

KNOWLEDGE PROCESS OUTSOURCING AND THE USE OF ENGLISH: INDIAN EXPORT TO THE WORLD

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Homework tutors in India

Each day at 4.30 am 20 well-educated Indians start work in their call centre in Kerala, India. They provide one-to-one tutorial help in subjects such as mathematics and science to Californian schoolchildren. One recent estimate suggests that over 20,000 American schoolchildren now receive e-tutoring support from India, usually through US service providers. (*ChristianScience Monitor*, 23 May 2005)

Fast food service

When customers in some branches of McDonald's restaurants in the USA place orders for fast food, they speak to a call centre hundreds of miles away, who pass back the order, together with a digital photo of the customer, to the kitchen. This approach is marginally cheaper for the restaurant per transaction. It apparently can make the process 30 seconds faster, allowing more burgers to be sold per hour, with fewer mistakes. (*TheWorld is Flat*, Friedman, 2005)

Language, both spoken and written, comes in a variety of discourse types. As teachers of language, we attempt to introduce our learners to as many of these as possible. The variety and types of discourse ideally help to put the process of language learning in a multi dimensional mode. In Indian context, somehow the skill groups involved in learning a language are not properly balanced. An average Indian student likes to differentiate between the writing and the speaking skills and prioritises writing over speaking.

The expressive, (letters, diaries, etc.); transactional, (advertising, business letters, editorials, instructions, etc.); and poetic, (drama, poetry, novels, short stories, etc.) discourses of the language teaching are not equally explored in ESL/EFL class room. There is often reluctance on the part of teachers, course designers and examiners to introduce unabridged and authentic texts to the EFL/ESL syllabus. There is a general perception that literature is particularly complex and inaccessible for the foreign language learner and can even be detrimental to the process of language learning.

Widdowson in his well-known essay, 'The Teaching, Learning and Study of Literature' has distinguished between the study and the learning of literature. The study is action, which leads to knowledge and extends awareness, and learning is knowledge that leads to action and develops proficiency. For Widdowson, learning literature means acquiring the ability of 'creative reading'. In India, the 'creative reading' can be understood as the 're-contextualizing the text' as per Indian culture, literary tradition and aesthetics. Teaching in itself is an act of translation. Teaching of Western literature in non-Western cultures

involves translation of not just the words but also the entire sensitivity and the sensibility. This paper aims to discuss this multi faceted challenge of teaching spoken language to ESL/EFL students with the help of literature.

Literature, Speaking, and Listening

The study of literature in a language class, which is mainly associated with reading and writing, can also play an equally meaningful role in teaching both speaking and listening. Oral reading, dramatization, improvisation, role-playing, pantomiming, reenactment, discussion, and group activities may center on a work of literature.

Here it is important to distinguish between classical and popular literature. The literature used in ELT class rooms today is no longer restricted to canonical texts from certain countries like UK and USA but includes the work of writers from a diverse range of countries and cultures using different forms of English.

Indian students are learning English at various levels. Their motivation and objectives highly differ from one another and always reflect on their final language acquisition. Again we can divide this entire phenomenon of learning English in two broad categories: those who learn to pass the educational program and those who want to use it further in their professional environment. As one student responded, "If you learn English but cannot speak it fluently, you are like a blind man being on the street. You lose many precious opportunities to enjoy the beauty of this world. You are kept inside a dark box. But if you speak [English] well, you will learn about culture, people and life. You feel your life colourful and meaningful. You are not isolated." This is the type of response one has to consider while using literature for teaching spoken English. Teachers can introduce the topic or theme of the text, pre-teach essential vocabulary items and use prediction tasks to arouse interest and curiosity in students.

Benefits of using literature in ELT classrooms:

Language teachers can make listening comprehension and pronunciation interesting, motivating and contextualized at the upper levels, playing a recording or video of a literary work, or reading literature aloud themselves. Having students read literature aloud contributes to developing speaking as well as listening ability. Moreover, it also leads to improving pronunciation. Pronunciation may be the focus before, during, and / or after the reading.

A literary text is representational rather than referential. It involves the learners and engages their imagination. It enhances their empathy for others. A variety of linguistic, cultural and personal inferences can be explored and it becomes more motivating than the referential ones often used in the classroom. Short stories, Poems, Novels, Plays and Songs can be used. Here is an example of how to use Shakespeare for the increase in spoken efficiency of our students. Some of the benefits of selecting the bard for the exercises are discussed here.

