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Explorations: Teaching and Learning English in India

Issue 7: Managing resources and integrating ICT

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Explorations: Teaching and Learning English in India

Issue 7: Overview

Managing resources and integrating ICT

Two of the papers in this issue of *Explorations: Teaching and Learning English in India* investigate the professional practice of managing resources and the process of selecting and exploiting materials best suited to supporting effective learning. Through this professional practice, teachers can make informed choices about which resources to select and how to use them and reflect on the extent the resources have effectively met learner outcomes. The third paper looks at the professional practice of integrating ICT, the use of which represents a powerful source of and vehicle for these resources. Through this teachers develop skills in exploiting ICT for classroom purposes and encourage its use to support autonomous learning.

Jeena George and **Sudipta Singha Roy** look at two resources available to the teacher. **Jeena** reports on the successful use of diary writing to help secondary school students increase the richness and effectiveness of their use of vocabulary and emphasises that this activity leads to higher performance, confidence and creativity among the learners who participate. **Sudipta** examines ways of motivating students through theatre and drama and suggests practical ways as to how this resource can be made available to learners. **Chanchala Tiwari** and **Ranjit Singh** investigate secondary school teachers' attitudes to information technology in the state of Bihar and in particular the extent to which teachers feel supported by the state in developing ICT skills.

About the authors

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About the English Language Teaching Research Partnerships (ELTReP) Award programme

India has a long tradition of educational research but the results of this have not always reached the wider world. Through a range of programmes, British Council India places considerable emphasis on encouraging and supporting inquiry. A key

strand of that work between 2012 and 2016 has been the English Language Teaching Research Partnerships (ELTReP) Award programme. The programme aimed to facilitate high quality, innovative research to benefit the learning and teaching of English in India and to improve the access of ELT policy makers, professionals from India and the United Kingdom and the global ELT community to that research. All writers contributing to the eleven issues of *Explorations: Teaching and Learning English in India* were selected and supported in their research by the ELTReP Award programme.

All three papers in this issue have been written by practitioners in the field, whether teachers, lecturers, educational department personnel or other roles that involve day-to-day contact with the teaching and learning of English. The researchers, many of whom will be seeing their work published for the first time, have designed and implemented their studies and present results which in each case are innovative and thought-provoking. Each paper reflects the creativity, detailed awareness of context and practical suggestions of a wide range of writers, from different backgrounds and working in different situations.

We very much hope you enjoy *Explorations: Teaching and Learning English in India* and that you feel the insights the papers provide into a variety of educational environments are applicable to your own context, wherever you may be working.

Acknowledgements

The opinions expressed in the papers in this issue are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent or reflect the views of the British Council.

1

Diary writing as a vocabulary building activity for English language learners

Jeena George

'Writing in a diary is a really strange experience for someone like me. Not only because I've never written anything before, but also because it seems to me that later on neither I nor anyone else will be interested in the musings of a thirteen-year old school girl. Oh well, it doesn't matter. I feel like writing.'

Frank (1952)

This is a report of an enquiry made into the effectiveness of diary writing as a vocabulary building activity for English Language learners.

1. Background

1.1. English in school

Schools in India offer English as a first language and second language. Those who take English as a second language take their mother tongue, that is, the first language that they learn when they are a baby, rather than a language learned at school, as their first language in school but those who take English as a first language learn it as the primary language. Learning a new language as a first language, as the curriculum demands, can be a daunting task for a learner. Achieving the fluency of a native speaker and gaining mastery over the language to meet academic expectations need concerted efforts from the learner. Classroom activities provide considerable help to the learner in the form of textual learning – reading, discussions, answering questions, doing projects, writing tests, etc. It is observed, however, that the vocabulary from other subjects seldom figures in students' compositions.

Mastering the vocabulary and language patterns, which might be quite different from their native language and not encountered in their non-academic setting, becomes an uphill task for the learner. The majority of learners are thus heavily dependent on academic exercises. In India the school curricula are often drawn up with this in mind, following a graded approach.

Students find comprehension level questions from texts they have already understood relatively easy. However, at higher grades, i.e., class 8 onwards, the learner is expected to write lengthy compositions, 350 to 450 words or more, where wider vocabulary, reading and writing skills are required. The subtle use of vocabulary, the effective use of grammar (which they thought they had already mastered in lower grades) suddenly become very difficult for them. This was even so to a lesser extent when they were doing shorter compositions of 50 to 100 words in the lower grades, i.e. up to grade 7.

1.2. Language acquisition

Language acquisition happens through non-

guided learning – just as in mother tongue acquisition – through formal and informal interactions with teachers, parents, peers, guests at school, at home, in the school bus, in the playground, etc.

1.3. Language learning

In a typical classroom, English is taught through textual reading and discussions followed by language exercises that vary from comprehension level questions to grammar and composition. The teaching is then tested.

