

Volume 26

Number 2

December - 2024

ISSN 2250-2831

The English Classroom

A Peer Reviewed Bi-Annual Journal



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Publisher : **Regional Institute of English, South India**
Jnanabharati Campus,
Bengaluru - 560 056.

Edition : December 2024

No. of Copies : 400

Printed at : **Praanjala Creations**
33/A, 3rd Main
Havanoor Extension
Post : Nagasandra
Bangalore -560073
Contact: 9741739650

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About “The English Classroom”

The English Classroom Journal is a peer reviewed bi- annual journal published in the month of June and December. The main objective of the journal is to publish articles pertaining to English Language Teaching. We hope that the research findings, strategies, techniques, methodology and assessment discussed in the journal would enable the ELT community to imbibe better understanding and insights for further research ideas and for classroom practices.

This issue includes 9 articles contributed by researchers and practitioners of ELT and also, 3 obituaries of Dr. N S Prabhu who propounded the concept of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) which is also famously known as the Bangalore project. This 5 long year project was conducted at RIESI, Bangalore. The first obituary is written by **Alan Maley**, author and English Language Officer of British Council (formerly), second by **Dr S Mohanraj**, Professor (formerly), EFL University, Hyderabad and the Chief Advisor of the English Classroom Journal (formerly) and the third by **Dr Geetha Durairajan**, Professor (formerly), EFL University, Hyderabad.

A brief highlight of each article is given below.

The article, **Recontextualizing Culturally Alien Materials in the English Classroom: Teachers as Policy Actors in Mizoram** by **Lalremruati**, is an ethnographic study which examines the classroom teaching of culturally alien materials of English language teachers of government high schools in Aizawl, Mizoram. The paper shares the recontextualizing strategies employed by the teachers in teaching contents which are not culturally aligned.

Archita Majumder, in the article, **Online Communities of Practice for Teacher Professional Development: Learnings from a Multiple Case Study** discusses the potentialities of online communities of practices (OCPs) for continuous professional development (TDP) in India. The paper also shares framework for planning and execution of an effective OCP.

The article, **Teaching Biblical Allegory Through Fantasy Fiction** by **Pooja Sunil Ranade** explores the use of C.S. Lewis' series *The Chronicles of Narnia* which is rich in Biblical allegories and mythological references, to teach complex fiction to the students of BA or MA English class.

Lakshmi B and **Dr. P. Nagaraj** in the article, **Assessing the Effectiveness of Individualized Instruction Method for Students in Government Schools in Kerala: A Case Study** focus on the use of individualized instruction method for students

who lack comprehension skills in language learning. This study is based on the theoretical framework of Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligence.

Vinu T, and Thiyagarajan K, in the article, **Developing Communication Skills for Enhanced Performance in Group Discussions in ESL: A Study with the Students of Chennai Institute of Technology,** present the findings of the four-week intervention carried out on a sample of undergraduate Engineering students of Chennai Institute of Technology, Kundrathur, Chennai to improve the Group Discussion skills, during the job interviews.

Savitha Bandela in the article, **Painting with Words Enriching English Language Skills through Colourful Idioms and Phrases,** proposes various strategies of incorporating color idioms into English language instruction. The paper states that vibrant and engaging ways of conveying feelings and emotions through colour idioms would enable the students especially with strong mother-tongue influences to learn English.

Kasthuri S and Dr. P.R. Sujatha Priyadharsini in the article, **Gamification Tools for English Classrooms and their multidisciplinary significance- An Exploratory Study,** discuss the advantages of the use of assortment of Gamification tools rather than a singular method, to promote improved language acquisition, considering the fact that learners and classrooms are diverse.

G. G. S. Nageswara Rao, in the article, **Classroom Interaction skills of Pre-Service teachers- Exploring the use of advertisements,** shares the use of tasks based on advertisements to generate meaningful interactions among the first-year pre-service teachers of 2-year Diploma in Elementary Education course.

Mohammad Azim M. Saiyad and Dr. Shemal Mevada, in the article, **The Write Way to Excel in Exams: Unlocking Academic Success Through Effective Writing Skills,** focus on the importance of writing skills for academic success with specific reference to written exams. The article shares practical strategies for mitigating some of the challenges of writing an exam.

OBITUARY



Nagoor Seshagiri Prabhu (N S Prabhu)
(25-02-1933 - 08-11-2024)

In Memory of Dr N.S. Prabhu.

Alan Maley

The ELT world has lost one of its outstanding professionals. Dr Prabhu became a legend in his own lifetime and will be widely regretted and sorely missed.

He was born and grew up in Nagoor, Udupi district, before moving to his first teaching posts in Manipal. He was first talent-spotted by the renowned Professor W.W.S Bhaskar while on a training course in Mysore in 1966. Bhaskar advised him to take the one-year Diploma in Teaching English at the recently established CIEFL Hyderabad, which he did in 1966-67. By then he had also obtained his MA in English Literature from Madras Christian College.

Before long, he was collaborating with Bhaskar in the 1970's in writing *English Through Reading 1 & 2*, published by Macmillan. These books were ahead of their time – well before extensive reading came to prominence elsewhere in the world. He went on to collaborate with Tickoo, Bhaskaran and Sasikumar in developing a complete new concept series, *Gul Mohar*, which amazingly is still going strong 50 years after its publication in 1974.

In the early 1970's Prabhu worked on his PhD at the University of Reading in UK. On his return, his ideas on task-based learning began to take shape and resulted in the *Bangalore Project* where he worked with a number of Primary and Middle schools over a 5 year period to test and refine the approach. His book, *Second Language Pedagogy* was published by OUP in 1987, and gives an account of his ideas and the principles on which the Bangalore Project was based.

Prabhu was a life-long exponent and proponent of critical thinking, long before it had become a fashionable buzz-word. His ideas on task-based learning were in stark contrast to the ruling paradigm at the time, which rested on the notion that teaching and learning language could be reduced to a predictable series of steps. He argued that, rather than focusing on the language through drills and the like, in what was termed the Structural-Situational approach, it was better to focus on practical, communicational tasks. He claimed that while focussing on the task, the learners were sub-consciously acquiring the language.

This approach inevitably entailed a view of teacher training and development which again ran counter to accepted notions. His concept of the teacher's 'sense of plausibility' envisaged teachers taking responsibility for their own professional and personal development. Any kind of formal training would need to be mediated by the teachers' own sense of what was appropriate for them in their particular context. And this would be a continuing, lifelong evolutionary process as they responded to their own experience and new developments in the field.

Prabhu was an inveterate debater. He loved nothing better than to discuss and argue about his provocative ideas. While working for the British Council in Madras, he was a frequent visitor to Bangalore and ran an informal discussion group which formed around Esther Ramani and her colleagues at the IIT, Bangalore. She went on to further articulate Prabhu's concept in a memorable article in the *ELT Journal* (1987) titled 'Theorizing from the classroom'.

When he moved to the National University of Singapore as Deputy Head of the English department, he continued to pursue ideas and to critique accepted practice. He was part of an informal group led by K.P. Mohanan and his wife Tara, which met regularly to discuss educational and more broadly philosophical issues. They had themselves set up an innovative Inquiry-oriented programme for undergrads. And Prabhu remained in touch with them when they set up their ThinQ programme at Pune. In 2005, Amartya Sen published a book titled *The Argumentative Indian* – this epithet is an appropriate description of Prabhu, which he richly deserved.

Unlike many academics, Prabhu did not publish very many books, and his articles were often published in small and relatively obscure journals. So we owe a great debt of gratitude to Geetha Durairajan for assembling and editing his complete articles in *Perceptions of Language Pedagogy* (Orient Black Swan 2019). This is a veritable treasure trove, with articles spanning the period 1966-2018 in chronological order. The sheer originality of his thinking shines through on every page. There are articles on all aspects of his contributions. Particularly significant are: *Procedural Syllabuses* (p26); *Coping with the Unknown in Language Pedagogy* (p45); *Language Education: Equipping or Enabling?*(p59) ; *Materials as Support: Materials as Constraint* (p 82); *There is no Best Method - Why?*(p 125); *Teaching is at Most Hoping for the Best* (p 241)... If one were designing a new course for the training of teachers, this could well serve as the structure for it.

The focus has been on Prabhu's professional contribution, so a word on his human qualities is in order. He was a caring and kind person. His deep and genuine concern for his students and his younger colleagues has been attested by the many people he has taught, mentored and shared his ideas with over the years. And throughout his adult life he has had the unconditional support of his dear wife, Praphulla, without whom he might well have achieved far less.

Prabhu did not seek the limelight but it was nonetheless fitting that in 2021 he was given the ELTons Lifetime Achievement Award.

He will be remembered for his sharp intellect, his original ideas, his practical wisdom and his humane care for colleagues and students. We shall not see his like again.

*We stand on the shoulders of giants,
And walk on the bones of the dead -
Our eyes are so fixed on our science,
We don't see the path that we tread.*

*We think we invented the present,
Want to access the future so fast,
Have no time to look back where we came from,
Have no eyes for the ghosts of the past.*

*The past is a foreign country,
They did things differently there.
But though we must live in the present -
Let us never forget they are there.*

Alan Maley.

Note: Thanks are due to Prabhu's daughter Vidya, Paul Gunashekar, Mike Garman and Keith Johnson for helping me with the details.

Alan Maley has been involved with ELT for over 60 years. He first met Dr Prabhu at the British Council when Alan was Director, South India, in Madras (1984-89), and they became firm friends. Subsequently, they worked as colleagues in the department of English, National University of Singapore, in the 1990's. Apart from India, Alan has lived and worked in 10 countries worldwide, including China, Singapore, Thailand and France.

Prof N S Prabhu

Prof S Mohanraj

It is a sad occasion when one is asked to write an obit note for a person like Prof N S Prabhu. In writing this I am reminded of my long association with him.

My first meeting with Prabhu was way back in 1979 when the Bangalore Project was in progress. I was a research student at the CIEFL at Hyderabad. Prof Prabhu was on the lookout for a few teachers who could teach on the project. I was lucky to have been one of the team members (my strength was my ability to speak in Kannada). We had an initial training programme, where tasks were explained and Dr. Kay of the British Council gave a demonstration lesson on handling the tasks. This was useful and we were able to engage the classes in Corporation schools and the children were happy to learn in a new way. In this way, it was Prabhu who introduced me to real task-based teaching when the Structural Approach was at its peak in India.

Subsequently, I had several occasions to meet and interact with him in Gujarat (H M Patel Institute of English Training and Research) and Hyderabad (CIEFL). Each occasion was a delight to listen to him speak on different aspects of language teaching – especially ways of engaging with the learner. When he was on stage, he would lend dignity to it by his presence, and his talk (in a soft but firm voice) would provide the necessary light which the audience were eagerly looking for.

Meeting him frequently also gave me an opportunity to read many of his articles published in RELC journal as well as in ELTJ. This was around the time when his book *Second Language Pedagogy* was published and helped us the practising teachers resolve several of the misgivings one had about the Bangalore Project, especially after reading the Alan Berretta report. The appendix to the book has an inventory of tasks which could be used by our students during their practice teaching session – especially to demonstrate several aspects of information transfer.

Prabhu remained active till almost his end. My friend and colleague, Geetha tells me how involved he was when she put together some of his best writings on ELT in the form of a book *Perceptions of Language Pedagogy*. Thanks to Geetha for making these seminal articles available in one place and organised in a chronological order.

Prabhu was an excellent teacher, a good administrator (as evinced by his stint at the British Council as English Studies Officer, Madras), an author and best of all a good human being. He had his heart on the right side when it came to helping others. It was not necessary that the recipient of help was someone known to him. He was generous to a fault and I have seen several students receiving help in cash and kindness from him. But he wore all his qualities very lightly and this was a real sign of his greatness.

Before concluding, I should admit here that he was in some ways responsible for my professorship. When I attended the interview with him on the Board of Selectors, he gave me a big reassuring smile as soon as I entered the hall. This was so comforting and helped me perform well in my interview.

That he is not with us today is something difficult to believe. With him we have lost a doyen, someone who started the ELT movement in India with a great vigour along with stalwarts like Profs. Ghosh, Tickoo, WWS Bhaskar and others. He carried his mission with passion till the end and that makes the loss much heavier to bear. In this hour, all we can do is to pray for his soul to attain eternal peace. Our prayers should also be with his family whose loss is greater than any of ours.

Om Shanti, shanti shantihi.

Three books by Prabhu one should not miss reading:

- a. English Through Reading (Volumes 1 and 2)*
- b. Second Language Pedagogy*
- c. Perception of Language Pedagogy*

**Dr S Mohanraj, Professor (formerly)
EFL University, Hyderabad**

Dr N S Prabhu, thinker and teacher, academician

Dr Geetha Durairajan

The huge shift from knowing Dr. N S Prabhu not just as a revered and honoured academician, but also as a person with a dry yet delightful sense of humour and a sharp wit, as a coffee connoisseur and epicurean taste in food was only because I had the honour of working with him as his editor for his book “Perceptions of Language Pedagogy”, which he himself described and rightfully predicted as one that is likely to be his “Swan song”. That editorship was a labour of love, a contribution to the ELE community. There were so many reaching outs that had to happen for that book to reach the camera ready version. Dr. Prabhu had this pile of manuscripts in hard copy format, and many others as chapters in books, also hard copies. We had to get all of them typed and converted to soft copies, but that was the easiest part. A host of ELE professionals had to be contacted to obtain copyright permission, for the wide range of articles had been published in a variety of journals, (some now defunct) others in books, Festschriften etc. One of the joys was the responses when these ELT colleagues were contacted to ask for permission. The conversation or e-mail would often begin with a “ I am ...and am contacting you on behalf of... Do we have your permission to...etc”. The responses ranged from: “Of course, we will give permission” to “Oh, I am so glad to know Dr. Prabhu remembers me. Please convey my regards to him”.

Once all the collation, and typing had been done, began the arduous but educative task of proofing from manuscript to type script, and then a few rounds of copy editing. The proofing and checking was a lesson by itself: Dr. Prabhu would not allow even a comma or a colon to slip past him: he would also check every single verb preposition or subject verb concord: most importantly, if I asked a doubt, a quick patient pertinent grammar lesson would ensue. As one of my students who helped me proof-read the texts said: “I never knew that the use of a semi colon versus colon could make such a difference”.

Meticulous attention to detail was primary for Dr. Prabhu. These many rounds of discussions, (with me making lists of corrections and taking them over to Bangalore for cross checking) took place in his house, with Mrs. Prabhu providing sumptuous meals: the discussions were always punctuated with endless cups of coffee that Dr. Prabhu would fix for both of us, using his favourite coffee maker.

Dr Prabhu the academician was also a brilliant teacher. Way back in 1978 much before we knew anything about generative grammar, he gave us M A students in

Chennai, then known as Madras, a series of lectures on Noam Chomsky and his base arguments. The essence of those lectures is still crystal clear in my head and I have used them very often in my classes. He showed us how with an active versus passive sentence, with ambiguous sentences, like the classic “Flying planes are dangerous” and the even more classic “John is eager to please and the ...easy to please”, surface structure grammar cannot assign separate or similar categorisations and labelling as the case may be; that only deep structure will provide an underlying identical tree diagram for passivisation, but also provide separate ones for the other two.

Today this seems obvious, but nearly half a century ago, it was revolutionary. The complex, then befuddling Chomsky made simple was what those lectures were all about.

This great teacher and thinker was also a very humble person. When requested, he hesitated to write an article on evaluation, for the Perceptions book, stating, “I have not read in that area: I don't know enough”. This from the person who wrote about the teacher’s sense of plausibility which has ingrained in it an evaluation and who was able to problematise evaluation at six levels from that of a learner to curriculum evaluation. The great thinker and philosopher's paths travelled will ideate and cerebrate our minds, to not just enable but empower us for years to come.

**Formerly Professor
English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU)
Hyderabad**

Note: Thanks to Prof. Ravinaryan Chakrakodi, Professor and Academic Head for collecting the obituaries on N S Prabhu.

Recontextualizing Culturally Alien Materials in the English Classroom: Teachers as Policy Actors in Mizoram

Lalremruati

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Abstract

This paper examines how English language teachers of government high schools in Aizawl, Mizoram recontextualize culturally alien materials in their classrooms. Drawing on an ethnographic study that incorporates detailed field notes, participant observation, and in-depth semi-structured interviews, it delineates the various strategies teachers employ to make content relatable in the absence of culturally responsive materials. The study incorporates an integrated framework of socio-cultural theory, recontextualization theory, and the notion of teachers as policy actors. The findings of the study highlighted teachers' recontextualizing strategies - replacing foreign names with familiar names, bringing in anecdotal narratives from Mizo culture, and drawing parallels from their societal contexts. The study contributes to the understanding of how teachers' practices in the classroom can influence broader educational policies and offer insights into the importance of culturally responsive teaching in multilingual and multicultural contexts like Mizoram.

Keywords

Recontextualization, Policy Actors, Mizoram, Multilingual Education, Culturally Responsive materials

Introduction

In our increasingly globalized world, English has become a dominant medium of instruction even in countries where it is not the native language. Meganathan (2011) describes how English has become a language of empowerment in India, carrying with it a widespread belief in its transformative potential among the population. This belief is reflected in the educational policies of Mizoram, which have explicitly emphasized on enhancing the English language skills of students in the interest of them achieving better economic success (Govt. of Mizoram, 2013). However, the widespread influence of English language education has led to instructional materials that often fail to reflect the learners' socio-cultural contexts, as is evident in the case of Mizoram. An observation of textbooks prescribed by the Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE) for the 9th grade suggests that they are mostly composed of contents that are culturally and socially distant from the learners' immediate contexts. In certain circumstances, these issues are unavoidable to an extent, especially in a diversified country characterized by myriad social and cultural ethos like India. Nevertheless, the minority communities often get the short end of the stick in these cases, as exemplified in the lack of socio-cultural representation in Mizoram's English textbooks.

Considering the advantages of social and culturally responsive teaching materials in the context of English language education (Gay, 2010; Paris, 2012; Zhang-wu, 2017), the circumstance on the matter in Mizoram warrants a closer examination. Drawing on a blended framework of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of learning and Bernstein's (2000) concept of recontextualization, this paper studies how teachers engage with and adapt culturally alien teaching materials to fit their teaching-learning contexts. Based on an ethnographic study on state-run government schools in Aizawl, Mizoram, the paper provides an insight into the practices of English language teachers at the grassroots level in the classrooms. The findings delineate the different strategies employed by teachers in their attempts to bridge the disconnect between culturally alien materials and the students' socio-cultural backgrounds. It illuminates how teachers are active policymakers and policy actors who continually recontextualize official curriculum content to align with the lived experiences of their students.

Literature Review

Recontextualizing Culture in Content: Teachers as Policy Actors

Integrating culture into teaching materials has received considerable attention and advocacy in India's educational framework throughout the years (NCERT 1988, 2000, 2005, 2023). Similarly, in the field of English language education, researchers and educators have expressed the necessity of culturally responsive or sensitive materials in the curriculum to offer better learning experiences for students (Gay, 2010; Paris, 2012; Qianqian, 2017; Mukherjee, 2019). The positive impacts of integrating cultural elements into English language learning has also been demonstrated in research conducted on learners from Mizoram. Lalbiakpuii (2018) carried out a study which showed that introducing culturally sensitive materials to Mizo ESL learners lowered their affective filters, thereby promoting their English language learning.

However, as much as research and policies emphasize promoting culture in the curriculum, the actual practice of accounting for the multitudes of culture that students come from is a daunting task (Banks, 2008). Hornberger and Johnson (2007) express that the prescribed curriculum often fails to reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of students in multilingual and multicultural settings. This dissonance between socio-cultural contexts and the English learning materials is one of the factors Lalsangpuii (2015) cites as creating learning issues for English language learners in Mizoram. In an analytical study of the textbooks prescribed by the Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE), Sailo (2016) identifies multiple culturally alien contents, suggesting that the contents be more tailored to the socio-cultural contexts of the students it intends to teach.