Shakespeare's plays have stimulating plots and sub-plots. The story element is the most important factor. His characters get involved in bloody battles, death by poison, family feuds, problems between siblings, problems between parents and children... The plays are also littered with parties, weddings and funerals. They are quite simply action-packed.

The stories are timeless and can be used in any classroom setting. Not only are the stories exciting but they are still relevant today. Shakespeare's plays are dramatic and full of conflict. He captured the essence of human conflict in his writing which transcends time. This provides an excellent insight into the situation based understanding. They facilitate and accelerate development of the oral skills since they motivate students to achieve a clearer comprehension and awareness of its characters.

Though drama in the classroom can assume many forms, there are two main types, which are *dramatization* and *improvisation*. Dramatization requires classroom performance of scripted materials. Students can make up their own scripts for short stories or sections of novels, adapting them as closely as possible to the real text. Based on the story, they must guess what the characters would say and how they would say it. Scripts written by students are also possible to use with plays. Poems comprising one or more characters may also be scripted by students. Students should attentively read assigned sections of dialogue in advance and be able to answer questions about characters and plot. They should indicate vocabulary, idioms, or dialogue they don't understand and words they cannot pronounce. Students next rehearse the scene with their partners.

Some activities which can be proposed in the class are to emphasize the story and make it fun in the class room.

For example, there are several themes and situations running through the major plays of Shakespeare, like 'Othello', that can be related to the present: anger, jealousy, infidelity, corruption, power and love to name but a few. Once you have acknowledged these themes and discussed the relationships between the characters in the plays, move on.

Shakespeare's plays were written to be performed so when teaching them to students one can always focus on the performance. Let the students explore the same themes in their own lives or in the lives of people they know. Let them discover how the themes are universal and relevant to them.

Literature enhances ELT through elements such as authentic material, language in use and aesthetic representation of the spoken language, as well as language and cultural enrichment. It is with this last element that literature opens the door that leads to a wider and closer look on the culture (or cultures) where the target language is spoken. Shakespeare's words are the most influential. An estimated 3000 words and expressions that we use today originated in Shakespeare's plays and sonnets. Student's vocabulary can be increased in many possible genres. It's enriching for the students to see well-known expressions in their original contexts and to use them in completely new situations. For example: his famous quote, "All the world is a stage..."

Here one can cautiously generalize the above concepts to any work of literature. Literature can be regarded as a rich source of 'authentic material.' It conveys two features in its written text: one is 'language in use' and the second is an 'aesthetic representation of the spoken language'. 'Language in use' provides students with an approach to the language nourished by different linguistic and rhetorical uses, forms and conventions of the written mode: irony, exposition, argument, narration and so on. This is precisely needed in the context of modern Indian students who are merging the lines between British English, American English and Indian English. Paradoxically, literature as aesthetic recreation can be considered a much more "authentic" source and can inspire more

authority in the use and enrichment of language than English textbooks or even the direct samples of language.

A literary text provides students with a much clearer idea about the syntactic structure of a written text and to what extent written language differs from spoken language. By getting used to the formation and function of sentences, to the structure of a paragraph, a section or a chapter, their writing skill improves and their speech skill gain in eloquence. As they read, students get an idea of the contemporary or historical way of life where the story is taking place and thus develop insight into the country that speaks the language they are learning.

A small exercise can be like this...

“Here are some famous metaphors. See if you can figure out their meanings.

1. All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances - William Shakespeare
2. Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life. - Pablo Picasso
3. All our words are but crumbs that fall down from the feast of the mind. - Khalil Gibran
4. Let us be grateful to people who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom. -Marcel Proust”

The teacher has an important role in teaching English through literature. First, he should determine the aim of language teaching in relation to the needs and expectations of the students. At elementary levels, for example, students should be given simplified or specially written stories. At advanced levels, however, students are given literature in its original form so that they can develop their literary competence in the target language.

Disadvantages :

This approach also has some major disadvantages . On the one hand, an efferent reading keeps the students alienated from the text and language, as it prevents an active environment of creative experimentation at a personal and collective level. On the other hand, cultural insight is very superficial due to the nature of the efferent reading, since readers only follow the leads provided by the text itself, thus missing the inter textual references the literary work may offer.

In the end one can sum up in the words of Samovar, Porter, and Jain observe: “Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted... Culture...is the foundation of communication”

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