Mastering vocabulary forms a major part of language learning in most classrooms, in the form of synonyms, antonyms, homophones, rhymes, frame sentences, puzzles, dictation, cloze passages, fill in the blanks, morphology (prefixes, affixes, and root words), etymology etc. Students get acquainted with a wider vocabulary through reading library books, magazines and the newspapers, doing projects, making presentations in class and in assembly etc. It thus becomes clear that an Indian English learner, irrespective of the fact that English is not used as the language of communication at home, is introduced to a wide variety of words. This presupposes that the learner, by the time they come to grade 10, has a vast vocabulary.

Students from the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education, ICSE, and International General Certificate of Secondary Education, IGCSE, who took part in this study, are required to write 350 to 450 word essays for their term papers. Most of the students seem to use just basic vocabulary without much precision in expression, with a '*good'* or '*nice'* to describe anything positive and '*bad'* or '*not nice'* to talk about anything negative. This leaves their writing rather bland and predictable, without much variation between the compositions of individual learners.

The pestering question was: in spite of spending years, in fact, more than 12 years, in mastering vocabulary, why do students fail to put their vocabulary to actual use? The ICSE examination pattern requires the students to write one lengthy composition of 350 to 450 words for 25 marks

and a letter carrying 10 marks. The IGCSE pattern requires the students to write three long answers and a composition of 350 to 450 words of 25 marks each. Therefore writing long compositions is a must for these students. The fear of 'going wrong' is found to be one of the reasons why students refuse to be adventurous with new words, rather than sticking to common words. This made the researcher inquire if students would use a more accurate and varied vocabulary if the 'fear of going wrong' was removed, when their writing will not be evaluated, graded or judged for their language proficiency. Students feel perturbed by academic underperformance, which often is due to a lack of language skills and quite often they get branded as underachievers and are ridiculed by their peers, parents and teachers. This affects their social and emotional wellbeing too. Some students get withdrawn, depressed and quite often turn aggressive. The learner gets caught in this mire unless the problem is recognised and external help is provided.

1.4. Benefits of diary writing as outlined by diary writers

Sara Zasowski lists the benefits of keeping a journal in her blog (Zasowski, 2012), all of which are relevant to this study:

'Writing a journal has many benefits, but here are a few I think are important to consider:

1. Writing in a journal is a way to establish a writing routine. By making the time every day to jot down thoughts, whether one page or six, creates a good writing habit for those looking to improve their skill.

2. Writing in a journal gives you the power of perspective. Revisiting past times and selves will help you realise that day-to-day life changes so much and you have, too.

3. Writing in a journal is a way to say what you would not have otherwise said. Some of us have a lot rattling around in our brains - the release of a journal can not only be therapeutic, but it can also be life-saving.

4. Writing in a journal is a productive way to spend your free time. By having it as an

option, you can sit down and be quiet/listen to music and just be.

5. Writing in a journal is an excuse to be creative. The space can be used in any way you choose - whether to write a daily account, doodle something you saw on the bus, or write lists of things you want to do this week. Having creative outlets is good for you.

6. Writing in a journal is something that's privately yours. Having a secret or place like this can be freeing.'

1.5. Diary writing and cathartic effect

Catharsis is the process of venting aggression in a socially acceptable way to release or get rid of the emotions. According to psychoanalytic theory, this emotional release is linked to a need to release unconscious conflicts.

James Pennebaker, in his work, '*Opening Up*' (Pennebaker, 1997) describes how diary writing can help a person with physical and emotional problems: 'Since inhibition requires physiological work, it inhibits short-term biological changes and long-term health. Inhibition also influences thinking abilities. By not talking about an inhibited event, for example, we usually do not translate the event into language. This prevents us from understanding and assimilating the event. On the other hand, confrontation reduces the effects of inhibition. Confrontation forces a rethinking of events, thereby helping people to understand and ultimately assimilate the event. By writing or talking about previously inhibited experiences, individuals translate them into language. Once it is language-based, people can better understand the experience and ultimately put it behind them.'

1.6. Slow vocabulary and learning disability

Harvard University published a report on studies conducted in English language learning (www.gse.harvard.edu/uk/news). Here are a few excerpts from that study related to the importance of vocabulary building which are relevant to this study:

1. There are large and persistent gaps between the reading performance of language-minority and English-only (EO) children: 'Fourth-grade performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading test shows a 22–29 point scale score advantage for children living in homes where a language other than English was never used compared with children who lived in homes where a language other than English was always used' (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003).

2. Poor vocabulary leads to poor comprehension: 'ELLs who experience slow vocabulary development are less able to comprehend text at grade level than their EO peers, and they may be at risk of being diagnosed as learning disabled, when in fact their limitation is due to limited English vocabulary and poor comprehension that results in part from this limitation. A recent report funded by the U.S. Department of Education underscores this possibility' (Development Associates, 2003).