In this scenario, the practical challenges lie in the hands of teachers at the ground level. Bernstein (2000) suggests that teachers are agents of recontextualization who adapt and modify the curriculum in classroom practice. Bemoaning the neglect of teachers' voices in educational frameworks, Batra (2005) emphasizes the need to pay more attention to teachers and their practices. Following this notion, Sriprakash (2012) observed teacher practices in a prolonged ethnographic study in rural Karnataka. Her study demonstrates how teachers recontextualize mandated pedagogic reforms to fit their own contexts. This exemplifies Ball et al.'s (2011) concept of teachers as both policy subjects and policy actors in schools. Menken and Garcia (2010) shed light on how teachers negotiate language policies in practice and call for more attention to explore the realities of these practices.

This paper draws on a combination of these frameworks – socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), recontextualization (Bernstein, 2000) and teachers as policy subjects and actors (Ball et al. 2011), to delineate the strategies of teachers in negotiating socially distant and culturally alien materials in classroom practice in Mizoram.

Research Question

“How do teachers deal with materials alien to their immediate socio-cultural contexts of teaching in classroom practice?” This was the question that came across my mind when I pored through the English textbooks prescribed for the 9th Grade by the Mizoram Board of School Education. The English syllabus comprised a set of three textbooks – a literature reader, a coursebook and a workbook with activities paralleling the lessons in the coursebook. Notably, the literature reader included only one Mizo story. Ironically, in a workbook described in the blurb as designed specifically for students in Mizoram, Mizo names were visibly scarce amongst the exercises and activities. On one hand, this could be seen as a reflection of the long-standing practice of using English names for exercises in the English classrooms. However, it was not just English names that appeared in the textbooks – many Indian names from other regions were also present. The scarcity of Mizo names among them became a point of contention. Coupled with the prominent theme of teachers voicing concerns about the lack of culturally responsive materials in the English curriculum, as revealed in my analysis of ethnographic data from fieldwork, this observation led me to pursue the question as a full-fledged study.

Ethnography as methodology

Blommaert and Jie (2020) state that people are not always aware of what they do and why they do it, suggesting that directly asking them is often the worst and least effective way to understand their actions. They instead advocate

for ethnography as a favorable way of understanding how and why people do what they do. Following this framework, the study adopts ethnography as its methodology. It emerged from a larger ethnographic study on language-in-education policies in Mizoram, conducted as part of my doctoral thesis.

The detailed notes and observations from ethnographic field works over a span of two years (2022 -2024) highlighted several prominent themes. Amongst these was the teachers' dismay at the lack of culturally responsive materials and the abundance of culturally alien materials. Drawing from these ethnographic observations and field notes, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 9 English language teachers who participated in my doctoral research. The interviews were carried out in the form of in-depth discussions to ensure as little external influence as possible, as well as to avoid the general sense of surveillance and evaluation that often accompanied any inquiries about their teachings during our many interactions.

Findings: Strategies of recontextualizations

An in-depth analysis of the data gathered from the discussions and field notes highlighted a few recurring strategies of adaptation and recontextualization of materials by the teachers in the study. The analysis followed a three-step coding process. The initial coding identified themes relating to prescribed teaching materials, particularly ones identified as unfamiliar and alien by the teachers themselves. The second phase of coding filtered instances of recontextualization. Finally, the third coding categorized similar and recurring strategies employed by the teachers. These strategies are illustrated in the following sub-sections.

Replacing foreign names with Mizo names and items in exercises

Skimming through the pages of the prescribed 9th Grade English grammar coursebook, the lack of Mizo names and items stood out. Additionally, foreign concepts were ubiquitous throughout the exercises and the activities. One could argue that this is a common occurrence in English textbooks and therefore not a pertinent issue. The teachers I spoke to believed otherwise. In an in-depth discussion that arose one afternoon when we were looking at a lesson on active and passive voice, Miss Rovi explains how she replaces the given names on the exercises with Mizo names when she teaches:

"I often replace names in the textbooks with Mizo names so that students can relate better to the content. Instead of 'James,' I use names like 'Mawia' when I teach them in class..."

She believes that this evokes a sense of ownership of the English language among the students, a notion that she regards crucial for them to gain

confidence in using the language. This is a sentiment shared by Miss Liani, an English language teacher from another government school. Similarly, she modifies the names in the exercises, using the names of students in the class instead. This act alone has been met with enthusiasm among her students. She explains:

“The students get bored if you stick to what is written in the textbooks. I do this bit where I use my students’ names for the writing activities, I add a little bit of their real-life characteristics as well. I try to make their lessons as relatable as possible. They love it when I do this.”

Anecdotal narratives from Mizo culture

Miss Kimi, who has been teaching English in her current school for more than 20 years, expresses her desire to incorporate more Mizo folktales in the syllabus. This is an issue she is especially concerned about, stressing that students learn better when they can relate to what they read. She shows me the literature reader, pointing out how only one Mizo story was included in the textbook:

All the names of the teachers in the study have been changed to protect their privacy

“It is time we include more Mizo folktales into our textbooks...they enjoy ‘Rimenhawih’ (a Mizo folktale) way more than ‘The Night we won the Buick’...if the language is not familiar, at least the content ought to be...”

She has her own way of dealing with this challenge – she tries to find Mizo stories similar to the ones in the textbooks and draw parallels between them. According to her, this is a strategy that works best for her students, better than the suggestions provided in the textbooks. For example, she explains what a ‘Buick’ means by finding a corresponding story with a similar concept to ensure her students grasp its significance in the story.

Miss Deborah, an English teacher who teaches the literature section of the English syllabus, describes how she uses Mizo idioms and phrases to help her students understand the moral of the stories in her class:

“The stories usually have some moral they try to convey... I find simple Mizo idioms and phrases useful in explaining them... in a story that talks about greed, idioms like ‘sem sem dam dam, ei bil thi thi (*he who shares lives, he who doesn’t dies)’ work well in amplifying the impact...”

Drawing examples from Mizo society

The teaching materials contain certain disparities that might seem redundant at a glance but significantly imposing upon practice. The English workbook has a section dealing with writing skills – essays, letters, reports, invitations, and telegrams. While they all follow a specified format, some types are more difficult to teach than others, says Miss Liani. Pointing out the issues with unfamiliar concepts, she explains how complicated it is to teach her students how to write a telegram when they have not seen a telegram machine in their lives. To deal with this pertinent issue, she uses Mizo history to help them understand and visualize telegrams.

“Teaching how to write telegrams is challenging. I have not even written one myself. But since it is a part of the syllabus, I must teach them anyway. I tell them about how useful telegrams were back in the day before telephone lines were even set in the region. It fascinates them, and we imagine ourselves living in the past Mizo society and try to emulate that in telegram writing...”

For instance, teaching how to write invitations too poses a challenge for Miss Liani; there are stark differences in the wedding invitations exemplified in the textbooks and the wedding invitations in the Mizo society that they are familiar with. To tackle this issue, she teaches them both formats.

“Wedding invitations are regularly included in the board exams, but the problem is teaching them how to write them. The format in their syllabus is too different. Look at this (showing me the example) see how different this is. We don’t write the names first! But if they do not follow this format, they will not get marks in the exams...Even I get confused with the formats...”

The teachers’ approaches and strategies resonate with Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory of learning as a social process facilitated by cultural tools and practices (Vygotsky, 1978). By employing the strategies outlined above – replacing foreign names with culturally familiar names, anecdotes and narratives from Mizo culture, drawing examples from Mizo society - they effectively make the learning content more accessible, engaging, and meaningful within their socio-cultural contexts. Their engagement with policy directives like the prescribed curriculum and their practices of adaptation showcase how teachers are not simply passive implementers of top-down directives. Rather, they prove to be thoughtful and creative policy actors who carefully adapt policies to their teaching-learning contexts (Ball et al., 2011).

Conclusion

The study highlights a crucial yet often overlooked aspect of education policy implementation and the corresponding teaching-learning process: teachers are active policy actors who constantly recontextualize methods and materials to fit their own unique contexts. The strategies of recontextualization devised by the teachers in this study display how thoughtfully they interact with policy measures at the classroom levels. They made conscious decisions to tackle the dissonance between materials claimed to be designed for learners in Mizoram and the lack of cultural reflection within these materials. They bring local, culturally relevant examples into their teaching to help students connect more with the content. It is evident that teachers are not merely passive recipients of policies; they actively engage with and adapt policies in their classrooms. In the metaphorical layers of onion that Ricento and Hornberger (1996) characterize language policies in education, the teachers in the study are living examples of the “educators that ‘cook’ and stir the onion” (Menken & Garcia, 2010, p.256).

Given the diversity that characterizes India, developing materials that cater to the myriad socio-cultural tenets across the country is a monumental task – a responsibility that we, as researchers and educators, must shoulder. This study demonstrates the groundbreaking potential of discovering practical and implementable methods for incorporating culturally responsive materials through teacher inputs. Teachers’ strategies are pragmatic and rooted in real-life situations, aiming to make the curriculum more relevant to their students’ experiences. Identifying and utilizing more localized strategies in adapting culturally responsive teaching in the face of scarce of culturally relevant materials can inform current and future practices in English language education.

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Online Communities of Practice for Teacher Professional Development: Learnings from a Multiple Case Study

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Abstract

During the spread of COVID-19 in India, the sudden change from teaching in real classrooms to online platforms for teaching and learning posed a major challenge to teachers in India, where digital access is a concern. In that situation, when travelling and spending money on professional development were major challenges, online communities of practices (OCPs) emerged as a potential tool for teacher professional development (TPD). However, OCPs are relatively underexplored in Indian TPD contexts. Globally, its potential has not been fully explored in language teacher education scenarios. In light of the background, this paper presents a framework for leveraging OCPs for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers' professional development. Based on the findings of an empirical study, which is briefly described in the paper, the framework highlights how an OCP can be planned, executed, and evaluated. The framework can be tested by future researchers in other educational settings. By encouraging teachers to participate, with their collaborative and non-autonomous characteristics, OCPs can be used as a continuous preparation for TPD in India, where they face constraints like time, distance and financial assistance. This study looks at the potentialities of OCPs for English as Second Language (ESL) teachers' TPD in an Indian context.

Keywords

Teacher Professional Development (TPD); Online Communities of Practices (OCPs); English as Second Language (ESL); Communities of Practices (CoPs); Multiple-Case-Study

Background and Rationale

As proposed by Wenger (1998), communities of practice (CoPs) aim to promote collaboration among a group of professionals who share common concerns, support each other professionally, and exchange ideas related to the profession. They are also used by teachers for professional development (PD). CoPs help teachers achieve individual goals and simultaneously grow as a support group. The Tejas project conducted by the British Council in association with Tata Trusts and the Government of Maharashtra (2016-21) and the Teacher Development Coordinator (TDC) programme introduced by the State Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT) of the Delhi government as an extension of the Mentor Teacher programme, are examples of large-scale attempts at utilizing CoPs as teacher PD tools. When CoPs are operated virtually with the help of the internet, they are called online communities of practice (OCPs) (Palloff & Pratt, 1999). In India, OCPs can serve as a viable alternative to CoPs because they

can easily bridge the gaps of time, distance, and financial support, which are major concerns among teachers when it comes to attending PD programmes (Singh & Mahapatra, 2022). A few examples of OCPs in Indian contexts could be small school or organization-based teacher groups staying active on social media platforms like WhatsApp. What distinguishes OCPs from large Facebook or other social media groups having broad professional development goals is that OCPs are more focused in terms of participants' interests, problems and professional needs, which are similar for all members of the group (Lay et al., 2020). See Mahapatra (2015) for a study on an online intervention built on the principles of OCP. However, empirical studies on OCPs are almost non-existent in India, and their explicit use for TPD is rare in the country. Globally, more research is required on the utilisation of CoPs in a context-appropriate manner (Al-Habsi, 2022). This paper addresses these gaps in the literature and presents a framework for creating OCPs for TPD in India, based on an empirical study.

Teacher Professional Development with OCPs

OCPs can be used by teachers as a forum to share resources and experiences related to their teaching practices and forge partnerships to achieve common pedagogic goals (Dille & Rokenes, 2021). They are in line with the features of effective PD: collaboration, active participation, and learning, contextually relevant, sustainable, reflexive, and feedback-driven (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). As pointed out by Roberto et al. (2021), personal, interpersonal, contextual, and technological factors may determine an OCP's success in promoting professional growth among its members. Figure 1 captures some of the most common PD-friendly features of OCPs laid out by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), Dille & Rokenes (2021), Lay et al. (2020), and other researchers working on the topic.



Specific goal-driven: OCPs have specific pedagogic goals, for example, making classes more interactive, assessing the conversation skills of students, and offering feedback to students in crowded or low-resource classrooms. These goals are often decided by all the members of the community, and thus most teachers see value in actively participating in it.

Dialogic: OCPs are dialogic, which means teachers can engage in dialogue or discussion when working towards achieving a common goal. It is important to note that assigning clear roles to each member may enhance collegiality in the community. For example, one or more members can take the responsibility of scheduling the meeting, a few others may moderate discussions, and some others can keep track of the progress reported by individual members.

Collaborative problem-solving: Since COPs involve addressing group or community goals, they encourage and facilitate collaboration. More often than not, especially in Indian contexts, English teachers have several problems on their hands to solve. When they work together, they overcome their sense of professional isolation and collaboratively solve problems with their peers.

Knowledge and resource sharing: While some teachers may have easier access to knowledge and resources related to English language teaching and learning, others may struggle to find good resources. In an OCP ecosystem, teachers share their knowledge and resources with other members of the community in the form of success stories or learnings from a workshop or a book.

Accessible: Since OCPs are hosted on social media platforms, they could be more accessible than a COP, which requires the physical gathering of its members at a mutually convenient time. Recorded community meetings, e-resources, digitised classroom artefacts, and such materials can be shared with members. Teachers can access those when they have time.

Equitable: One of the most significant features of OCPs is their equitable nature. The members can use as much professional support as they need. All members may not need similar or the same amount of support. Digital accessibility offers the opportunity to the members to use knowledge and resources and engage in conversations as per their requirements and convenience.

These features formed the foundation of the OCP that was created as part of an empirical study conducted by the researcher.

Methodology for the Empirical Study

An empirical study i.e., a multiple-case study to assess the impact of an OCP on five tertiary-level ESL teachers' teaching practices and pedagogic knowledge

was conducted. A multiple-case study approach (Flyvbjerg, 2011) was adopted for the study. Each teacher was considered a case in this enquiry. These teachers taught in a private institute of higher education in Hyderabad, India. Data for the study were collected through a classroom observation schedule, an oral pedagogic content knowledge test, a semi-structured interview, video recording of OCP meetings, field notes, and document analysis. The data collection for the study was carried out in three phases. In the first phase, information on teachers' qualifications, teaching schedules, syllabuses, and students' English language proficiency was collected during a casual conversation, using field notes. Later, details about teachers' teaching practices and knowledge about teaching were obtained. Then, 6-7 classes of each teacher were observed. After each observation session, a simulated recall interview was conducted with the teacher. In the next phase, the teachers created an OCP and met bi-monthly on Google Meet to discuss and address issues related to methods, materials, and assessment, for an academic semester. They had a WhatsApp group on which they shared pedagogic resources regularly. The researcher acted as a participant and moderator in the OCP. During each meeting, one teaching-related issue was taken up for discussion. The teachers narrated personal examples from classroom teaching, shared stories of success from similar contexts, and tried to solve practical classroom problems as a team. The post-intervention phase was carried out after three months as the quality of the impact of the intervention in teacher education research is often traced more effectively with delayed data collection (Chen, 2020). In the last phase, once again, qualitative information about teachers' practices and knowledge about teaching was collected. The results of the analysis indicate discernible changes in teachers' approach to teaching and formative assessment. It was found that they took more interest in offering student-centric feedback and using authentic tasks. However, they continued to face difficulty adapting to technology-led teaching.

The Framework Based on the Findings

In this section, a framework on how to plan, run and evaluate the pedagogic impact of an OCP for ESL teachers, based on the aforementioned study, has been presented.

Planning

The teachers who participated in the study taught courses like Business Communication, Communicative English, etc., in colleges and universities to undergraduate students. Although the OCP started with 10 teachers, only five teachers who regularly participated in the study, were selected, for an in-depth understanding of the impact. One of the first things when planning for an OCP is to consider the size of the community because it impacts teachers' participation.

Some large online teacher communities in India are great platforms for net working and information-sharing. However, the participation of each member in the community is severely limited by the size of the group and the corresponding individual goals. Therefore, an OCP becomes more effective when it is a close-knit group. A community comprising a minimum of four to a maximum number of 10 should be an ideal one. A related factor is the need for a moderator, the role which was played by the researcher in this case. Previous research claims that a moderator is necessary for a sustainable OCP.

The second aspect to be noted is the transparency within the group in terms of what the group wants to achieve, how it is going to achieve, and how the members are going to benefit from the OCP. This is possible when the members set definable and clear pedagogic goals that are relevant to their content and are of immediate value. In the current study, the teachers started with how to give feedback on writing in a large classroom. It was a common problem. Before the OCP meetings started, it was decided that the core areas would concern teaching methods, materials, and formative assessment practices in the classroom.

The study revealed that deciding the OCP timeline plays a crucial role in encouraging teacher-participation. Since most teachers have long working hours, the OCP meetings can be conducted at regular yet convenient intervals. A social media platform like WhatsApp or Telegram can be used for maintaining a regular exchange of information and resources.

Running an OCP

OCPs must encourage bottom-up and non-hierarchical discussions. Since, OCPs are dependent on open and productive dialogue among participants, the community must ensure that every teacher gets the space and time to share their input. This can be done by developing and following a standard operational procedure. It is also important to keep the teachers focused from being diverted from the main idea during meetings, which could be the responsibility of the moderator/s. The moderator/s must ensure that the group members regularly communicate with each other. This is where an alternative platform like WhatsApp can cushion its main purpose. This platform can be used to decide the date and time for meetings, share minutes and recordings of meetings, pedagogic content, success stories, any immediate classroom problems/issues, solutions to problems, and classroom artefacts. Apart from these, it is necessary to maintain a friendly, non-judgmental, and welcoming atmosphere in all forums used by the community members.

When running an OCP, adhering to discussions on real classroom problems and finding solutions to those must be a norm. Teachers are reported to learn fast from practical, authentic, and relatable examples. Such sessions can be organised by pre-deciding the agenda for a meeting. Sharing a quick summary of the discussion or ‘minutes of the meeting’ in the WhatsApp group can also prove to be beneficial for the teachers as the main points discussed in the meeting remain documented for future use.

An oft-ignored aspect of a successful OCP is professionalism. Sharing what is discussed in the group meetings with outsiders should be done in consultation with group members. In fact, it may help if group members form a set of ethical codes involving what to share (or not to), with whom, and when.

Evaluating the Pedagogic Impact

Just like any pedagogical practice, the effectiveness of OCPs depends a lot on their impact on teaching and learning. The challenge lies in identifying the indicators of impact, analysing the impacts, and making decisions based on the analysis. In the empirical study, teachers regularly shared their reflections on changes through voice messages on the WhatsApp group. Continual reflection on pedagogic practices and keeping track of corresponding changes can strengthen teachers’ practices. Sharing with peers can be a motivating factor and obtaining feedback from them can fast-track PD. Methods like a journal entry, video or audio recording of the classroom, creating a portfolio of teaching materials, assessment tasks, rubrics, student feedback forms, etc., can be utilized for self and collaborative reflection.

Many groups do not go beyond sharing reflections, success stories, and achievements. The sustainability of the group, as my study suggests, also lies in analysing the evidence about the impact. When done properly, the analysis may help identify areas that can be adopted for future practice and those that need tweaking or improvement.

The last stage of impact evaluation is making decisions about changing practices. What needs to change must be decided in the group taking into account various contextual and personal factors. Since teacher change is a slow process, the group needs to acknowledge that and move with patience and focus.

Conclusion

In spite of the planning and implementation of OCPs, there could be challenges to them as well. The case studies discussed in the paper reveal that differences in institutional infrastructure, facilities, and availability of resources can be factors that slow down the progress of OCPs. On the brighter side, in a fast-evolving digital

world, OCPs could make a difference in teachers' PD, especially in Global South contexts like India, where in-service teachers' professional growth is a major concern. Policy-makers can consider including CoPs as a tool for in-service TPD, and teacher trainers can be trained to realise this goal. However, considering the scale and nature of the study, which could be a limitation, the findings can be interpreted with some caution. Larger sample size and replication studies may be necessary for making wider claims.

Future researchers may examine the effectiveness of the framework in various other contexts. It may be interesting to explore OCPs using mixed methods approaches. Since there is inadequate evidence available regarding the impact of OCPs on specific pedagogic aspects, researchers can investigate how OCPs shape specific classroom-based strategies. Finally, analysing OCP discourse could unravel interesting information related to power, hierarchy and identity.

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Teaching Biblical Allegory Through Fantasy Fiction

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Abstract

This paper addresses the challenges of teaching complex fiction to the students of BA or MA English class, using C.S. Lewis' series *The Chronicles of Narnia* as a case study. This series is rich in Biblical allegories and mythological references. By exploring strategies to understand these layered narratives, this paper aims to equip educators with effective methods for facilitating student understanding and appreciation of allegorical fantasy fiction. Drawing on pedagogical best practices and literary analysis, this paper demonstrates how fantasy series can be made accessible and engaging for students in classroom, enhancing their critical thinking and interpretive skills.

Keywords

The Chronicles of Narnia, Graduate-level coursework, Fantasy, Religious Allegory

Introduction

Teaching fiction at Bachelors or Masters' course in India can be a challenging task, as the students often have concerns regarding the length, difficulty of language, and complexity of themes within a novel. Teaching a novel, which has metaphors and allegories, with multiple mythical or religious references may prove to be difficult if the students do not have an overall context. However, using an interesting teaching method, which encompasses various modes of instruction and a student-centric class, can ensure that a fiction class can become dynamic.

This paper focuses on teaching Biblical allegory in a fantasy fiction course at BA and MA English level. The *Chronicles of Narnia* series by C. S. Lewis has been used as a case study for this paper. This series is often prescribed in the popular / fantasy fiction courses, and in children's literature specialization at several British and American Universities, and in some Indian universities.

The *Chronicles of Narnia* series isn't very difficult to read as the plot and language is simple, and can be enjoyed and understood by children (10-14 years), without focussing on the allegorical meaning but simply thinking of it as an adventurous tale. At Bachelors or Masters level coursework, however, this series offers a plethora of teaching options for a detailed literary analysis. The paper provides a background of the author and the series, several methods to teach Biblical allegory, observations, and concludes with what works in the context of this series.

Background

The Chronicles of Narnia is a classic fantasy series for children, written by the Oxford Professor Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963). The seven books in the series were published between the period of 1950-1956, and also won the Carnegie Medal in the UK. The plot follows the adventures of children (mainly the four Pevensie siblings – Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy) who are transported from our world to Narnia, often through magic portals. The timelines in our world and the Kingdom of Narnia are shown to be different. The reading chronology of series is different from the publication order. It is given below for reference.

Table 1 can be given as a preliminary handout to the students:

Reading Serial No.	Name of the book	Publication Year	Summary
I	The Magician's Nephew	1955	The magical world of Narnia is created by the Lion Aslan, the son of the Emperor beyond the Sea. Two children, Digory Kirke and Polly Plummer, are transported to Narnia magically. There they witness Aslan defeating the evil Queen Jadis, the White Witch.
II	The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	1950	Narnia has fallen under the control of the Witch Jadis. Aslan helps four children – the Pevensie siblings – Peter, Edmund, Susan and Lucy to defeat her and win it back for the innocent Narnian animals.
III	The Horse and His Boy	1954	Two children, Shasta and Aravis, help the Pevensies to stop the evil designs of the neighbouring Kingdom of Calormen (Prince Rabadash) against Narnia.
IV	Prince Caspian	1951	The Pevensie children are called to Narnia again to help Prince Caspian to fight against his usurping Uncle Miraz. The children learn the meaning of courage and sacrifice as they fight Miraz and help Caspian regain his kingdom.
V	The Voyage of the Dawn Treader	1952	King Caspian takes up a sea journey to find Aslan's country, accompanied by Edmund and Lucy and their cousin

			Eustace Scrubb, who also comes to love Aslan, and Narnia once he repents and improves his ways.
VI	The Silver Chair	1953	Eustace and his friend Jill return to Narnia, where they help to find and rescue Caspian's son, Prince Rilian, who had been kidnapped by an evil witch.
VII	The Last Battle	1956	Calormen Kingdom has taken over Narnia and Aslan's name is being dishonoured. All the children who ever visited Narnia are called back by Aslan to fight the Calormen soldiers. The old Narnia is destroyed and a new world is created.

Narnia has many references to Jesus Christ and the Bible, along with other religious allegories, based on virtues and sin. This subtext in Narnia often made critics wonder if the books were meant for children. However, as Lewis posited Narnia was intended to be a fairy tale but grew into a Christian/ Biblical allegory as he continued writing. He wrote:

Supposing there really was a world like Narnia . . . and supposing Christ wanted to go into that world and save it (as He did ours) what might have happened? The stories are my answer. Since Narnia is a world of Talking Beasts, I thought He would become a talking beast there as He became a man here. I pictured Him becoming a lion there because a) the lion is supposed to be the king of beasts; b) Christ is called 'The Lion of Judah' in the Bible (Lewis 1969:426)

The teacher can focus on the background of C.S Lewis, whose writing was influenced by Christianity and Celtic and Norse myth and folklore. His membership in the group Inklings (that included J. R. R. Tolkien, author of the Lord of the Rings, another biblically inspired high fantasy series, also plays a vital role in the writing of the series), all combined in a beautiful way to form The Chronicles of Narnia.

The books can be read only as a fantasy series, but having a background of Lewis's life will help students understand several aspects about the books. Therefore, students can be asked to read Lewis' autobiography *Surprised by Joy* (1955) and listen to the compilation of his BBC talks on Christianity called *Mere Christianity*.

Teaching Methodology

Pre-reading activities

Before starting the series, the teacher should elicit students' responses to what they think about magic, good versus evil, alternate worlds, sacrifice, family values, religion, etc. They can also be introduced to the fantasy genre for children and the genre conventions (such as call to adventure, meeting a mentor or role of the magical characters in fairy tale narrative, etc).

Warm up questions can be as follows:

- How do you feel about adventure?
- As a child did you think that a magical world, full of magical creatures, exists?
- Would you have liked to visit a magical place as a child?
- Do you believe in virtue and sin?

The teacher can also ask if students have read other fantasy books like Alice in Wonderland, Harry Potter, Lord of The Rings, to know if students are familiar with the genre of fantasy and children's literature and the conventions. The teacher can highlight the idea of alternative worlds, children as heroes, theme of good versus evil, the quest motif, among other things. The teacher can also encourage students to read further and participate in these discussions.

Teaching Activities

- The teacher can plan an activity to read some important passages and chapters from the series. In the class, the teacher can focus on the major scenes in each novel, so that the students are well versed with the entire sequence of important incidents in the series.
- Students can be assigned a group reading activity and focus on role plays once they are familiar with the major characters.
- The teacher should ensure that students have a basic background of English society at the time of the Second World War, since the novel series is set during that period and indirectly uses the fantasy tropes to address the trauma of war.
- It is essential that the teacher explains the context of the loss of faith in God and religion among children during these harsh times, and how Lewis hoped to rekindle that faith in children through his books and religious allegory.

Teaching Allegory:

Once the teacher covers the background of the novels, it will be easier to start teaching the religious allegory. An allegory refers to an extended metaphor, where the text has a literal meaning (an adventure tale as Narnia) and a symbolic meaning with significance that goes beyond the narrative (for example the sub text of Bible in Narnia).

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The focus must be to facilitate students understand the features of symbolism and allegory. The entire Narnia series heavily borrows characters and creatures from the Greek and Roman myths, but follows the plot of Christ's tale. Once the students are familiar with the text, they should be encouraged to connect these myths to Christian allegory.

Table 2 can help students understand the comparison while teaching allegory and their religious reference as per the characters:

Characters in Narnia	Religious Symbolism
Aslan is a great Lion, and sometimes called the Lamb	Aslan teaches moral values to the children who visit Narnia and his followers gain salvation at the end. He is the Son of Emperor Beyond the Sea in the Kingdom of Narnia. Thus, Aslan is allegorical to Jesus Christ, who is the Lamb (Bible, John 1:36) and the son of God.
Pevenise Children and other children who visit Narnia	The Pevenise children and other humans are referred to as the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve. They are prophesized to bring peace in Narnia when Narnia is in need of help.
Queen Jadis of Charn, the White Witch	Jadis is the embodiment of evil and is described as the descendent of giants and Lilith, who was supposed to be Adam's first wife but she was punished because of her rebelliousness and demonic nature.
Father Christmas	Christian characters like Father Christmas (Santa) play an important role in the series. Moreover, his arrival shows the Christian values and defeat for Jadis.
Animals in Narnia	Dragons are considered evil and greedy, so Eustace gets turned into a dragon for stealing. The Serpent (form of the Green Witch) is symbolic of Satan and temptation that befell mankind.

The teacher can use additional flashcards and handouts to support the reading related to the themes in the Narnia series and Allegory (Table 3).

Book	Idea in the book	Biblical Parallels (King James Bible, 1769)
The Magician's Nephew (chapter 8-9)	Aslan creates Narnia by singing it into being. Jadis enters Narnia and tries to tempt Digory to take magical fruit to cure his mother	Genesis 1:1 (Old Testament) where God creates the world. Evil/Satan enters paradise and tempts Adam and Eve to take the Fruit of the Forbidden Tree. Original Sin happens
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (chapter 14-15)	Aslan is captured and Jadis almost kills Aslan, but he is brought back for his selfless sacrifice	In Matthew 26 (New Testament), Judas betrays Jesus, who is Crucified but then Resurrected on 3rd day.
The Horse and His Boy (overall themes)	Baby Shasta is discovered in a boat and brought up unknown of his destiny. Aslan explains his power to Shasta to fulfil his destiny	Exodus (Old Testament): Moses is found by the Queen in a boat, unknown that he would save the Israelites. Psalms (Old Testament): God explains that his creation and his expectation for man
Prince Caspian (chap. 13-14)	Caspian overthrows Miraz and establishes peace in Narnia	Restoration of the true religion after a corruption is expected in the realm
The Voyage of the Dawn Treader	Caspian undertakes a journey to Aslan's country	Thematic: Spiritual pilgrimage and the true sense of duty for followers of Christianity
The Silver Chair	Jill and Eustace rescue Prince Rilian from the Green Witch	Thematic: Bible talks of the continual struggle of Good vs. Evil
The Last Battle (Chapter 3)	Coming of Tash, the evil God. Aslan judges his true followers and creates a new world	Revelations: Coming of Anti-Christ leading to Armageddon, the Last Judgment by God, End of the Old World

Resources and Audio-Visual Material for Teaching:

While primary and secondary research material is essential to Narnia, and various reading activities and academic writing assignments are integral for grading, the students can be asked to watch the important scenes from the three

movies based on the series (The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe; Prince Caspian, and The Voyage of the Dawn Treader). The movies are a visual delight and stay true to the novels. They also provide additional contextual background to the series.

Coming to the Biblical Allegory, students can be asked to go through the major sections in the Holy Bible. Apart from some lectures and discussion on the Bible, the sections which connect to Narnia and form the core metaphor and narrative, could be read in the class. The students can also watch specific scenes from movies based on the Bible such as The Ten Commandments.

Assignments

At BA or MA level, students should be comfortable to discuss and present their ideas on various aspects dealing with The Chronicles of Narnia. The teacher can encourage discussions and focus on their active participation in the class, so that students give evidence-based opinions and understand the meta-text.

Apart from the Biblical allegory, the teacher should aim to have students realise that like most of the children's literature, Narnia was never merely meant for the purpose of entertainment but to teach children the virtues of good life and to revive their faith in goodness.

Potential Assignment Topics based on themes:

- How does a specific genre of literature (fantasy and children's literature) emerge?
- Why does a fantasy text so temporary in setting have universal values, which makes it popular in children throughout the world?
- Is there a role of religion and God in human life and children's life? What is it?
- What role does fantasy (real/literary) play in human or child psychology?
- What is the feminist and post-colonial criticism of this series?

Other Group Assignments:

- Students can be put in groups and assigned presentations dealing with application of the framework of fantasy, children's literature, etc to the series.
- For example, at the end of reading of all texts, students can describe each of the novels in one-two paragraphs.
- A peer-to-peer exercise can help all the students and see if they have understood the novels and are familiar with the plot, the story and the characters.

Observation and Discussion

While teaching Chronicles of Narnia, the parallel reading between the Bible and the Narnia books can be seen through discussions, group projects, and activities, which can help students understand the allegory better.

For example, the book of Genesis in the Bible and the relevant paragraphs in the chapter 'Founding of Narnia' (The Magician's Nephew) should be read together. Various books of the Bible such as the Romans, Proverbs and Psalms have references in Silver Chair, while the Corinthian, Gospel of Luke, Gospel of Matthew have similarities with The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, and several references to Revelations, and Exodus are seen in The Horse and his Boy, and The Last Battle.

The teacher should encourage the students to understand that C.S. Lewis did not aim to teach children Christianity with the Narnia series. He wanted to introduce similar ideas that would make it easier for children to accept Christianity (Lewis 1969:426).

Thus, while teaching Narnia, the teacher can plan lessons where there is a perfect balance between the allegorical study of Narnia, the literary study and promoting a unique classroom experience for the students. This is possible while teaching any fantasy book that has religious allegory and references.

Conclusion

The Chronicles of Narnia, with its setting in an alternative universe, and universal theme of good versus evil, can be a great way to introduce the Bible and allegory to BA or MA level students at any college in India. This series can help students understand metaphor and religious comparisons better, and help them see the relation between English literature with the Bible.

However, a successful experiment such as teaching fantasy literature needs patience and planning on teacher's part. In order to teach allegory through fantasy texts, a teacher can plan simple lessons – lectures and regular revision, open discussions, basic classroom tasks for students (e.g. finding symbolism, character sketches) and ending each session with a relevant movie clip – that ensure an active student-centric classroom.

It also means ensuring that primary reading materials, hand-outs, reference books are made easily available to all students, either through the library, or electronic medium. While lectures are critical to such a different course work, teachers can enhance a class by the use of multimedia and Audio-Visual aids whenever possible. Similarly, having student presentations that deal with the religious, allegorical or mythological aspects, can prove to be useful for everyone, and also empower students to become better learners.

Teachers can promote teaching other fantasy novels by promoting a detailed study of any work. A niche genre like fantasy can widen students' perspective and make them interested in research. It can also help students develop their opinions

and understanding of the subtext in literature and become innovative and creative, which is the need of our time.

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Assessing the Effectiveness of Individualized Instruction Method for Students in Government Schools in Kerala: A Case Study

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Abstract

Within the educational landscape of Kerala, there is a noticeable language competency gap between students attending government schools compared to their counterparts attending aided and CBSE schools. They are prone to show many language disorders including Dyslexia and Developmental Language Disorder (DLD). This research focuses on the comprehension skills of government school students and examines the significance and effectiveness of intervention based on personalized learning. The conventional traditional classroom instruction method takes an extended period and seems to be less effective compared to the personalized instruction for students who lack comprehension skills. Early intervention particularly focusing on each student's requirements facilitates overcoming these difficulties. Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligence lays the theoretical framework required for the study. Twelve students from government schools in Kerala were identified by the researcher using convenience sampling method. The researcher employed individualized instruction method to the students and the study's findings demonstrated that the children showed visible changes in their comprehension skills after administering personalized methods. These findings suggest that individualized instruction method can be an effective tool for supporting students who lack comprehension skills in language learning.

Keywords

Comprehension skills, ELT, Individualized instruction, Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligence, School Education, Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Introduction

Comprehension skills in language studies are of great significance, extending their influence far beyond academic pursuits into various facets of life. Proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking forms the core of effective communication. Comprehension skills are essential in developing the ability to articulate thoughts coherently and understand nuanced expressions. In academic settings, strong language skills are important for success across disciplines enabling critical analysis. Beyond the classroom, these abilities are useful in real-life environments because they improve a person's ability to communicate ideas clearly and relate to different communication styles. It is evident that, linguistic proficiency promotes empathy and cultural understanding in a globalised world, eliminating boundaries between people and communities. Language skills

are not just academic; they are essential for both personal and professional success. It helps to enhance all facets of life.

These skills are deeply rooted in language development and are an inevitable result of school education. As students advance in their schooling, they simultaneously develop a range of critical talents in addition to improving their language skills. They include problem-solving techniques, cooperation, effective communication, and critical thinking. Students are exposed to a variety of learning experiences in school, which provides them with the flexibility to navigate a range of subjects and real-world situations. A key component of this process is language development, which provides a means of communicating ideas, comprehending difficult ideas and having meaningful conversations. As a result, the combination of extensive skill development and language competency in the classroom creates a strong basis that enables students to succeed academically and prosper in the wider context of life. Unfortunately, a large proportion of students attending government schools in Kerala have large gaps in their basic skills, particularly when it comes to comprehension skills. This deficiency is especially noticeable in a variety of linguistic abilities, indicating a range of challenges within the educational system.

This research article explores individualized instruction methods for supporting students who lack comprehension skills in their language learning process. The result will provide an overview of the advantages of using a personalized instruction method for students, the challenges associated with implementing personalized instruction in language learning as it requires a lot more effort on teachers' part and future research directions in this field. The article will also present an intervention-based case study, investigating the effectiveness of individualized instruction method aid to improve the comprehension skills and overall language skills of students. The researcher initiates the study on improving comprehension skills in school children through individualized instruction by first conducting a thorough literature review to understand existing methodologies and gaps in current practices. Following the literature review, the researcher designs a detailed research plan, outlining the objectives, hypotheses, and methodology.

Theoretical Framework

This study makes use of Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences to investigate the language competency gap and the efficacy of personalized learning interventions among students in Kerala's government schools. According to Gardner's theory, people have several intelligences, each of which adds differently to their total cognitive capacity. Gardner further deliberates on intelligence as it

includes the knowledge that is acquired by speaking, writing, and reading in language. It entails knowing the right way to utilize language as well as the sequence and meaning of words in writing and speech. It requires comprehension of the social subtleties of a language, such as wordplay, idioms, and language-based humor. Language, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic are some of these intelligences. Linguistic intelligence, which includes the capacity to use language for both comprehension and expression, is particularly significant when it comes to language learning. This study investigates the effects of individualized learning interventions adapted to each student's unique strengths and intelligences, with a focus on government school children exhibiting comprehension challenges. Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding and addressing the language competency gap observed among government school students in Kerala. The idea that people learn differently and have distinct cognitive abilities is supported by this theory, which distinguishes between different types of intelligence, including linguistic intelligence. Gardner's theory is crucial to this study since it emphasizes the need for individualized learning interventions that are suited to each student's unique intelligences. Conventional teaching approaches frequently fall short of taking into account these individual variances especially when it comes to children who have developmental language disorder (DLD), dyslexia, or difficulties with comprehension. The research shows how customized teaching methods can considerably improve language comprehension by concentrating on individualized instruction that matches the unique intelligences of the students. Gardner's theory has practical significance, as demonstrated by the study results that students who received individualised teaching had noticeable improvements in their comprehension skills. This method not only meets students' current learning demands, but it also provides a well-defined theoretical foundation that can direct future policies and practices in education. It promotes a change from a one-size-fits-all educational model to one that values pupils' varied cognitive capacities. Thus, this theoretical framework offers a strong basis for creating inclusive and more successful teaching strategies that guarantee every student, regardless of starting language proficiency, has the chance to succeed.