3. Second language learners display a lack of an in-depth knowledge of words: 'Knowing a word implies knowing many things about the word—its literal meaning, its various connotations, the sorts of syntactic constructions into which it enters, the morphological options it offers and a rich array of semantic associates such as synonyms and antonyms. These various aspects are related to the depth of word knowledge, which is as important as learning many words (breadth of word knowledge). Second-language learners have been shown to be impaired in in-depth of word knowledge, even for frequently occurring words' (Verhallen and Schoonen, 1993).

4. There is a gap in the vocabulary between English language learners and English only speakers: 'Cross-sectional data collected on fourth-grade Spanish speaking and EO students in four schools in Virginia, Massachusetts, and California corroborates that ELLs have limited breadth of

vocabulary, and also indicate they lack depth of vocabulary knowledge as well (August et al., 1999)'. The results confirmed data reported by Umbel et al., (1992) that there is a large gap in the breadth of vocabulary between ELLs and EO speakers and that the gap does not diminish over the course of the year.

2. Research question

Can diary writing help improve the vocabulary of a learner who takes English as a first language to aid longer compositions?

3. Methodology

This study incorporates interview and observational methods.

One hundred and twenty five students from Grades 6 and 10 of the Indian Certificate of School Examinations (ICSE) and International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) were asked to participate in this study and make regular diary entries. This yielded 11 diary writers. They were interviewed and their academic performances were observed by the investigator. The sample comprised 84 Grade 10 ICSE students, ten Grade 10 IGCSE students and 31 Grade 6 ICSE students.

4. Analysis of diary entries made by Grade 6 students

Thirty one students of Grade 6 were initiated into diary writing and asked to keep a diary during their Christmas holidays. Five students made diary entries every day and the remaining 26 students did not make any diary entries.

After the holidays the students were asked to talk about their holiday experience and it was found that on an average, the diary writers were more eloquent; that is, they spoke for longer, recollected more events, added comments and used more nouns and verbs in their narration compared to those who did not make any diary entries, even when most of their diary entries seemed a literal repetition of previous ones.

Here are a few sample entries made by the

students. The spelling and grammatical errors are retained as in the original entries.

4.1. Sample entry of Participant #1

December 25, Friday

I woke up at 7:15 am and did my morning routine. Today me, my family and my friends were going to a farmhouse at Varkala. After me and my family were ready to go we waited for our friends to come. After they came we started the trip at 11:30 am. It was a one and a half hour trip. We reached the place around 1:00 pm. After we reached we looked around and played till night. And we slept at 10:00 pm.

Analysis

A number of nouns are used in the diary entries of Participant No 1: 'farmhouse', 'routine', 'trip', 'beach', 'Tirichandur', 'pilgrimage' and verbs such as 'cayaking' (though spelt incorrectly), 'booked', 'slept', 'woke', 'started', 'reached', 'went', 'swimmed' (though incorrect) figure in the entries. This is an excellent aid to remember what had happened during the holidays and since the writer has learned to name and explain things and events, expression will gradually improve when the child is required to write about his experience a second time.

4.2. Diary entries of Participant #2

The creativity of the writer is evident in the following entries:

24th Thursday 2015

Today I'm writing a dairy. And you my friend need a name so your name is... secra which comes from the Cather word meaning 'Secret' or 'Personal'. Actually Cather is a language which I made. Anyway this is me and you.

I will go to church at 1130 pm for Christmas. Advanced Merry Christmas Secra.

26th Saturday 2015

OMG! Not even a single holiday homework done, Don't worry there's still a lot of time. Today I had

a competition for English Speech in my Church. The topic was need for environmental protection in today's world. And guess I got the 3rd prize, too bad. I was the smallest, I felt like a dot in between the huge people. Oh! in the morning I also went for music & dance class.

27th Sunday 2015

I went for Sunday class and sang in the choir in the early morning. After that I went for music and (Bharatanatyam) dance class. Which is actually nice. It's fun to hang out with friends and today also had a Bharatanatyam competition. I don't know the result. Too sleepy. Good night Secra.

28th Monday 2015

Today I had Malayalam recitation competition. And got the, what? What do you think Secra? 2nd prize for Bharatanatyam. I am too lazy today.

29th Tuesday 2015

Sorry Secra

I cannot write today because I have to go out and there will be no time to talk (write).

Sorry

Analysis
This student has made a friendly relationship with her diary, given it a name and confides her feelings and emotions with her diary: 'I am too lazy today' (diary entry for 28th December), 'I am feeling angry today', and as soon as she has put her feeling down she feels relaxed: 'I feel a little relaxed right now' (entry for 31st). 'And we have this girl called Anusha in my Church. Everybody says she was born with golden spoon in her mouth.'