Methodology

The research article adopts a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. As ethical concerns are of the greatest significance, getting the required approvals from school officials is imperative before engaging in any activity. In order to measure the current language and comprehension skills of a representative sample of students from

government schools, the researcher has conducted a pre-assessment test to assess the students. The outcomes of these pre-assessments guide the specific modifications to the individualized training, ensuring that it meets the unique requirements of every learner. The process of instruction is open to continuous assessment and adjustment as necessary. Post-assessment tests are used to quantify the effectiveness of the intervention, and data analysis is used to extract insights from the information acquired. The researcher takes an integrated approach to give a thorough assessment of the intervention's effects, taking into account variables including learning preferences, socioeconomic status, and other relevant influences. This methodology guarantees a comprehensive comprehension of the intervention's effectiveness in enhancing the students' language proficiency.

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of students in grades 7 and 8 from a selected government school in Kerala. Out of the total population of 59 students, 12 were identified by the researcher as having significant issues with comprehension skills. This experimental group, which constitutes the sample, includes five male and seven female students, all of whom use English as a second language. These students share similar social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. To assess the students' comprehension abilities, the researcher employed a combination of questionnaires and interactive assessments. The sample was selected using a convenience sampling method, allowing the researcher to readily engage participants who fit the study's criteria.

Data Collection

The researcher used qualitative methods, including questionnaires, observations, interviews, and student reflections, to examine social interactions, collaborative processes, and language development within the context of individualized instruction for English as a second language. A questionnaire was distributed to teachers in government schools to gather background data, identifying the unique learning needs of students struggling with second language acquisition. This included their learning objectives, weaknesses, preferred study techniques, and required English proficiency levels. The background data informed the focus of the intervention, which aimed to help students with limited language skills overcome barriers to learning English effectively through personalized instructional methods.

The pre and post-test

The pre and post - tests were employed as a quantitative method to evaluate the overall advancement of participants' comprehension skills. These tests were

designed to assess the knowledge acquired in a class across a group of students with difficulty with comprehension skills. The primary focus of these tests is to assess how students engage with the personalized instruction method and course material used for it. The data gathered from these assessments can identify students requiring additional support and point areas where teaching and learning approaches may need adjustment or enhancement. This case study was based on the observation of each student based on the following criteria for pre and post-test

1. Communication Skills
2. Interpersonal skills
3. Critical thinking
4. Decoding
5. Phonological Processing

The researcher has generated ten close-ended questions for pre-test and post-test assessments that focus on individualized learning. The same questionnaire was provided to the students before and after the intervention. The researcher observed a noticeable improvement in the condition of the students.

1. Communication Skills :

- ◆ Do you feel confident expressing your ideas in English during classroom activities? (Yes/No)
- ◆ Can you understand instructions given in English without needing additional help? (Yes/No)

2. Interpersonal Skills :

- ◆ Are you able to work effectively with your peers in group activities? (Yes/No)
- ◆ Do you find it easy to understand and respond to your classmates during discussions? (Yes/No)

3. Critical Thinking :

- ◆ Can you analyze a text and identify the main ideas on your own? (Yes/No)
- ◆ Are you able to evaluate different perspectives in a discussion? (Yes/No)

4. Decoding :

- ◆ Can you correctly identify and pronounce new words that you encounter? (Yes/No)
- ◆ Do you understand the meaning of new words based on the context of a sentence? (Yes/No)

5. Phonological Processing :

- ◆ Are you able to differentiate between similar-sounding words in English? (Yes/No)
- ◆ Can you follow along with spoken English, even if the speaker talks quickly? (Yes/No)

Individualized Instruction and Implementation

Individualized instruction is an educational approach that reshapes teaching methods and content to the unique needs and abilities of each student. Individualized instruction takes into account the fact that every student is unique and has varying learning styles, speeds, and strengths as opposed to traditional method. Using this approach, learning plans are personalized and instructional materials and tactics are modified based on the assessment of each student's current comprehension level. To meet the varied learning needs of students, individualized instruction may involve differentiated assignments, variable pace, personalized feedback, and the utilization of a variety of instructional tools. Through the ability for students to meet their individual learning needs and advance at their own speed, this method seeks to promote a more effective and personalized learning experience. Individualized instruction has a significant effect on students' academic performance. This approach promotes a more diverse and student-centered learning environment by meeting each student's individual learning needs. When material is presented in a way that suits each student's unique learning style, students are more likely to interact with it, which increases motivation and results in a deeper comprehension of the subject matter.

There are several benefits of implementing individualized instruction methods in schools, and these benefits help students have better learning experiences. In order to create a more inclusive and productive learning environment, this personalized method adapts teaching strategies to the particular requirements and learning preferences of each student. This method has the noteworthy advantage of being able to accommodate different skill levels in a single classroom.

There is less chance that any student will feel confused or left behind because they can learn at their own pace and receive extra help or challenges as needed. This promotes a good attitude towards learning in addition to improving academic achievement. Furthermore, as students take charge of their education, personalized instruction helps them develop a sense of freedom and responsibility.

In this study, the researcher carefully selected a sample of 12 out of 34 students, implementing personalized instructional techniques on a daily basis over a two-week period. Throughout this process, continuous assessment of the students' progress was conducted and despite an initial lack of enthusiasm, the students began to respond effectively within a few days. In a short amount of time, their comprehension skills improved noticeably because of their enhanced curiosity to investigate and comprehend the teaching methodologies. The researcher's ability to closely monitor each student was facilitated by the small group size, typically consisting of twelve students. Employing activity-based methods allowed students to use their full potential, with the researcher emphasizing personalized instructions. As each student varied in their learning pace and style, this approach proved instrumental in encouraging their active participation. By the end of the study period, all students exhibited visible enhancements in their abilities, demonstrating a remarkable transformation from the initial phase where they struggled to complete tasks independently to the final week where they confidently accomplished tasks without assistance.

Intervention Design

The researcher has implemented an individualized instruction approach that addresses the unique learning needs of each student, while incorporating Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. The intervention aims to reshape teaching methods and content, based on each student's individual learning styles, speeds, and strengths. By using Gardner's theory, which recognizes that students possess different types of intelligences, this plan will provide a more holistic and personalized learning experience. The approach was assessed through pre and post-test evaluations to measure the impact on students' comprehension skills.

Phase 1: Assessment and Planning

1. Pre-assessment Tests :

- ◆ Conduct pre-tests to evaluate students' current comprehension skills.
- ◆ Identify each student's dominant intelligences (e.g., linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic).

2. Student Profiling :

- ◆ Develop a profile for each student based on their pre-test results and identified intelligences.
- ◆ Determine each student's preferred learning style and areas of strength and weakness.

3. Customized Learning Plans :

- ◆ Create individualized learning plans tailored to the specific needs and abilities of each student.
- ◆ Incorporate a variety of instructional tools and activities that align with the student's dominant intelligences.

Phase 2 : Implementation

1. Instructional Strategies :

- ◆ Linguistic Intelligence: Use storytelling, reading, and writing activities for students who excel in language.
- ◆ Logical-Mathematical Intelligence: Introduce problem-solving tasks, logical puzzles, and experiments for students with strong analytical skills.
- ◆ Spatial Intelligence: Utilize visual aids, drawing, and model-building activities to support students with spatial strengths.
- ◆ Musical Intelligence: Incorporate music, rhythm, and songs in lessons for musically inclined students.
- ◆ Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence: Design physical activities, hands-on experiments, and role-playing scenarios for kinesthetic learners.
- ◆ Interpersonal Intelligence: Facilitate group work, peer teaching, and collaborative projects for socially aware students.
- ◆ Intrapersonal Intelligence: Encourage self-reflection, independent study, and goal-setting exercises for introspective students.

- ◆ Naturalistic Intelligence: Use nature-based activities, environmental studies, and outdoor learning for students interested in the natural world.

2. Differentiated Assignments:

- ◆ Provide assignments with varying levels of difficulty to match each student's skill level.
- ◆ Adjust the pace of instruction according to individual student progress.

3. Ongoing Monitoring and Feedback:

- ◆ Continuously assess students' progress through formative assessments and informal observations.
- ◆ Provide personalized feedback and make necessary adjustments to the learning plans.

Phase 3: Evaluation

1. Post-assessment Tests:

- ◆ Conduct post-tests to measure improvements in students' comprehension skills.
- ◆ Compare results with pre-assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of the individualized instruction.

Pre and Post-test Result and Analysis

Prior to the pre-test, members of the experimental group exhibited lower confidence levels and hesitated to actively engage in the assessment. Discomfort with group activities was evident, reflecting in comparatively lower test scores and indicating a need for targeted support and personalized instruction. Following the interventions and subsequent post-assessment, a noticeable transformation occurred among the students. Their confidence levels improved and passion for learning emerged. The students demonstrated an increased willingness to partake in various activities, encompassing both group exercises and comprehension assessment tests, showcasing a positive response to the implemented strategies. The researcher observed that the group of 12 students in the experimental group benefited from personalized learning over the traditional classroom approach. When they received individualized attention, they felt recognized, which resulted in noticeable gains. Their improved abilities included both comprehension and

critical evaluation of the material. During interactions, one student expressed the feeling of being acknowledged; highlighting that in conventional classrooms, there was limited opportunity to articulate personal thoughts. The experimental group systematically advanced through different stages of desired development in comprehension abilities. The individualized instructional approach proves to be an effective intervention tool for students facing language barriers, particularly in primary school settings. By using this approach, students could learn at their own pace according to their individual skill levels and experience a decrease in stress.

Conclusion

The research indicates that implementing a personalized individualized instruction method will be significant in enhancing students' comprehension skills. By integrating Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, the intervention not only addressed the academic needs of students but also engaged them in ways that resonated with their natural strengths and preferences. The key to the method's success is its customized approach, which takes into account each student's individual degree of difficulty and addresses their particular obstacles. In addition to proving effective in the study, this individualized education necessitates more research to determine how it affects learners in the long run. Further research needs to explore the precise characteristics of individualized courses that enhance their efficacy, giving insight into even the subtle features that distinguish them from other forms of education.

In a nutshell, this research work delved into the potential of the individualized instruction method as a means to overcome learning difficulties and improve the overall language skills of students, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds. The results underscored the significant improvement in comprehension skills among the experimental group that received individual attention.

These findings advocate the effectiveness of personalized instruction-based interventions in language learning. According to the research, children who had learning plans that matched their dominant intelligences had higher levels of engagement, comprehension, and perseverance in their academic pursuits. Students with strong linguistic intelligence, for example, performed well in reading and writing assignments, whereas students with strong bodily-kinesthetic intelligence performed well in practical work and physical activities. All students were able to make a meaningful connection with the subject because a variety of instructional tactics were included, such as visual aids for kids with spatial intelligence and musical activities for those who have a musical bent. In brief, the integration of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences into individualized

instruction proves to be a powerful method for improving comprehension skills. The study supports the idea that education should be as diverse as the learners it serves. One of the primary challenges faced by the researcher during the intervention was the time-consuming nature of implementing individualized instruction. This method required significant individual attention for each student, which posed difficulties for a single researcher to manage effectively. The sample size could have been expanded if the research was conducted by a team. However, to maintain the integrity of the study and ensure accurate conclusions, the most suitable samples were carefully selected. Given the potential difficulties in increasing manpower for similar future studies, the research suggests integrating AI tools to address this limitation. By employing AI, a single instructor can efficiently manage a larger sample size, thus optimizing the intervention process without compromising the quality of instruction or data. As education enters the era of artificial intelligence, it becomes imperative to explore how AI can augment support in various areas, including speech and language therapy. Future studies should not only expand the scope of these interventions to encompass larger sample sizes and extended intervention periods but also explore the ways in which AI can be used to provide individualized attention, thereby further enhancing educational outcomes for students, especially those facing learning difficulties.

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**Developing Communication Skills for Enhanced Performance in Group
Discussions in ESL: A Study with the Students of Chennai
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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to establish the effects of enhancing the learners' vocabulary and communication skills on their GD performance during job interviews in the milieu of English as a Second Language. The study involved 60 undergraduate Engineering students who initially underwent a pretest conducted to determine the degree of existing competency and a post-test after the intervention. After a four-week intervention, the students were given six training components to improve their vocabulary and communication skills. A summative assessment was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the intervention on the subjects in the milieu of communicating effectively in Group Discussions. The findings showed a positive shift in clarity, persuasiveness, and proportion of time spent engaging with others, suggesting that the strategies implemented work for improving GD performance.

Keywords

Experimental Study, Control Group, Experimental Group, Intervention, Grouping, clarity, persuasiveness, Nonverbal Communication

Introduction

Group Discussions (GDs) are important part of the job interviews especially those occupations that involve interactions with other people and especially in teams (Smith & Brown, 2021). GDs assess how a candidate thinks, solves problems, and how he or she will be able to communicate with workmates (Johnson & Miller, 2018). Vocabulary and communications skills are two areas in GD assessment which recruiters ensure that the candidates are good at. The enhancement of terms helps in expressing ideas in better ways (Morrison, 2020) and communicates ideas effectively (Lee & Wang, 2019). In doing so, this paper identifies how vocabulary enrichment and communication development impacts on the GD performance of ESL Learners, and; therefore, offers insights in relation to preparation.

Background of the Study

The subjects were the students of undergraduate engineering courses doing either Bachelors in Engineering or Bachelors in Technology at Chennai Institute of Technology, Kundrathur, Chennai. Totally, 60 students were chosen as the

samples for the study based on a common assessment. The chosen subjects were from diverse academic domains of studies like Computer Science and Engineering, Electronics and Communication Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, Mechanical Engineering, Mechatronics Engineering and so on. The duration of these engineering courses would be four academic years. The age group of the subjects was between 19 and 22.

These students will usually attend job interviews at the end of the third year of their studies, which often involve Group Discussion as part of the selection process. The students need to demonstrate effective communication skills during the GD round, but many struggle due to various factors. Previous studies by the researchers have found that the primary obstacle for these students is their poor command over vocabulary, which hinders their ability to contribute ideas in Group Discussion. Therefore, there is a need to improve vocabulary skills and competency in communication skills to enhance their performance in communicating effectively during job interviews and this is the context that this study has been set in.

Objectives

- a. To identify the impact of vocabulary enrichment in communicating effectively during Group Discussions for job interviews.
- b. To assess the efficacy of the intervention developed and executed by the researcher in order to develop the communication skills of the students towards a better performance in GD.
- c. To provide practical recommendations for candidates to improve their performance in GD through targeted interventions.

Statement of Problem

Though Group Discussions are one of the vital aspects of job interviews, most of the candidates are unable to put forward their opinions in front of the panel due to lack of proper communication skills and this research relates to how language expansion and communication abilities may enhance the candidates' performance while participating in GD.

Literature Review

Effective communication relies on strong vocabulary competency. Words are essential for conveying ideas and making them more compelling. Gass and Selinker (2008) emphasize the importance of using a diverse word store to think and communicate ideas succinctly and clearly, preventing misunderstandings. Thus, a thorough and skillful use of language in group discussions can improve persuasiveness and intelligibility of the information being shared, ensuring a diverse and effective communication environment.

According to Cunningham and Stanovich (1998), reading a lot and being exposed to a variety of textual resources are good ways to increase your vocabulary. According to their research, reading often increases comprehension and broadens one's vocabulary (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). Furthermore, Hulstijn (2001) emphasizes the usefulness of vocabulary learning applications like Quizlet and Memrise, which gamify and use spaced repetition to help users retain vocabulary (Hulstijn, 2001).

Further, while looking at the acquisition process of new vocabulary, it could be understood that the acquisition of new vocabulary involves not only learning words but also using them in appropriate contexts. Research shows that using new vocabulary in speech and writing improves learning and retention (Schmitt, 2000). Practicing vocabulary in GD settings and keeping a personal word list can enhance vocabulary application. In addition to that, once vocabulary competency is achieved, learners must communicate using these skills to retain and improve their communication skills.

It is empirical to document that clear ideas are exchanged, with a focus on both the verbal and nonverbal contributions from all parties involved, in communication. According to Adler et al., one can properly participate in GD by organizing their thoughts and figuring out how to communicate them (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Proctor, 2016). It is also essential not to ignore the fact that active listening is crucial for paying close attention to and understanding messages Anyao (2012). Therefore, communication management is crucial since verbal communication is often accompanied by nonverbal cues like body language and gestures (Knapp & Hall, 2010).

Above all, the components discussed so far, nonverbal communication, including body language, posture, and eye contact, is crucial for conveying and understanding messages during discussions. These cues boost involvement and help GDs achieve their communication encounter goals, according to Knapp and Hall (2010).

The Study

Methodology

Three major methodologies were used as tools in this study. They are interaction with the subjects, graded assignments and personal interview with the subjects. Further, data collection and data analysis were also conducted to determine the variations in competency and performance levels of the subjects.

Pretest Analysis

Participants

The pretest included all the 60 participants that were selected to observe the effects of the programme based on a common assessment test. Among the subjects chosen for the study, there were 34 boys and 26 girls. The number of subjects educated through vernacular medium in school was 17 and the number of subjects educated through English medium was 43. Thus, it had been ensured that there was diversity in the medium of study of the subjects as well as the board of school education. The control group was required to go through a standard GD exercise while the experimental group was made to do the same after which no further intervention was done on them.

Pretest Assessment

The subjects were divided into groups of 6 members each and so there were 10 groups altogether for the discussion that was conducted for pretest analysis. It was ensured that there were equal number of subjects in both control group (CG) and the experimental group (EG). So, it had been finalized that 30 subjects should be allocated to CG and the other 30 subjects were allocated to SG. Thus, there were 5 discussion groups of 6 members each both in CG and EG. This method of grouping made it possible to find out whether there were any differences between the two groups, before the intervention was implemented as any differences would have made it difficult for the researcher to ascertain if the intervention had any impact when results were being analyzed. A pretest was therefore done to ascertain their competency levels with regard to the initial stage.

The study involved subjects in both CG and EG taking GD assessments on three topics for which a duration of 5 minutes was given to the subjects for preparation. The preparatory time was followed by a discussion on a nontechnical topic (Topic: After graduation, should one work in the field of his or her own studies, or can take up any job that gives a good income?). Participants' interaction was evaluated, and scores were recorded based on clarity, persuasiveness, and engagement. Activity completion measures were collected to establish data points of reference. Participants also completed a self-administered questionnaire to assess their perceived vocabulary and communication competence. Further, the participants also filled the self-administered questionnaire for their perceived level of vocabulary and communication competence.

Observations from the pretest

S.No.	Particulars	SCG	SEG	SCG%	SEG%
1	Clarity	19	14	63.3	46.7
2	Persuasiveness	17	11	56.7	36.7
3	Engagement	20	19	66.7	63.3
4	Self-Assessment	18	12	60	40

Table 1: The observations from pretest

The study found that the subjects in the experimental group (SEG) had poorer clarity and communication skills compared to the subjects in the control group (SCG). The experimental group also had lower persuasiveness, suggesting difficulty in persuading others. The interaction levels between the two groups were similar before the interventions, indicating equal interaction. Self-administered questionnaires revealed that the experimental group had lower perceived competence in vocabulary and communication compared to the control group. The chart given below shows the observations found in the pretest.

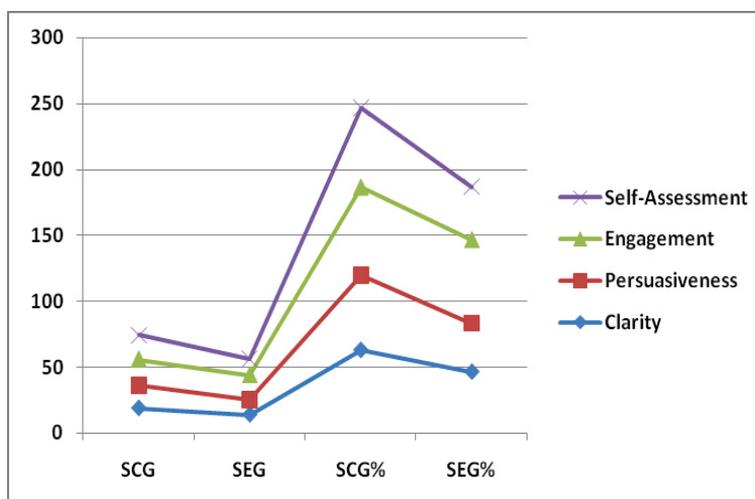


Chart1: Pretest – Observations

Intervention

Duration

The intervention was implemented over four weeks and during this time subjects were engaged in the process of vocabulary building as well as direct

communication practice. The subjects participated in weekly activities focused on vocabulary development and communication skills training, including listening, speaking, and body language. This systematically developed and consolidated knowledge, ensuring balanced development of language and interpersonal communication skills.

Vocabulary Enrichment: Vocabulary apps

The experimental group undertook a vocabulary improvement exercise that was developed to construct and consolidate their language via the following activities. An essential part of it was to incorporate study applications for expanding vocabulary into daily practice, such as Quizlet. These applications provided the participants with a clear and engaging form of focused learning by engaging all participants who created and revised unique flash cards pertinent to the selected target vocabulary. Since participants used the given digital tools on a daily basis, they were able to enhance their capability to recall the new words.

Reading Assignments

Besides using digital tools the participants were also given weekly reading assignments to give them a broad spectrum of readings to peruse. These assignments included such types of materials as articles of different time periods, books, both classical and modern, and articles of academic journals. This exposure to varied content was beneficial in a way that it enabled participants to come across and understand new informal vocabulary in other situations which would enable efficient use of complex informal language.

Personal Word Lists

To supplement the three main activities used for promoting growth in expressive vocabulary, the participants also kept and used their personal word list. The list also comprised of words which they came across while reading and using the applications. In addition, the participants were able to incorporate the words after using it in various mock GD scenarios like debates and discussions. Besides enhancing their understanding this process also helped them to enhance the usage of newly acquired words in practicing communication.

Communication Skills Development

The experimental group underwent a structured programme focusing on improving communication skills through weekly workshops. These workshops were designed to enhance listening, fluent speaking, and body language. The group developed active listening skills, enhancing empathy and thicker dialog. The programme also focused on articulation activities, fine-tuning participants' information presentation skills. Non-verbal communication, such as body

language and facial expressions, was explored for encoding and decoding meaning and relationship building. These workshops were an actual-life application of the semester's learning.

Workshops

To enhance the participants' experiences, the participants experienced role-play where they acted out some GD scenarios. These exercises gave the participants an opportunity to put to practice the skills learnt in real life situations. They were able to get the first-hand experience on how to handle the actual time communication process by handling different roles and discussing various topics. After each of the sessions that were conducted in the form of role-plays, there was healthy feedback given that enabled the subjects to evaluate their performance, and their strategies for the next session of the role-play. This cycle of practice and correcting not only made concepts more imprinted in their mind but also helped to gain confidence of communicating something.

Role-Playing Exercises:

Taken together, it can be stated that structured workshops and role-playing training sessions allowed the experimental group to develop effective inter personal communication skills and improve the effectiveness of one's interaction in the intimate and professional spheres.

Post-Test Analysis

Post-Test Assessment

During the post-test, the same flow and process used in the pretest had been adapted. However, the duration for preparation after the topic had been given was fixed as 3 minutes against the duration of 5 minutes given during the pretest analysis. In the post test, students were given a single technical topic for GD (Topic: Impact of 'Internet of Things (IoT)' on our lives) and the duration of the GD was 10 minutes. Both control and experimental groups were assessed based on clarity, persuasiveness, and engagement in the task. A short post-test online survey was also conducted to gauge self-perceived improvements in vocabulary and communication skills.

Observations from the post-test

S.No.	Particulars	NSCG	SEG	SCG%	SEG%
1	Clarity	25	28	83.33	93.33
2	Persuasiveness	22	27	73.33	90

3	Engagement	26	28	86.67	93.33
4	Self-Assessment	24	29	80	96.67

Table 2: The observations from post-test

The study analyzed the clarity and persuasiveness scores of the experimental group (NSEG) compared to the control group (NSCG). The experimental group showed 46.7% increase in clarity rising from 14 to 28, while the control group showed 20% increase rising from 19 to 25. The score in persuasiveness of the subjects also improved, with increased levels in engagement too. However, the increase in clarity and persuasiveness was not as dramatic. A post-test questionnaire revealed an improvement in confidence levels in vocabulary and communication skills among the experimental group. The results are presented in the chart below.

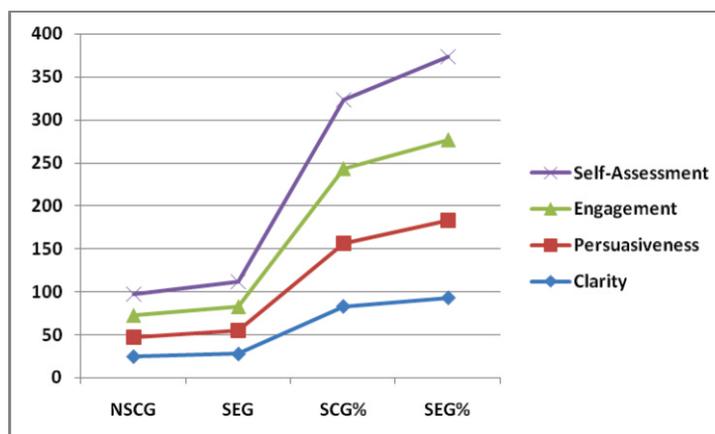


Chart 2: Post-test – Observations

Variation in Performance Levels

S.No.	Particulars	SCGPRT	SCGPT	DIP	SEGPRT	SEGPT	DIP
1	Clarity	63.3	83.33	20	46.7	93.33	46.63
2	Persuasiveness	56.7	73.33	16.63	36.7	90	53.3
3	Engagement	66.7	86.67	20	63.3	93.33	30
4	Self-Assessment	60	80	20	40	96.67	56.67

Table 3: The variation in performance levels between the pretest and the post-test

The study found that the experimental group showed a lower standard deviation from pretest to post-test, indicating a more consistent improvement in clarity in communication. This was observed in terms of the number of subjects in the experimental group in the post-test (SEGPT) compared to the control group (SCGPT). The standard deviation also reduced for the experimental group after training compared to the performance before training (SEGPR), indicating uniform improvement in persuasiveness. However, the decrease in engagement was lower than other components, indicating moderate improvement and consistency. The following chart shows the variations in performance levels observed between the pretest and post-test.

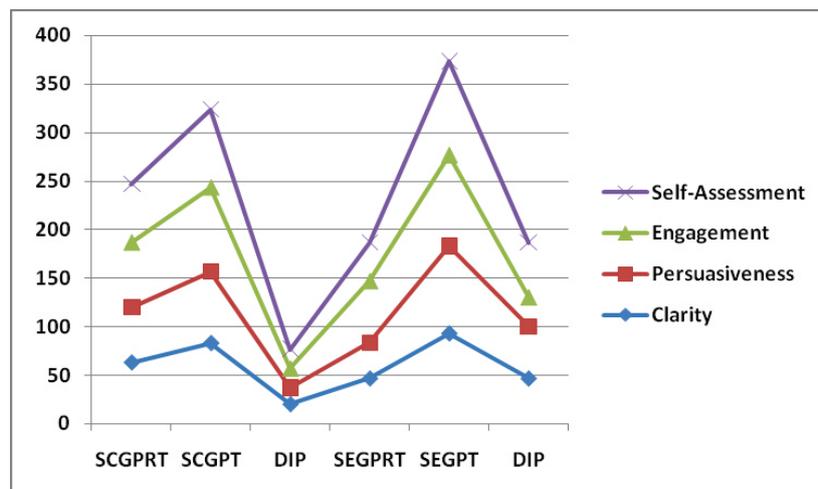


Chart 3: The variation in performance levels between the pretest and the post-test

Results

While comparing the difference in percentage between the number of subjects in control group (NSCGDP) and the difference of percentage in the number of subjects in experimental group (NSEGDP) it could be observed that the improvement among the number of subjects in experimental group (IEG) is found to be greater than the improvement in the number of subjects in control group (ICG).

S.No.	Particulars	NSCGDP	ICG	NSEGDP	IEG
1	Clarity	20	1.316	46.63	2
2	Persuasiveness	16.63	1.293	53.3	2.45
3	Engagement	20	1.3	30	1.47
4	Self-Assessment	20	1.33	56.67	2.417

Table 4: Improvement observed in Experimental group

The study demonstrates that new vocabulary and targeted approaches to improving communication skills significantly enhance GD performance. The test group showed significant improvements in clarity, persuasiveness, and student engagement, proving the effectiveness of the interventions. The use of vocabulary apps and readers' choices of books led to an increased vocabulary bank. Participants applied the new vocabulary in simulated GD scenarios, resulting in clearer and more persuasive communication. Workshops and role plays improved active listening, oral communication, and body language. Positive changes in group discussion behavior also improved performance. The study suggests that incorporating lexical acquisition and communication skills into study and preparation can improve performance in GD which would be helpful for success in job interviews to a certain extent.

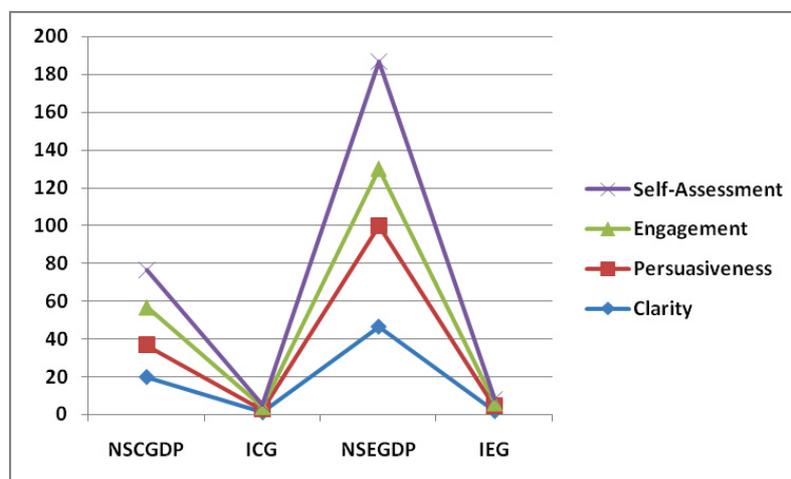


Chart 4: Improvement observed in Experimental group

Discussion

The study investigates the impact of improving vocabulary and communication skills on English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' performance in group discussions at job interviews. The study was conducted involving 60 undergraduate engineering students of Chennai Institute of Technology aged between 19 and 22; who received a four-week intervention. The aim of the study was to improve these students' vocabulary skills and enhance their communication abilities in GDs during job interviews.

The study utilized methods such as interaction with subjects, graded assignments, and personal interviews to achieve desired research outcomes. Data collection and analysis were conducted to determine variations in competency and performance levels among the subjects. The study conducted a formative assessment on four components, revealing that the experimental group (SEG) had a lower level of communication clarity (46.7%) and persuasiveness (36.7%),

despite similar interaction levels to the standard group (SCG). This was attributed to a lower level of vocabulary and persuasiveness among the subjects.

The formative assessment revealed that a four-week intervention was necessary to overcome communication obstacles in GD. The intervention included six components: vocabulary apps, reading assignments, personal wordlists, communication skills development, workshops, and role plays.

After the 4 week intervention, a summative assessment had been conducted in order to determine the efficacy of the intervention in producing the desired outcome in SEG. The summative assessment concluded that the subjects showed a good improvement in terms of clarity (93% against 83.33 % in SCG) and persuasiveness (90% against 73.3 in SEG) in communication, besides recording a rise in score in the context of using vocabulary.

Limitations

The researchers encountered primarily two limitations during the study. They are: integrating subjects from different backgrounds into a single track and ensuring their interest in reading assignments and personal wordlists. Initially, subjects were less engaged, but after mentoring sessions, they showed interest. Further, this intervention was finalized based on the needs of the subjects chosen for this study and so it is necessary to check the needs of the subjects and check the suitability of this task.

Scope for further research

In this study, the research was conducted with the view to improve the communication skills of the subjects in GD for job interview. Further studies can be conducted focusing on developing communication skills in the milieu of one on one conversation in the HR and Technical interviews.

Conclusion

Working on the vocabulary and communication skills is helpful in succeeding in group discussions (GDs) during the job interview. The research also clearly demonstrates that specific enhancements in these areas are effective and sometimes more effective than traditional methods of lecturing. Learned participants who make conscious efforts to expand the use of their vocabulary and work on developing communication skills are those who record mortal improvements in written and oral expression and how they conduct themselves in the company of their peers. A job candidate is therefore encouraged to do some vocabulary building during GD preparation and also some focused communication skills practice. In this way, they can obtain better performance levels and create a more cumbersome image during job interviews and subsequently better employment opportunities.

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Painting with Words Enriching English Language Skills through Colourful Idioms and Phrases

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Abstract

Incorporating color idioms into English language instruction can be a vibrant and engaging way to enhance learning, especially for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, including those from rural areas or with strong mother-tongue influences. Color idioms, which use colors to convey emotions, concepts, and cultural nuances, offer a dynamic and contextually relevant approach to teaching. This article explores various strategies to effectively use color idioms in the classroom to improve vocabulary development, comprehension, and intercultural awareness.

One engaging activity is "Color Idiom Charades," where students act out idioms while their classmates guess the meanings. For example, when acting out "feeling blue," a student might display sadness, helping peers associate the idiom with the corresponding emotion. This interactive method not only makes learning more enjoyable but also helps students internalize idiomatic meanings in relation to real-world emotional or situational contexts.

Another creative approach is "Idiom Color Charts," where students create visual representations of idioms using drawings or collage techniques. For instance, illustrating "green with envy" through a character looking visibly jealous helps link abstract expressions to clear images, making meanings easier to grasp and remember.

By integrating these creative and interactive activities, educators can make lessons more memorable and engaging. Importantly, using color idioms not only expands students' vocabulary but also helps bridge linguistic and cultural gaps, offering a familiar yet engaging method to navigate language learning. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of idiomatic expressions, while encouraging greater cross-cultural dialogue and sensitivity.

Keywords

Color idioms, Intercultural awareness, Visual learning, Linguistic diversity, Vocabulary acquisition.

Introduction

Imagine walking into a classroom where the walls are not just lined with traditional educational posters but are instead brought to life with vibrant hues, each representing a unique idiomatic expression. This classroom becomes a living gallery of language, where every color tells a story, each one rich with meaning and cultural significance.

One wall might be awash in soothing blues and greens, displaying idioms like "feeling blue" and "green with envy," while another is painted in bright yellows

and reds, showcasing idioms such as "seeing red" or "feeling like a million dollars." In this setting, the classroom is transformed into a visual playground where idiomatic expressions take on tangible form, allowing students to see and experience the language in a dynamic way. Research suggests that integrating visual elements into language learning can significantly enhance students' understanding and retention (Paivio, 1986).

For students, particularly those from rural areas or with strong mother-tongue influences, this visual, interactive approach to learning idioms can make all the difference. Instead of memorizing abstract meanings, they can connect emotionally and visually to these idioms, making them easier to understand and recall. The idioms painted on the walls become more than just decoration; they become powerful learning tools that enable students to engage with the language in a deeper, more meaningful way.

In essence, the classroom transforms into a rich tapestry of cultural and linguistic exploration, where each idiom becomes an adventure into the world of language. This visual approach to teaching idioms not only enhances vocabulary acquisition but also fosters a creative, immersive environment where students can explore the subtleties of English in a memorable, engaging manner.

The Power and Benefits of Teaching Color Idioms

Color idioms offer a wealth of opportunities for language learners. They are much more than simple phrases used to enhance vocabulary—they provide a lens into the emotional and cultural undercurrents that shape language. When students learn idioms like "green with envy," "feeling blue," or "seeing red," they are not only learning new vocabulary but are also diving into the cultural and emotional landscapes that give these phrases their depth. According to Krashen (1982), understanding the cultural context is essential for effective second language acquisition.

For example, "green with envy" conveys more than just jealousy—it paints a vivid emotional picture. Similarly, "feeling blue" expresses sadness in a way that transcends the literal meaning of the word "blue." "Seeing red" captures the intensity of anger, allowing students to feel and visualize the emotion behind the expression. By understanding these deeper emotional contexts, students grasp more than just the definitions of idioms—they learn how colors in language reflect human emotions, and how those emotions are interpreted in English-speaking cultures.

In this way, teaching color idioms goes beyond vocabulary. It serves as an entry point into the emotional, cultural, and psychological aspects of language that can

sometimes be hard to teach through traditional methods. Students not only build their vocabulary but also begin to develop a deeper intuition for the language, understanding how words and phrases are imbued with cultural significance. This understanding opens the door to greater linguistic and cultural fluency, allowing students to engage with the language on multiple levels.

Engaging Classroom Activities

To make the learning of color idioms even more engaging, educators can develop a range of interactive and creative activities. These activities ensure that students not only memorize the idioms but also understand their use in context, fostering a more intuitive grasp of the language.

One innovative idea is the "Color Idiom Wall," where students can contribute idioms related to different colors. This activity can be expanded by encouraging students to include idioms from their own native languages, enriching the learning experience by introducing cross-cultural dialogue and comparison. This multilingual approach helps students appreciate both the similarities and differences in how different cultures use color to express emotions or concepts. Collaborative learning strategies have been shown to enhance engagement and retention among students (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

Another engaging activity could be role-playing scenarios where students act out idiomatic expressions. For example, a student could "see red" by acting angry in a skit, while another might act "tickled pink" by showing delight. These activities provide a more concrete understanding of abstract concepts, enabling students to internalize the idioms by experiencing them in action.

Colorful Storytelling is yet another way to engage students creatively. In this exercise, students write short stories or dialogues that incorporate specific color idioms. By embedding these expressions into narratives, they practice using them in context, enhancing their ability to recall and apply these idioms naturally in conversation. Such storytelling not only builds language skills but also nurtures creativity and deepens their emotional connection to the idioms they are learning.

Each of these activities engages students on multiple levels—visually, emotionally, and cognitively—making the learning experience both effective and enjoyable.

Connecting To Cultural Context

Idiomatic expressions do not exist in isolation. They are deeply tied to the cultural values and social norms of the communities that use them. Teaching idioms provides an excellent opportunity to introduce students to the cultural nuances that influence language use.

For example, the idiom "white lie" reflects cultural attitudes about politeness and social harmony. It demonstrates how certain truths can be bent in the name of kindness. Similarly, "black sheep" highlights ideas about family dynamics and societal expectations. These idioms provide more than just language lessons—they offer insights into the cultural underpinnings of English-speaking societies, allowing students to develop a richer understanding of how language and culture are intertwined.

Cross-Cultural comparisons are an invaluable tool in this context. By comparing English color idioms with those from students' native cultures, educators can broaden students' understanding of idiomatic expressions while fostering linguistic and cultural appreciation. Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions theory illustrates how language reflects underlying cultural values and social norms.

- **Activity:** Have students research and present idioms related to colors from their own languages, comparing and contrasting them with English idioms. These discussions can lead to fascinating insights about how different cultures perceive and express emotions through language.

Similarly, exploring the cultural significance of colors in different societies can deepen students' understanding of idiomatic expressions.

- **Activity:** Organize a class project where students research the meaning of colors in various cultures and present their findings, linking them to the color idioms they are learning in English.

Enhancing Vocabulary and Intuition

By consistently integrating color idioms into lessons, educators can help students build a more intuitive grasp of English. The vivid imagery associated with colors helps anchor new vocabulary in memorable ways, making it easier for students to recall and use these expressions naturally. As students become more familiar with the emotional weight that different colors carry, they develop a deeper sensitivity to how idiomatic language functions in everyday conversation.

A Dynamic Learning Experience

In essence, using color idioms in English instruction transforms the learning experience into a lively, engaging journey. By infusing lessons with color and creativity, educators can turn abstract language concepts into tangible learning experiences. This approach not only aids in vocabulary acquisition but also fosters a deeper connection to the language, making learning both effective and enjoyable.

Activity Based Learning For English Vocabulary Through Idioms

Dewey (1938) argues that experiential learning is vital for meaningful education, which is evident in the engagement generated through activity-based learning approaches. By linking color idioms to cultural contexts and incorporating cross-cultural comparisons, educators create a rich, immersive environment where students can explore language and culture hand in hand. This approach helps students not only master the vocabulary but also gain insights into the emotional and cultural significance of the language they are learning.

Introduce Basic Color Vocabulary

Before students can grasp idiomatic expressions tied to colors, they need to be confident with basic color vocabulary. This foundational step ensures that students can easily associate colors with their meanings.

Activity: Color-Matching Game

In this game, the teacher provides students with a set of color cards and corresponding objects or images (for example, "red" might match with an apple, "blue" with the sky). The objective is for students to quickly match the color card with the correct object or image. This activity helps solidify color associations, ensuring that students are comfortable identifying and naming different colors in English. Once the basic vocabulary is mastered, the transition to idiomatic use becomes smoother.

- Additional Twist You could have students explain why they think certain colors are associated with the objects, opening a discussion about cultural associations with colors (e.g., red for love or danger).

Explain Color Idioms and Phrases

Now that the students know their colors, it's time to dive into idiomatic expressions. This is where the meanings behind phrases like "feeling blue" or "green with envy" are introduced, with examples that place these idioms in real-life contexts.

Activity: Short Stories or Dialogues

Now that the students know their colors, it's time to dive into idiomatic expressions. This is where the meanings behind phrases like "feeling blue" or "green with envy" are introduced, with examples that place these idioms in real-life contexts.

Present students with a series of short stories or dialogues where the idioms naturally occur. For example, you could read out a story about someone feeling

sad after a bad day at work, and then use "feeling blue" in the description of their emotions. Discuss the meaning of the idiom with the class afterward, ensuring they understand how the expression ties to the emotion or concept.

Follow-Up: Ask students to explain the idiom in their own words, perhaps in small groups or pairs, and see if they can think of a time they've felt "blue" or "green with envy." This makes the learning personal and relatable.

Visual Learning Aids

Colors are inherently visual, so it makes sense to use visual aids to teach idioms. These aids can be anything from flashcards to digital slides, each representing the idiomatic expression in a way that connects to students' emotions.

Activity : Visual Representation of Idioms

Show students images or illustrations that bring color idioms to life. For instance, an image of a person looking angry with a red backdrop can visually represent "seeing red," while an image of someone looking sad with a blue tint could represent "feeling blue." After showing the image, ask students to explain what emotion or idea they think the idiom conveys and why.

Interactive Element : Students can be invited to draw or find images that they think best capture the essence of a particular idiom. This gives them a creative outlet while reinforcing the idiomatic meaning.

Role-Playing to Practice Idioms

Nothing solidifies language learning quite like using it in action. Through role-playing, students get to experience idioms in use, making them far more memorable.

Activity : Role-Playing Scenarios

Divide the class into pairs or small groups and assign each group a different color idiom. Students will create a brief skit where they incorporate the idiom in a real-world situation. For example, one pair might act out a scene where someone gets angry at losing a game, allowing them to say, "I'm seeing red!" Another group might act out a scene where someone is sad after a long, difficult day and says, "I'm feeling blue."

Why It Works: This activity engages emotional and physical memory—by acting out the idiom, students not only hear and say it but also 'feel' the emotion behind it, making the idiom easier to recall in the future.

Games for Vocabulary Development

Games are an effective way to engage students in a fun, low-pressure environment while reinforcing language learning. Color idioms can be the basis for several competitive or collaborative games.

Activity : Idiom Scavenger Hunt

This is a fun, active game where students are tasked with finding color idioms hidden around the classroom or within texts, books, or websites. The teacher might place flashcards with idioms written on them around the room, and students have to find and explain the meaning of each one.

Follow-Up: Once students find the idiom, they must use it in a sentence or describe a real-life situation where it would be appropriate. This reinforces both the search for idioms in everyday language and contextual usage.

Variation: You can turn this into a competition where teams race to find and explain the most idioms correctly, making the learning process fast-paced and exciting.

Cross - Cultural Connections

Language learners often come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, and discussing how different cultures use color in idiomatic expressions is both educational and inclusive.

Activity : Cross-Cultural Idiom Comparisons

Ask students to research and share idioms related to colors from their native languages. Students can present their findings, comparing the idioms with English equivalents. For example, in some cultures, white might symbolize purity or mourning, while in others it might represent celebration. Similarly, colors like red might symbolize love, luck, or danger, depending on the culture.

Follow-Up: Students can create posters or charts that visually represent idioms from different cultures, exploring both the linguistic and cultural significance of color. This kind of activity not only enriches their language learning but also fosters an appreciation of cultural diversity and how language reflects culture.

Creative Writing Exercises

Writing exercises encourage students to actively use color idioms in their own stories, helping them practice in a creative context and ensuring they understand the idioms' meanings in a broader narrative framework.

Activity : Color Idiom Stories

In this exercise, students write short stories or dialogues that must incorporate a certain number of color idioms. You could give each student a list of 5-10 idioms and challenge them to create a story where the idioms make sense in context.

Example Prompt: "Write a story about a character who has a day full of ups and downs, using at least five color idioms to describe their emotions and experiences."

Why It Works: Writing encourages deep cognitive processing. By using idioms in a narrative context, students practice not only recalling the idioms but also embedding them in meaningful situations.

Classroom Presentations

Presentations encourage public speaking and deepen comprehension, as students must explain both the idiom and its cultural context. This can be a great way to celebrate language diversity while learning English.

Activity : International Idiom Wall

After the cross-cultural idiom activity, students can contribute idioms from their native languages to an "Idiom Wall" in the classroom. Each idiom should include an explanation of its meaning and how it compares to an English equivalent. For instance, students might bring in the French idiom "avoir la pêche," which means to feel great (literally, "to have the peach"), and compare it to the English idiom "feel like a million dollars."

Why It Works: This activity promotes cultural exchange and emphasizes that idiomatic expressions, while unique to each language, often reflect shared human experiences. It also gives students a sense of ownership and pride as they contribute to the classroom environment.

Colorful Storytelling

Students practice integrating color idioms into their everyday language by crafting original stories where these expressions are naturally used.

Activity: Storytelling Using Color Idioms

In this exercise, students either write or orally tell a story using color idioms in context. The story can be simple, like a personal anecdote, or more elaborate, like a fictional tale. For example, a student could describe a day at school where they were "green with envy" of a friend's new toy, or a holiday where they were "feeling blue" because of bad weather.

Why It Works: Storytelling is a powerful tool in language learning, encouraging students to use the idioms actively and think creatively about how they fit into real-world narratives. It also fosters a sense of accomplishment when they successfully use idioms in a meaningful way.

Conclusion

Integrating color idioms into English language instruction not only enriches the educational experience but also transforms the classroom into a vibrant tapestry of linguistic and cultural exploration. By leveraging these idiomatic expressions, educators can craft a learning environment that is both comprehensive and engaging, addressing the unique needs of students from various backgrounds, particularly those with strong mother-tongue influences or rural origins.

When educators immerse students in the colorful world of idiomatic expressions, they effectively bring language learning to life in a dynamic and multifaceted way. Color idioms serve as a bridge between abstract linguistic concepts and tangible, relatable experiences. They offer students a vivid and memorable way to grasp the subtleties of English, moving beyond mere vocabulary to embrace the rich emotional and cultural layers embedded in idiomatic language.

Through interactive activities such as "Color Idiom Charades," "Idiom Color Charts," and "Colorful Storytelling," students can engage with idioms in ways that are both imaginative and practical. These activities make abstract concepts concrete, allowing students to internalize and use idioms naturally and confidently. The visual and kinesthetic elements of these exercises help anchor new vocabulary in memorable contexts, facilitating deeper understanding and recall.

Moreover, by exploring the cultural significance of color idioms, students gain valuable insights into the societal norms and values of English-speaking cultures. Activities like comparing idioms across languages or discussing the cultural meanings of colors provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of the language. This cross-cultural exploration fosters empathy and appreciation, enriching students' global perspectives and enhancing their ability to navigate diverse linguistic landscapes. Repetition and reinforcement through engaging games, creative writing, and peer interactions further solidify students' grasp of color idioms. Regular practice and constructive feedback ensure that these expressions become an integral part of their linguistic repertoire. By continuously revisiting and applying idioms in various contexts, students develop a more intuitive and confident command of English.

Ultimately, by weaving color idioms into the fabric of language instruction, educators create a classroom environment where learning transcends traditional methods. It becomes a vibrant journey of discovery, where each idiom adds a splash of color to the students' linguistic palette. This approach not only enhances their proficiency but also fosters a deeper, more intuitive connection to the language, making their educational experience both effective and memorable.

In conclusion, embracing the world of color idioms transforms English language instruction into a dynamic and enriching adventure. It invites students to explore the expressive power of language in a way that is both engaging and profound, guiding them toward greater linguistic and cultural insight. Through this colorful journey, students are not just learning English—they are painting their own pathways to proficiency and understanding in a truly memorable way.

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Gamification Tools for English Classrooms and their multidisciplinary significance - An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

In the context of English language teaching, Gamification is one of the most popular themes currently being discussed. This is especially true after the COVID-19 pandemic, where its relevance was greatly felt and immediate attention was taken to consider the significance of its implementation to ensure active engagement. Understanding its significance, this study delves into the diverse world of Gamification tools within English language classrooms, exploring their multidisciplinary significance. This further aims to piece together various Gamification tools, encompassing digital approaches, to showcase their impact across different English language skills and areas of various studies that are inferred in the building of Gamification. The research highlights the advantages of Gamification through this complex mosaic, including improved language acquisition as well as the promotion of creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. Besides, the study recognizes the inherent diversity of learners and classrooms, suggesting that an assortment of Gamification tools, rather than a singular method, holds the key to unlocking language learning potential for all. An exploratory research is carried out to deepen the understanding of the Gamification tools and its inferred significance, inviting educators to step beyond the limitations, embrace a broader, cross-disciplinary perspective on how these elements can collectively transform English language learning into a dynamic and engaging experience.

Keywords

Gamification tools, ELT, Interactivity, Immersive learning, Emotional elements.

Introduction

Gamification is the art of applying game-design elements and principles to non-game contexts to make the respective activity more engaging (Shahri et al. 2019). It further enhances motivation, improves learning with better retention, promotes collaboration, and increases productivity. Reward is the most crucial element in Gamification in the form of Points, Badges, Leader boards, challenges, Avatars etc., which allows the users to keep their spirit on (Kaban, 2021). The incessant release of Dopamine in the players' minds keeps the game forward with curiosity. It is to understand that Gamification is not always a game application but a game-based component included in a field to ensure immersive commitment (Al-Dosakee, K., & Ozdamli, F. 2021). The practise of Gamification is growing continuously, and it has drawn a lot of attention from educationists and

academic practitioners. The research results of Hursen, C., & Bas, C. (2019) suggest that the application of Gamification in education significantly increases learners' enthusiasm, participation and reliability. Given that, it is important to understand the nature of Gamification and the impetus that it shares with the other disciplines such as Science, Business and Technology that underline the significance of Gamification.

Literature Review

Gamification has demonstrated its efficacy in enhancing students' integration of the learning process by elevating their level of competency and engagement with the instructional content. Since teaching and learning a new language is a challenging process, students are likely to require motivation. Gamification has the potential to motivate students substantially more (Dosakee, 2021). It should be understood that teaching a new language involves some cognitive activities and challenging tasks with substantial attention for every single individual who intends to learn a new language (Hong, 2016). Gamification supports this phenomenon of personalized care by tracking every individual's performance for an effective outcome. According to Calderon et al. (2018), implementing Gamification involves motivating users for non-gaming roles like training and education in addition to using game aspects to do so. Achievements and behaviours that go against learning objectives are positively impacted by gamification (Yildirim 2017). It is interesting to know that terms like Game, Gamification and Game-based Learning (GBL) are used in such a way that they are reciprocated. It is a common phenomenon to encounter, as the proximity that these terms share, provides a hidden ground to differentiate between them. The digitization of games in recent years has increased their use and integration into our daily lives. Gamification has attracted a lot of attention from academia to study its phenomena from a multidisciplinary perspective, including the significance of design thinking, psychology, business, immersive learning and its relevance in the contemporary world (Jun et al., 2020).

Aim of the study

This paper aims to draw a line of relevance of different disciplines like science, business and technology that underpin the significance of Gamification encouraging teachers to look beyond the constraints of specific Gamification technologies and adopt a more comprehensive, interdisciplinary viewpoint on how different components might work together to make learning exciting and dynamic. Additionally, it also proposes to include various Gamification tools that are significantly relevant in English language classrooms.

Research Methodology

Exploratory research allows a researcher to venture into uncharted territory, understand the signs, connect them to comprehend a design, and further allow for investigation (Bryman, A. 2016). The application of exploratory research in this research paper widely helps to understand the underlying different disciplines that underpin Gamification and how their significant features help in comprehending Gamification in the ELT class rooms. This method is to lookout for the diverse explanations that makeup Gamification and explores how they influence the tools used in the ELT classroom.

Research questions

- (1) How do different fields of studies underpin Gamification and how has its significance impacted education, particularly with respect to ELT?
- (2) How are Gamification and its tools significantly relevant in (English) Language classrooms?

Gamification - An Introduction

Eric Schmidt, the former CEO of Google, famously said that everything online in the future is going to look like a multiplayer game, and it stands as a prophecy with the mushrooming of games in every possible field to ensure focused engagement. The concept of Gamification is not a novel idea per se but a directed, objectified task to enable a productive engagement process. According to McGonigal (2010), in her TED Talk titled "Gaming can make a better world," she brings to light that people perform better tasks in the world of games, they learn better through incentives, which in turn can improve their performance and complement their survival in the real world as well. According to a study, a new synapse in the brain requires 400 repetitions, unless it's during play, in which case it only requires 10 to 20 repetitions (Purvis, 2016). It proves that a gameplay helps in the process of registering new lessons in an effective way which can be applied in the learning process. Given that, the paper proceeds to briefly explore different disciplines like Science, Business and Technology that underpin Gamification, understanding its impact in education, language learning in particular and discussing significant online gamified platforms for ELT classrooms.

Gamification in Science- as a leveraging tool for Motivation and Creativity

Gamification is increasingly being recognized as a powerful tool for engaging the brain, boosting motivation, and enhancing learning and performance in real-world contexts. This neurocognitive approach helps turn regular tasks into a thrilling quest, tapping into the brain's reward system and intrinsic desire to play.

There are a few significant characteristics of Gamification that are often

associated with brain functions, allowing the participants to ceaselessly focus on the game activity.

Engaging in games causes the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter linked to reward and pleasure. This reward pathway is triggered by completing tasks, earning points, and overcoming challenges, thereby making the experience innately joyful and inspiring. Storytelling, narrative components, and spaced repetition strategies are frequently used in Gamification, and these strategies successfully support knowledge retention and memory consolidation.

Gamification, in addition, triggers the whole brain engineering ensuring the usage of both creative and critical thinking skills and exercising the brain to stay alert, thus gradually sharpening it to think better and solve more complex problems. Games that involve diverse puzzles, challenges, and activities stimulate both analytical and creative thinking (Cloke, 2020). Puzzles can be effective tools for promoting both creative and analytical thinking when integrated into English Language Teaching (ELT). For instance, effective platforms like Edpuzzle (<https://edpuzzle.com/>) and Plickers (<https://get.plickers.com/>) allow teachers to add questions, audio clips, or videos to existing videos. This interactive feature helps students engage more deeply with the content. Having discussed the significance of science, the paper now proceeds to discuss Gamification in the Business trajectory and its eventual participation in the education sector.

Gamification in Business- VUCA and Design Thinking

The term VUCA expands to Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity, which dates back to its shared origin at the US Army War College in 1987, introducing the amalgam of VUCA concepts into its curriculum. However, researchers General Wayne A. Downing and Major General Stanley F. Thompson are key figures in its adoption. In the early 2000s, the term was widely used in the business sectors (Genovese, 2014) and leadership circles (Ghuse & Petrosky, 2013). Later, it was adapted to multiple fields, including government, education, and even individual development, as a way to describe the challenges and opportunities of our current, rapidly changing world. As far as the pedagogical sector is concerned, Gamification stands as one of the ways to enable raw problem-solving skills among students. Students of English may struggle to understand concepts that are not concrete or tangible. They may further find it challenging to apply their knowledge to new or unfamiliar situations, such as writing essays on unacquainted topics. Interactive learning environments like Arloopa (<https://app.arloopa.com/>), Class Craft (<https://www.hmhco.com/programs/classcraft>) provides interactive simulations and role-playing games to widen the scope of one's horizon. The phrase "Games are the New Normal" (2016) allows us to think about the crucial effect of games

in the teaching process. The understanding is that the progress of any field thrives with the application of new faculties to help the process of sustenance. For instance, in English classrooms, online portals like Nearpod (<https://nearpod.com/>) can be involved to introduce interactive elements like quizzes, polls, and open-ended questions instead of the routine traditional passive lecture method.

Design thinking focuses on a human-centric problem-solving approach and innovation methodology (Brown, 2008). It deeply focuses on understanding the needs of the end user in the business world. When applied to pedagogy, educators create more effective, engaging and student-centred learning experiences (Carroll et al., 2010). Design thinking also encourages thinkers to learn from previous mistakes, embrace ambiguity and engage in crafting the design with clarity (Luka, 2014). Luka's objective can be effectively implemented in the English classroom. A study by Alrehaili and Alhawsawi (2020) demonstrated that employing a five-step design thinking strategy significantly improved the writing performance of English especially with respect to punctuation and sentence structure of Foreign Language (EFL) students. By fostering a deeper understanding of learners' needs and allowing for feedback-driven improvements, educators can create more effective learning experiences that promote self-regulation among students (Brown, 2008). This process can effectively address pedagogical issues in English Language Teaching (ELT) as categorized in Table 2.

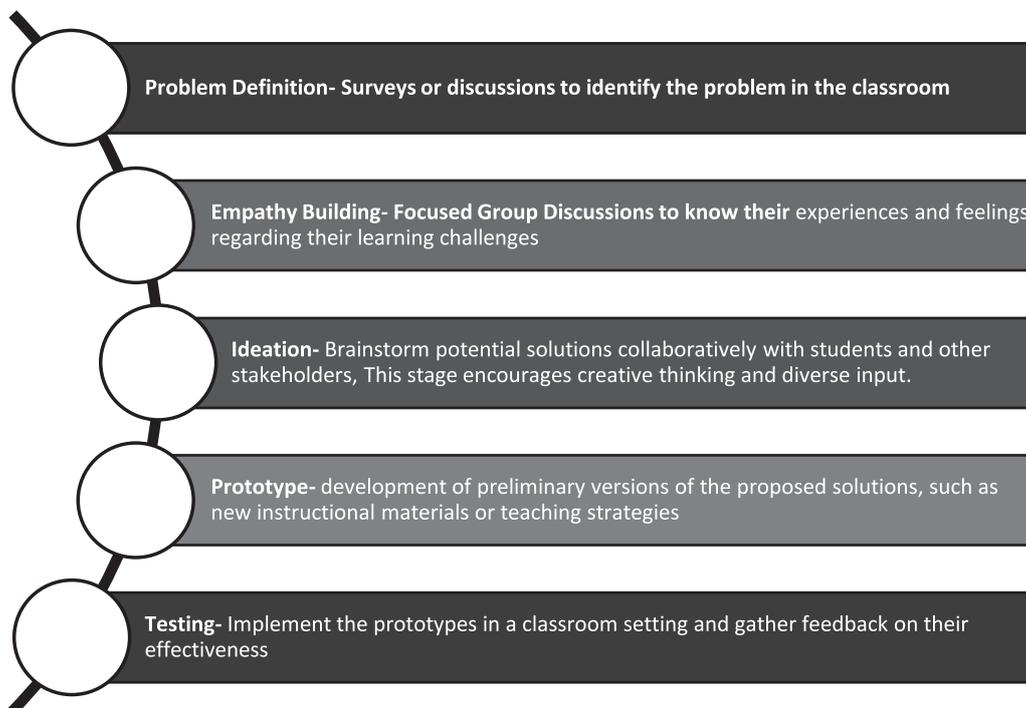


Table 2: Design Thinking in relation to ELT

Gamification in Technology- Immersive Learning World

Several studies prove that gamification works well with language pedagogy because it supports language learners in an immersive environment, increasing their motivation and effectiveness in learning a new language (Huang & Soman, 2013). Immersion traditionally means immersing oneself in the target language where it is spoken to get a first-hand experience and to make genuine contact with the culture of the target language intended to be perused. With the advent of modern technology and boundless access to the internet, this immersion is made possible even for those who are rooted in their respective hometowns. In addition, platforms like HelloTalk (n.d.) and Speaky (n.d.) connect millions of people to converse with native speakers, while language exchange programs create virtual pen pal experiences that broaden our cultural horizons. Immersive technology, such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), can also provide realistic and engaging learning environments that simulate authentic language use (Milgram et al., 1994; Blyth, 2018). Immersive technologies like AR and VR offer unique opportunities to enhance English language learning in secondary classrooms. AR platforms like Arloopa (<https://app.arloopa.com/>) can be used to create visuals in real time scenario, in one's own classroom to motivate the students to engage to kindle a spark and engage in creative writing tasks. Table 1 provides significant immersive language learning platforms that help students involved in the natural acquisition of the English language through Gamification.

<p>LingQ Extensive reading with interactive features- Authentic Articles-Books-Personalized Flashcards- Pronunciation Guide https://www.lingq.com/</p>	<p>Memrise Engaging flashcards, quizzes, and short video clips- Compete with friends, earn badges, and climb the leaderboard https://www.memrise.com/</p>	<p>Duolingo Personalized language Learning- Rewards- Customized Paced speed https://www.duolingo.com/</p>
<p>BBC Learning English Diverse range of resources- Interactive Games- Podcasts- Documentaries https://www.bbc.co.uk/learnenglish/</p>	<p>Hello Talk and Speaky Chat with Native Speakers- Free https://hellotalk.com/ https://speaky.com/</p>	<p>FluentU Videos, Clips-Interactive captions- Personalized quizzes, Flashcards https://www.fluentu.com/</p>

Table 1: Immersive Language Learning Platforms

ESL Gamification platforms- An Outlook

The six prominent Gamification platforms are discussed describing their nature of service and how their potential role enhances the efficiency in the English Classrooms.

Wordwall (wordwall.net)	Gamilab (gamilab.com)	Wisc-online
Educa-play	Educandy	Duolingo

Table 3: Gamification portals for English Language Teaching

Wordwall (<https://wordwall.net/>): Wordwall is useful for improving English language proficiency in several ways, including developing vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Educators and students can build interactive and printable learning resources, like crossword puzzles, quizzes, matching games, and flashcards, using this Gamification Wordwall platform. Concerning vocabulary development among the learners, Wordwall helps learners to acquire and review new words, phrases, and idioms through engaging activities that require matching, spelling, unscrambling, or finding words in a grid. Wordwall also supports different languages, so learners can practice translation or bilingual skills. The website throws special light on the improvement of Grammar rules and regulations in the form of reinforcement through activities that require filling in the blanks, choosing the correct option, ordering sentences, or identifying errors. Some of the activities that are offered on the websites are Matchup, Quiz, Random Cards, Group Sort, Random Wheel, Flash Cards, Missing word, Anagram, Find the Match, Matching pairs, Unjumble, Open the box, Labelled diagram, Wordsearch, Flip tiles, etc.,

Gamilab (<https://gamilab.com/>): Gamilab enables users to make and share instructional games for a range of topics and skill levels. It uses Gamification principles like rewards, feedback, challenges, and collaboration to make learning more enjoyable and engaging. Users can pick from a variety of game templates, including simulations, adventures, puzzles, and quizzes, and add their own settings and content to make them uniquely their own. Also, users can rank, comment on, and play games made by other users. Teachers, students, parents, and anybody else who wants to learn or teach something in a gamified fashion can use this portal. Gamilab currently supports two different game approaches; they are time-based games and score-based games. Numerous academics and educators have used and assessed Gamilab, and they have found that it has a good impact on students' performance, contentment, and level of involvement. For instance, Kapp et al. (2014) figured out that gamilab games have increased

learners' confidence, enjoyment, and ability to recall and retain information. Another study by Luka (2016) reiterates that gamilab games improve students' critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork abilities.

Wisc-Online (<https://www.wisc-online.com/>): Wisc-Online is an open educational resource (OER) portal that provides more than 2,800 learning materials on a variety of topic areas for free. Even though it wasn't curated exclusively with ESL students in mind, it has a plethora of useful information and interactive elements that can greatly aid in their language learning process. Some of the useful features of the platform are accessibility, creative common licensing, search capability, and community features. It does contain an important characterization of having a variety of engaging formats like interactive modules, simulations, games, videos, and quizzes, catering to different learning styles and preferences. Some of the games that are related to ESL students are Test Your Tenses: An interactive game practising verb tense conjugation, Practice With Suffixes (Nouns & Verbs): Interactive activities reinforcing noun and verb formation through adding suffixes, Grammar Bytes: Interactive short animations explaining key grammar concepts.

Educa-Play (<https://www.educaplay.com/>) It is a free educational platform similar to Wisc-online with no specific area of interest exclusively concerning ESL context; however, it has relevant resources from a vibrant community of educators who have contributed a treasure trove of games directly pertinent to English language acquisition that can be fetched through a proper search. Some of the features that Educa-Play offers are Intuitive Game Creation, Pre-made Game Library, Game Variety, Multiple Languages, Social Features, Analytics and Tracking. Educa-Play offers a vast array of games specifically designed for ESL learners or easily adaptable to suit their needs. Some of the popular examples are Vocabulary Games, Grammar Games, Reading and Listening Games. Table 4 lists the activities that are related to the aforementioned examples.

Vocabulary Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching Pairs • Crosswords • Hangman
Grammar Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill in the Blanks • Order the Words • Memory Test
Reading & Listening Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dictogloss • Interactive Cloze Test

Table 4: Activities in Educa-play

Educandy (<https://www.educandy.com/>): Instructors and students can design and play instructional games on the entertaining and interactive platform Educandy. Its user-friendly features and extensive game library offer outstanding value for English language acquisition, despite the fact that it is not exclusively focused on ESL. The significant features of Educandy include easy game creation, a variety of game formats, multimedia integration, sharing and collaboration, mobile App availability, and statistics tracking. It should be noted that Educandy is similar to the previously discussed website Educa-play, offering a similar set of immersive gamified activities focusing on vocabulary games, grammar games, and reading and listening games. Some of the benefits of this Game-based Learning Platform are that it offers personalized learning in a variety of forms catering to different learning styles and preferences, ensuring inclusivity and engagement among the learners. Moreover, the platform is free to access, broadening our learning opportunities.

Duolingo (www.duolingo.com/): Duolingo, the world's most popular language app, offers an extensive gamified approach to learning languages that is not restricted exclusively to ESL. However, the engaging format and paced-content delivery make it a valuable tool in the language acquisition journey. Duolingo offers a gamified learning experience with its specialized bite-sized lessons, points, streaks, and leaderboards to ensure fun and motivation in learning the language. It ensures listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are equally distributed in the lessons offered through various activities. Users can connect and discuss language learning through forums and other community features, fostering motivation and support. Duolingo primarily caters to vocabulary building like matching, translations, and sentence construction, reinforcing new vocabulary. Grammar drills are carried out focusing on the target grammar points like conjugations, sentence structures, and punctuation. Audio exercises with dictation and comprehension checks improve understanding of spoken English.

Discussion

The paper draws a line of relevance of different disciplines like science, business and technology that underpin the significance of Gamification. It proceeds to bring in the importance of Gamification in the context of learning a language. The paper answers the research questions, fulfilling the aim of understanding the Gamification and its impact on the students' cognitive minds. The vitality of the interdisciplinary connections underlying Gamification provides a clear background to the process of engaging language learners. It is understood from the fact that Gamification has the potential to boost pupils' motivation and excitement. Consequently, it makes the process of teaching and learning a new language pleasurable (Al Dosakee, 2021). The paper takes a substantial stand in

allowing the readers to note the important features that are essential in bringing to mind while curating a game subjected to the context given. It also provides a list of Gamification tools and how they are significantly relevant to English classrooms.

Recommendations and Conclusion

It is recommended that by exercising the highlighted gamified platforms into practice, blending with the existing methods, a teacher shall observe optimal change in his/her classroom. The observations, especially the pros and cons shall be noted and the challenges can be ruled out by customizing a Gamified platform that suits their respective students keeping in mind the points discussed in the paper. Thus, in conclusion, Gamification is undoubtedly an effective and engaging tool for language learning, enabling the learners to sustain the motivation for prospective outcomes.

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Classroom Interaction skills of Pre-Service teachers- Exploring the Use of Advertisements

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Abstract

The English classrooms in the globalized world have been witnessing many changes in terms of the teaching learning process including classroom interaction. It is mandatory for the Pre-Service teachers to digest the need and importance of interaction in the English class. Most of the pre-service teachers are struggling in generating meaningful interactions in the English class. In this context, this study explores the use of advertisements, which are considered as authentic teaching learning material, in improving the pre-service teachers' skills of interaction. Carefully selected advertisements, collected from various sources like newspapers, magazines, hoardings along with audio and video advertisements by employing different worksheets and tasks designed, are used in the first year of 2- year Diploma in Elementary Education course. A significant improvement is witnessed among the pre-service teachers' skills of interaction through the use of advertisements within a span of two months. The study is still continuing and is expected to further improve the linguistic competence of the teacher trainees.

Keywords

Advertisement, Classroom, Interaction, Linguistic competency, Teacher trainee, Worksheets

Introduction and Background

We need to accept that the teaching profession is becoming challenging where knowledge is exploding rapidly, and much of it is available to students as well as teachers. (Perraton, Robinson and Creed, 2001). Teaching English language for beginners by the teacher trainees who have just completed their Higher Secondary course is also another challenge. Further, there is very little scope for children at the Primary level especially in Government- run schools to receive the required ambience for learning English. More significantly, the trainees, who join the course after their Plus Two, possess only a limited knowledge and experience of using the English Language and they themselves struggle a lot to carry out their teaching practice in the English language classroom.

Advertisements in English have been popular in India. The popularity is not only limited to cities and towns, but also to the villages and remote areas due to digital platforms such as television, FM radio, OTT platforms etc., print media such as news-papers, magazines, leaflets etc., the online market and e-shopping etc. and the availability on social media such as short videos, reels etc. The digital advertisements make use of both oral as well as written form of the language,

whereas the print advertisements confine only to the written part of the language. The printed advertisements are usually in the form of incomplete extract information containing words, phrases, abbreviations and even symbols, and rarely are they found in the form of complete sentences. Ads are an excellent source of language used in context. One major advantage of using advertisements for the teacher trainees is that it can help develop linguistic competence. This in turn enables them to equip themselves with the skill of interaction useful to make the classroom transaction more meaningful and interactive. Most of the time there is tough competition between the competitors and at that time the language makes their advertisement more attractive. Learning English through ads help to improve the language competence. English advertisements are both interesting and rewarding. The brand names, trademarks, logos, jingles, slogans etc. have become part and parcel of our lives.

The advantages of using advertisements in the pedagogy classroom are manifold. Advertisements enhance the ability to understand spoken language in all its variety. Learners unconsciously assimilate language and sentence pattern as they watch ads. They get an insight into new cultures, comprehend and recognize various accents and improve pronunciation. Learners are exposed to various social and cultural discourse conventions, which are pragmatically very apt. Ads, which are videos, are a valuable tool for raising the learners' awareness of the role of body language and facial expression in communicating different attitudes and emotions. Advertisements have a great potential in the language classroom as they bring together a combination of various modes and are rich in linguistic meaning.

Being a teacher educator of the students of the Diploma in Education, the investigator for many years had been attempting to engage the trainee teachers in meaningful interactions. Updating the skill of interaction of teacher trainees became a challenge due to their schooling in vernacular medium, where English is learnt as a language. Though some students have studied in English medium schools, their English use is limited to reading the content in English from the examination point of view. There was very little chance for them to use English for interpersonal communication before they join the teacher preparation course. Hence, many of the teacher trainees have a lot of inhibition towards spoken form of the English language. As a result they depend more on the display of teaching learning material and employing task sheets where there is less scope for spoken form of the language or they resort to the use of mother tongue for classroom interaction. This prompted the investigator to make use of advertisements to enhance the interaction skills of the teacher trainees. So an attempt was made to make advertisements as a tool for developing the English oral proficiency of the teacher trainees.

The investigator had during his service noted that the linguistic competency of the teacher trainees at the entry level is alarmingly low. This could be because the best students who complete Plus Two do not opt to join the teacher training courses. And those who have joined do not possess the basic communication competencies resulting in lack of confidence to handle classes in English. Hence, many interventions were tried out to build their confidence as well as competence. The investigator also managed to develop their reading skills and task generation skills by conducting a series of work-shops. Though the trainees are able to prepare reading comprehension tasks and present rhymes/action songs, they struggle to generate a dialogue and to continue it.

What follows is a description of how the investigator made use of advertisements to enhance the interaction skills of 60 teacher trainees of III Semester students of the Diploma in Elementary Education course from a District Institute of Education and Training (D.I.E.T.) in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India.

Problem Statement

Classroom Interaction skills of Pre - Service teachers - Exploring the use of advertisements

Objectives

1. To develop the linguistic competency of teacher trainees through advertisements.
2. To develop skills of classroom interaction of the teacher trainees through advertisements.

Brief Review of Studies

An exploratory study 'Using Advertisements in the English Classroom: An Exploratory Study' conducted by Sanjay Arora & Ruchi Kaushik in July, 2021 on 81 undergraduate students of two colleges from two different states (viz. Delhi and Rajasthan) revealed through a research question 'Can audio-visual ads be used in English classrooms to make the virtual teaching-learning more engrossing?', that 85.55% respondents were of the view that the advertisements can be used in the classroom to make teaching more engrossing. One more respondent said that the advertisers are "very selective and choosy about the words that they particularly use in their advertisements"

In another study titled 'Using Advertisements for ELT in schools in Rural India' by Anshuta Sharma and Ritu Kumaran which is a very small scale experiment,

20 students from a local rural school in Jabalpur city were shown different advertisements. The students were from Hindi medium background and within the age range of 13-16 years. With the help of the little experiment done, it was observed that the use of advertisements in English Language teaching is good to be implemented for secondary school (senior high school) learners in the rural areas/ schools of India where English is taught as a second language after Hindi or the regional language. This was done to make them aware of the various vocabulary parts and literary terms, like Translations, Tense, Noun Phrase, Simile and Homophones by using the ads; 'Hungry Kya (Domino's Pizza) – Are you Hungry?' for translation; 'Tanishq presents Utsava' for simple present tense; 'BMW- The ultimate Driving Machine' for Noun Phrase; Nike Sports Shoes: 'Heavy as a feather' to introduce a literary element 'simile'; The Amul ad 'Born in India - Bread in India' to introduce homophones.

Park's research study (2011) reports how newspaper articles can be used effectively in an EFL setting to develop students' critical reading skills. Several studies demonstrate how advertisements can be used beneficially to develop students' English language skills. "With advertising, a smart teacher invites students' participation and reenergizes the complete learning experience" (Chauhan, 2008). Highlighting the advantages of exploiting advertisements as pedagogical tools in an EFL setting, Picken (1999) exhorts teachers to use them optimally by focusing on their richness in terms of language and visual elements. Similarly, Babocka (2016) exhibits using billboard advertisements to enrich learners' English vocabulary apart from developing their intercultural competence, reading and writing skills as well as creativity. Leech (1966) has shown the relation of the aspects of advertising viz, grammar, vocabulary, discourse, rhyme, and rhetoric with the functional factors such as attention value, listening ability/readability, memorability etc.

Methodology

All the 60 teacher trainees of III Semester, Diploma in Elementary Education course from a District Institute of Education and Training (D.I.E.T.) in the state of Andhra Pradesh are taken for this study as population as well as sample. They were given oral practice through question framing ability, dialogue generation ability, and dialogue continuation ability through the use of advertisements. An eight week programme is designed. 4 advertisements including 2 video advertisements each week are presented through Interactive Flat Panel. The advertisements include commercial ads like cloth sales, jewelry shops, mobile phone sales etc, Life & Health Insurance ads, online shopping ads, banks ads etc. Some of the brands selected include Amul, Brooke Bond Red Label Tea, Tanishq, Dairy Milk, Fevikwick, Thums Up, Nescafe and Airtel etc. Printed ads from

Newspapers related to college admissions, job placements, Property sale, Home loan, Car/bike insurance etc. are also used.

In the first phase, the investigator wished to develop the linguistic competence of the teacher trainees by using carefully selected advertisements. In the beginning fun ads were used and gradually moved to other ads also. The electronic version of the printed ads and video ads were presented on the Interactive Flat Panel. The trainees were directed to get the features of the ads and the language use in the beginning followed by practice of the dialogues by applying as many gestures and facial expressions as possible.

The advertisements to highlight the need and importance of improving English are presented to the trainees first. One such advertisement is a video advertisement presented through YouTube which depicts a message passing by the Coast Guard personnel to the control room over a radio. The personnel in the sea are asking for help by saying that they are sinking. But the person in the Control Center has perceived the word 'sinking' as 'thinking'.

The advertisement is as follows:

'Mayday, Mayday'

Hello!

'Can you Hear us'

'Over'

'Hello'

'This is the German coastguard.

'We are sinking' 'we're sinking'

'What are you thinking about?'

Here the word 'Mayday' is an English representation of the French word m'aider which in the phrase venez m'aider means "Come and help me" , a radio message sent from a boat, ship or a plane through which people request for help in emergency. Here it is the issue of pronunciation. Similarly there may be other issues of misunderstanding in using English. Such advertisements give a lot of scope for generating interaction in the classroom.

The next advertisement presented to them is about selling a bicycle, taken from Cambridge English website. The advertisement goes like this:

My name's Jane and I would like to sell my bicycle. It's a purple and silver woman's bike and I've looked after it very well. It has new tyres, a leather seat and a bell. I am hoping to sell it for £35. I'm moving at the beginning of October, and can't take the bike with me. So I need to find a new owner for it before then. If you would like to come and see the bike, please contact me. I'm sorry. I can't bring the bike to you. My mobile number is 057234 128459. Please send me a text or phone me. I live in Fowley Area.

Here there is lot of scope for interaction. The trainees were asked to read it once or twice and were made to describe the ad in their own words. Later the student teachers were made to play the role of Jane and a customer through a telephonic conversation. The trainees prepared the dialogues and enacted the role play.

Another advertisement used was the ad of Arizona Department of Health Services with a caption of 'Hope Always Answers' to pass on the message of providing a Suicide & Crisis helpline number 988 to call, text or chat in public interest. Here the trainees were sensitized about the brevity of the expressions through ads. The advertisement of Malabar Gold and Diamonds ad, says, 'Exchange gold, Enjoy benefits', through which alliteration was taught. Regarding vocabulary, some words are deliberately misspelled in certain ads like 'krispy' for the word 'crispy'; new coinages like 'doublicious' which is a combination of double+ delicious were learnt. If we can't excuse the incorrect expressions in certain ads like Mc Donald's ad: "I'm lovin' it" it lacks the fire and the vitality to create interest among the readers. In this way, first the linguistic competence of the trainees was boosted through the above advertisements.

In the next phase, the trainees were given practice of interaction by posing questions like 'What is your favourite advertisement? Where did you see it for the first time? Who are the characters in the ad? What happened in the ad? Why did you like it? Did it bring much attraction? How can you make use of it in your English classroom? What expressions from the ad are useful in your English classroom? How do you make use of these ads to interact with your students in the English class?

The third phase is the planning of day wise activities for practice. In the beginning worksheet is used for identifying the words, phrases or sentences from the ads which are used to persuade the customers from the commercials, to make the message brief. If the ads are non commercials, the teacher trainees were given another work sheet for evaluating the effectiveness of the advertisement with the help of pre designed questions.

The next step in the third phase is dedicated to framing questions by using the content/theme of the advertisement, for writing complete sentences for the short form of the sentences used in the advertisement, using the key words used in the ads for framing statements, questions etc., Here the trainees are also assigned the roles of the characters and are given chance to produce simulating conversations between the customer and the sales person for commercial ads. Among all the tasks, framing of questions for the ads, and role playing helped them to get rid of their inhibition and come out with dialogue generation capacity.

The trainees are trained to describe the ads in their own sentences after getting thorough reading of the ad followed by writing about the ad in their own words. In this way their language skills are developed over a period of time. In the beginning they are asked to write simple sentences and are asked to move gradually to the lengthier sentences using passive voices with multiple clauses. Feedback is provided continuously to the trainees about their oral description and the written ones for refinement.

Results and Discussion

It is observed that the trainees have developed interest towards collecting advertisements and the way they look at an ad has changed. Now they are able to identify the catchy words, expressions in the given advertisement and are also able to think critically. Their critical thinking abilities are developed. They display an ability to frame simple sentences based on the data provided in the advertisement. They are also able to generate conversations, dialogues, play the roles of the characters of the advertisement. They also display an ability to interact among themselves by using simple English expressions. This would definitely help them in interacting with the children in their English class when they get an opportunity. The use of advertisements in the pre-service classroom has resulted in the capacity and confidence building of the teacher trainees.

Scope & Limitation of the Study

This is a simple experimental study conducted for the teacher trainees of a D.I.E.T in Andhra Pradesh and is limited to explore the use of ads in improving the skills of interaction of the teacher trainees of D.El.Ed course.

There is a lot of scope in this area like using advertisements for developing creative expressive skills of the teacher trainees, the use of ads in developing vocabulary and language skills as well as developing critical thinking through ads etc.

Conclusion

Advertisements are useful for developing the classroom interaction skills of the teacher trainees. The study made use of printed ads, digital ads, ads in images, and videos. Ads related to the commercials, health and hygiene, job ads and other ads are used. The major benefit of using ads in the English pedagogy class is to develop the speaking and interaction skills of the trainees which eventually help them to transact their lessons well during their teaching practice. The teacher educator has first presented some ads to sensitize the trainees to think and read critically to improve their logical thinking skills followed by structured implementation of the tasks designed by selecting different advertisements. The project is still continuing and it is expected to further develop the classroom interaction skills of the teacher trainees.

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Sanjay Arora & Ruchi Kaushi. Using Advertisements in the English Classroom:
An Exploratory Study IIS Univ.J.A. Vol.11 (3), 219-233 (2023) ISSN 2319-5339

The Daily Ad Exposure: How Many Ads Does the Average Person See Each
Day? (goadfuel.com)

The Write Way to Excel in Exams: Unlocking Academic Success Through Effective Writing Skills

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Abstract

In the landscape of academic assessment, written exams stand as a cornerstone, serving multifaceted purposes that extend beyond the mere evaluation of content knowledge. This article explores the crucial role that writing skills play in academic success and examines the broader significance of written exams. In academia, examinations serve as the ultimate assessment of students' knowledge, comprehension, and problem-solving abilities, with writing skills playing a central role in this evaluative process. Through a comprehensive exploration, the article highlights the critical nexus between writing proficiency and examination performance, emphasizing the role of writing in communicating ideas, demonstrating critical analysis, and organizing information coherently. Furthermore, the article elucidates common errors encountered by students in exam writing, ranging from misinterpretation of prompts to poor time management, and offers practical strategies for mitigating these challenges. Additionally, the article explains the importance of written exams in providing a comprehensive evaluation of students, fostering the development of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), and assessing essential skills necessary for both academic and professional success.

Keywords

Writing skills, Academic examinations, Critical thinking, Evaluation, Communication

Introduction

In the realm of academia, examinations serve as the ultimate test of students' knowledge, understanding, and analytical abilities. While exams come in various formats, one skill remains consistently paramount: writing. The significance of writing skills in examinations cannot be overstated. Studies have shown that students with strong writing abilities are more likely to articulate their knowledge clearly and score higher in exams. Research indicates that well-organized essays and structured answers often lead to improved grading outcomes, emphasizing the pivotal role of writing proficiency in academic success. It's not merely about putting pen to paper; it's about articulating ideas cogently, demonstrating reflective judgment, and presenting arguments persuasively. Effective writing is crucial for conveying complex ideas clearly and succinctly, which is a critical aspect of academic achievement (Bean, 2011).

Despite the importance of writing skills in examinations, students often encounter challenges that hinder their performance. These challenges include misinterpreting exam prompts, struggling with time management, and succumbing to test anxiety. According to Flower and Hayes (1981), writing is a cognitive process that involves planning, translating, and reviewing. These stages can be particularly stressful during timed examinations, leading to difficulties in articulating thoughts coherently under pressure.

Moreover, research by Yancey (2004) highlights that writing skills developed in one context do not always transfer seamlessly to another. This lack of transfer can exacerbate the difficulties students face during exams. Additionally, the modern educational landscape, increasingly influenced by digital technologies, has transformed how writing skills are taught and assessed (Weigle, 2018). While technology offers tools to aid writing, it also presents new challenges, such as maintaining focus and avoiding distractions.

Thesis Statement: This paper explores the vital role of writing skills in academic exams, providing practical strategies to help students overcome common challenges and improve their writing performance. By drawing on cognitive theories of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981), practical strategies for enhancing writing (Bean, 2011), and insights into writing assessment (Weigle, 2018), this paper aims to offer actionable guidance for both students and educators to excel in the academic examination process.

Significance of Written Exams

In the landscape of academic assessment, written exams stand as a cornerstone, serving multifaceted purposes that extend beyond mere evaluation of content knowledge. The significance of written exams lies in their unique ability to gauge students' comprehensive understanding and communication skills within a structured and time-bound environment.

Comprehensive Evaluation

Written exams provide a comprehensive platform for assessing students' mastery of course material across diverse topics and subject areas. By presenting a range of questions, from short-answer to essay formats, written exams challenge students to demonstrate their depth of understanding and proficiency in articulating complex ideas effectively. As McMillan and Schumacher (2014) highlight, this comprehensive evaluation is crucial for understanding the breadth and depth of students' learning.

Critical Thinking Development

The structure of written exams inherently fosters decision-making skills by

requiring students to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information within the confines of a given prompt or question. From interpreting data to formulating arguments, students are prompted to engage in higher-order cognitive processes, thereby honing their analytical abilities. Flower and Hayes (1981) emphasize that writing is a cognitive process that involves planning, translating, and reviewing, all of which are critical for developing robust critical thinking skills.

Communication Proficiency

Writing skills are foundational to effective communication, and written exams serve as a conduit for students to showcase their proficiency in conveying ideas, arguments, and insights coherently. Through well-constructed responses, students not only demonstrate their grasp of subject matter but also their ability to communicate persuasively to diverse audiences. Gopen and Swan (1990) underscore the importance of clarity in writing, which is essential for effective communication in both academic and professional settings.

Assessment of Transferable Skills

Beyond assessing subject-specific knowledge, written exams also evaluate students' mastery of transferable skills such as critical analysis, problem-solving, and communication—skills that are indispensable in both academic and professional contexts. As such, written exams serve as a litmus test for students' readiness to navigate real-world challenges beyond the classroom. Graff and Birkenstein (2014) note that the ability to frame and articulate arguments is a key skill that transcends disciplinary boundaries.

Standardized Evaluation

Written exams offer a standardized means of assessment, enabling educators to establish consistent criteria for evaluating student performance across cohorts. This ensures fairness and equity in the assessment process, as all students are judged based on the same set of criteria and standards. According to Nilson (2015), standardized assessments help maintain rigor and consistency in evaluating student outcomes.

Preparation for Higher Education and Career

Proficiency in written exams is not only vital for academic success but also for preparing students for higher education pursuits and future career endeavors. Being able to express ideas clearly, analyze information, and present arguments effectively prepares students for success in both higher education and professional environments where written communication is crucial. Strunk and White (2000) emphasize the importance of clear and concise writing, which is a critical skill in both academic and professional environments.

The Importance of Writing Skills in Examinations

Writing skills serve as a gateway for students to convey their understanding of course material, showcase their analytical prowess, and engage in scholarly discourse. Whether it's crafting essays, responding to short-answer questions, or composing research papers, proficient writing is fundamental to success in examinations for several reasons.

Communication of Ideas and Concepts

Firstly, writing facilitates the communication of ideas and concepts. Through well-structured and articulate writing, students can effectively convey their understanding of complex topics, theories, and arguments. This clarity of expression not only aids examiners in assessing students' comprehension but also reflects the depth of their knowledge. Graff and Birkenstein (2014) emphasize the importance of clear argumentation in academic writing, which is crucial during examinations.

Manifestation of Critical Thinking Abilities

Secondly, writing is a manifestation of critical thinking abilities. Examinations often require students to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information, and writing serves as the medium through which these cognitive processes are demonstrated. By constructing logical arguments, providing evidence to support assertions, and critically assessing different perspectives, students showcase their ability to think critically and engage with course material. Flower and Hayes (1981) highlight that writing involves complex cognitive processes that are essential for cognitive analysis.

Organization and Presentation of Information

Furthermore, writing skills are essential for organizing and presenting information coherently. In examinations, where time is often limited, the ability to structure responses effectively is crucial. Well-organized writing ensures that ideas flow logically, enhancing the coherence and readability of responses. This, in turn, enables examiners to follow students' arguments more easily and evaluate their work accurately. According to Swales and Feak (2012), clear organization is vital for effective academic writing.

Interpretation and Analysis of Examination Prompts

Additionally, writing proficiency influences the interpretation and analysis of examination prompts. Students must not only understand the content of the question but also discern its nuances and requirements. Strong writing skills enable students to dissect prompts effectively, identifying key tasks, requirements, and expectations. This ensures that responses are tailored to meet

the specific demands of the question, thereby maximizing their potential for success. Weigle (2018) discusses the importance of prompt interpretation in writing assessments.

Role in Grading Criteria and Evaluation

Lastly, writing skills play a significant role in the grading criteria and evaluation of examinations. Examiners assess not only the content of students' responses but also the quality of their writing. Factors such as clarity, coherence, organization, grammar, and punctuation all contribute to the overall assessment of students' work. Therefore, students who demonstrate proficiency in writing are more likely to receive favorable evaluations and achieve higher grades. Bean (2011) notes that writing quality significantly impacts academic evaluations.

Common Errors While Writing Examinations

Despite the paramount importance of writing skills in examinations, students often encounter challenges that significantly hinder their performance. Recognizing and understanding these common errors can help students identify areas for improvement and avoid pitfalls in their writing. Below is a detailed list of common errors that students generally commit while writing in exams: -

Misinterpretation of Exam Prompts

- Failing to fully grasp the requirements of the question : Many students overlook critical aspects of exam prompts, leading to incomplete or irrelevant responses (Flower & Hayes, 1981).
- Addressing only part of the prompt or veering off-topic: Students may focus on one aspect of the question, neglecting other essential parts, which results in partial answers (Graff & Birkenstein, 2014).
- Misinterpreting key terms or concepts in the question: Misunderstanding key terms can derail the response, resulting in answers that do not meet the exam criteria.

Lack of Clarity and Precision

- Using vague or ambiguous language that obscures the intended meaning: Ambiguous language can confuse examiners and dilute the impact of the argument (Strunk & White, 2000).
- Failing to articulate ideas coherently, leading to disjointed or confusing responses: Coherent articulation of ideas is crucial for effective communication (Bean, 2011).
- Overusing jargon or technical terminology without providing adequate

explanation: Overreliance on jargon without proper context can alienate readers and obscure the message (Swales & Feak, 2012).

Poor Organization and Structure

- Lack of a clear introduction, thesis statement, or main argument: A well-defined introduction sets the tone for the rest of the response, guiding readers through the argument (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).
- Weak or nonexistent transitions between paragraphs, resulting in a choppy flow of ideas: Smooth transitions are essential for maintaining the flow and coherence of the argument (Gopen & Swan, 1990).
- Inconsistent or illogical sequencing of information within the response: Logical sequencing ensures that ideas build upon each other, enhancing the persuasiveness of the response (Weigle, 2018).

Inadequate Development of Ideas

- Providing superficial or cursory explanations without delving into depth: Superficial responses fail to demonstrate a deep understanding of the subject matter (Flower & Hayes, 1981).
- Failing to support assertions with relevant evidence, examples, or citations: Supporting arguments with evidence strengthens credibility and persuasiveness (Bean, 2011).
- Overgeneralizing or making unsubstantiated claims without sufficient justification: Overgeneralizations weaken arguments and reduce their impact (Graff & Birkenstein, 2014).

Time Mismanagement

- Spending disproportionate time on certain sections of the exam, neglecting others: Effective time management ensures that all sections of the exam are addressed adequately (Nilson, 2015).
- Rushing through responses due to poor time allocation, leading to incomplete or hastily written answers: Hasty writing can result in errors and incomplete arguments (Bean, 2011).
- Getting stuck on one question and running out of time to complete the rest of the exam: It is crucial to allocate time proportionately to avoid incomplete sections (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

Neglecting Revision and Proofreading

- Submitting responses without reviewing for errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation: Errors can distract from the content and reduce the overall quality of the response (Strunk & White, 2000).
- Failing to edit or revise written work to improve clarity, coherence, or effectiveness: Revision allows for refinement and strengthening of arguments (Weigle, 2018).
- Missing opportunities to refine arguments or strengthen evidence through revision: Revising work can significantly enhance the clarity and impact of the argument (Gopen & Swan, 1990).

Test Anxiety and Psychological Factors

- Allowing test anxiety to impair writing performance, resulting in underperformance or blanking out during the exam: Anxiety can severely impact cognitive function and writing performance (Yancey, 2004).
- Overthinking or second-guessing responses due to fear of failure or perfectionism: Overthinking can lead to unnecessary revisions and time wastage (Bean, 2011).
- Allowing stress or pressure to affect concentration, leading to careless mistakes or lapses in judgment: Stress management techniques are crucial for maintaining focus during exams (Nilson, 2015).

By being aware of these common errors, college students can take proactive steps to improve their writing skills and avoid potential pitfalls in examinations. Through continuous practice, diligent preparation, and reflective learning, students can steadily improve their writing proficiency and strive for excellence in academic assessments. Remember, becoming proficient in writing is a journey that requires dedication, effort, and ongoing self-improvement (Flower & Hayes, 1981; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014; Bean, 2011).

Integrating Classroom Insights

In addition to the existing literature, practical classroom experiences with students at A. D. Patel Institute of Technology (ADIT), New Vallabh Vidyanagar provide valuable insights into how writing skills impact exam performance. Observations from classroom assessments indicate that students who engaged in structured writing exercises and received regular feedback demonstrated significant improvement in their ability to articulate ideas clearly and manage time effectively during exams. For example, a small in-class survey conducted with second-year students showed that 75% of participants who practiced timed

essay writing felt more confident and performed better in actual exams. This empirical observation underscores the importance of continuous writing practice, aligning with the theoretical insights discussed in the paper.

Tips for Writing in Examinations

Given the critical importance of writing skills in examinations, it's essential for college students to hone their writing abilities and adopt effective strategies to excel in this aspect of their academic endeavors. Here are some practical tips distributed in 3 stages to help students navigate the challenges of writing in examinations:

Pre-exam Preparation

1. Familiarize Yourself with the Exam Format and Requirements:

- Understand the types of questions that will be asked, whether they are multiple-choice, short answer, or essay questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).
- Review the exam guidelines and criteria for evaluation to know what the examiners are looking for in your responses.

2. Create a Study Schedule:

- Allocate dedicated time for revision and practice writing under exam conditions (Bean, 2011).
- Include breaks in your study schedule to avoid burnout and maintain focus.

3. Practice Writing Regularly:

- Write practice essays and responses to potential exam questions to build confidence and improve your writing fluency (Flower & Hayes, 1981).
- Time yourself while writing to simulate exam conditions and improve your time management skills.

4. Review Course Materials Thoroughly:

- Ensure a strong understanding of key concepts, theories, and terminologies that are likely to appear on the exam (Swales & Feak, 2012).
- Create summaries or mind maps to consolidate your knowledge and aid recall during the exam.

During-exam Writing Strategies

1. Read the Instructions and Questions Carefully:

- Take the time to fully understand what is being asked before starting to write (Gopen & Swan, 1990).

- Identify key terms and directives in the question, such as "discuss," "compare," or "analyze," to tailor your response appropriately.

2. Plan Your Responses:

- Outline key points and arguments before you start writing to ensure a coherent and organized response (Bean, 2011).

- Use a rough draft or notes to organize your thoughts and structure your answer logically.

3. Structure Your Responses Clearly:

- Begin with a clear introduction that outlines your main argument or thesis statement (Strunk & White, 2000).

- Develop body paragraphs that each focus on a single idea, supported by evidence and examples (Graff & Birkenstein, 2014).

- Conclude with a summary that reinforces your main points and provides a clear closure to your argument.

4. Use Concise and Precise Language:

- Avoid unnecessary jargon or overly complex sentences that can confuse the reader (Swales & Feak, 2012).

- Aim for clarity and precision in your writing to effectively communicate your ideas (Strunk & White, 2000).

5. Allocate Time for Review and Revision:

- If time allows, review your work to check for errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation (Weigle, 2018).

- Ensure that your arguments are coherent and that each paragraph transitions smoothly to the next (Gopen & Swan, 1990).

Post-exam Reflection

1. Reflect on Your Performance:

- After the exam, take time to reflect on what went well and what could have been improved (Yancey, 2004).

- Note any recurring issues or challenges you faced during the exam.

2. Seek Feedback:

- Obtain feedback from instructors or peers to gain insights into your writing strengths and weaknesses (Nilson, 2015).

- Use the feedback to understand where you need to improve and to refine your writing techniques.

3. Incorporate Feedback into Future Preparation:

- Use the feedback to inform your future exam preparation and writing practices (Bean, 2011).

- Focus on developing areas where you struggled and practice addressing similar questions or topics.

4. Continuous Improvement:

- Engage in regular writing practice to continuously improve your skills (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

- Attend workshops or seek additional resources to enhance your writing abilities and academic performance (Swales & Feak, 2012).

Conclusion

In essence, writing is a fundamental skill that transcends the classroom and is integral to lifelong learning and career advancement. Whether it's crafting essays, responding to questions, or analyzing case studies, proficient writing enables students to communicate their ideas effectively, demonstrate intellectual rigor, and present arguments persuasively. Writing is not merely a mechanical task but a cognitive process that involves organizing thoughts, structuring arguments, and conveying complex ideas in a clear and coherent manner. This skill is crucial not only for academic achievement but also for personal and professional development. By excelling in their writing abilities and implementing effective strategies, college students can enhance their performance in exams and attain academic excellence. Practical tips such as thorough preparation, strategic planning during the exam, and reflective practices post-exam can significantly enhance writing proficiency and exam outcomes.

Moreover, the journey to mastering writing skills is ongoing and requires continuous effort and dedication. Engaging in regular practice, seeking constructive feedback, and actively working on areas of improvement can lead to significant progress over time. As students embark on their academic journey, let them remember that mastering the art of writing is not just a skill—it's a pathway to unlocking opportunities, fostering personal growth, and realizing their full

potential. The ability to write well opens doors to opportunities and empowers students to express their ideas and insights effectively, thereby paving the way for future academic and professional achievements.

Future Trends and Educator Recommendations: Looking ahead, the teaching of writing skills is likely to evolve in response to advancements in technology, such as the integration of digital language tools for drafting and editing, and the growing emphasis on digital literacy. Educators should embrace these changes by incorporating digital platforms that foster writing collaboration, peer review, and the use of adaptive writing software that provides personalized feedback. At the same time, traditional approaches—like structured writing exercises and in-class discussions—remain invaluable for cultivating a deeper understanding of writing fundamentals.

Educators are encouraged to create diverse writing opportunities that blend digital tools with traditional methods, promote interdisciplinary writing experiences, and emphasize the importance of feedback and revision. By doing so, they can equip students with the writing skills necessary not just for academic success but for a world increasingly shaped by new communication technologies.

Ultimately, writing is a lifelong skill that opens doors to new opportunities and enables students to express their ideas effectively, paving the way for both academic and professional achievements. As such, students and educators alike should view the development of writing skills as an ongoing and essential aspect of education, one that will serve them far beyond their college years.

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