'PS=Not spoon, bronze, no, steel shovel.(3rd January)'

She confides her secrets with her diary: 'And got the, what? What do you think Secra? 2nd Prize for Bharatnatyam' (27th), 'And I got third for poetry' (30th).

Diary writing is a form of mental relaxation: 'I feel a little relaxed right now' (entry for 31st). Even when she keeps on reminding herself that she has to do her holiday homework and feels it as a burden, she keeps on making diary entries on a regular basis: 'Must start doing the homework so I started with Maths. Ah! I took 11/2 hrs doing Maths' (30th). 'Must start doing the homework. I did my Chemistry homework till 11:30 at night' (2nd). Even when she is tired she doesn't forget to jot down a few words or have a conversation with her diary: 'Too sleepy. Good night Secra' and 'I cannot write today because I have to go out and there will be no time to talk (write)' (27th and 29th).

A bond is formed between the two as she writes: 'I am going to school. I will really miss you Secra. I cannot write on you anymore' (3rd January).

She records that she has been taking part in competitions: 'Today I had a competition for English Speech in my Church. The topic was need for environmental protection in today's world. And guess I got the 3rd prize, too bad' (26th Dec), 'and today also had a Bharatanatyam competition. I don't know the result' (27th Dec), and 'What do you think Secra? 2nd prize for Bhratanatyam'.

These diary entries are accompanied by drawings, with an apt comment, that express her feelings:

'Me holding the "living" diary- no eyeballs.'

'Me like a dot.'

'Me in the lazy mode.'

4.3. Diary entries of Participant # 3
This set of entries made by another creative and independent thinker are from 22nd December to 2nd January.

22.12.15 Tuesday

The holidays are about to begin. I've started making preparations for the big play tomorrow, I've made masks, the stockings and I've packed up for my vacations, looks like everything is ready.

Happy Yeah Accomplishment

Tired (But still happy)
23.12.15 Wednesday

Sree Lekshmi ma'am left today, It was very disapointing and upseting. It made me feel like crying. (I held back my tears though, since I'm soo strong.)

Failed

Accomplishment

25.12.15

12:01 am

It's Christmas!

I'm travelling in the car right now, my grandmother came late to pick us up from Trivandrum to Kannur, well let's say that she came at 11:00 pm so, not exactly the happiest of travels.

Today I played with my cousins and met my relatives. That's all I did today, a little boring actually, since my cousins are not above the age of eight.

27.12.15

I'm leaving today afternoon, since today afternoon my grandmother is going to my uncle, (her son's) house in America, my cousins are going to stay at my house for a few days.

28.12.15

My cousins left today, we dropped them at the airport, it was sad.

29.12.15

Whoo-hoo! I went to see 'star wars' 'the force awakens' today. it was awesome. and on the top of that! I ate from Subway. Yippee!

Yeah!

30.12.15

My father and mother started going to work again, so today I kept myself occupied by skating, watching T.V., reading 2 books playing a board game and... sleeping.

(don't forget eating)

Just a normal day. Boring

11:55 pm

Oh my gosh!

10 minutes to new year Whoo-hoo! I guess this day turned out to be...

Exciting!

after all!

Jan 1st 2016

12:01 am

It's new year! I was so happy that I ran around the house screaming 'happy new year!' and unfortunately I bumped into the table, but saw the fireworks from my balcony, I saw some from the technopark, some from another apartment and from almost every crook and cranny. I live in the 11th floor so it felt like I saw the whole world out there!

Happy New Year!

10:00 am

I woke up a little late today!

! No problem!

9:00 pm

We went for an outing with our family friends today and ate dinner at Tamarasherry churam, some new restaurant.

2ⁿᵈ January

My father said that we'll go for the 'Saff Games' finals tomorrow, I never went to the greenfield stadium before.

10 am

I got my library books. hurray!

Analysis

These entries carry the little excitements and disappointments of the writer. She has drawn emoticons to express her feelings and makes an assessment of each day with an: 'Acomplished', 'Exciting!' 'Yippee!' 'Boring' or a 'Yeah'. This method of self-assessment and reflection helps her to set realistic expectations and perceive events on a realistic plane: 'looks like everything is ready' (22ⁿᵈ Dec), 'she came at 11:00 pm so, not exactly the happiest of travels' (25ᵗʰ Dec). Absence and departures of loved ones cause emotional turbulence, but the student is trying to come to terms with them in her own way and reiterates that she is strong; even when she is fighting back tears. The multiple entries on certain days also point out to the fact how specifically she records events in their sequence. The numerous nouns, verbs, exclamations in the entries make it clear that writing improves writing; you need words to express yourself and that builds your vocabulary.

4.4 Analysis of curricular performance of diary writers – Grade 6

Table 1: Academic performance

Score in annual examination	>90%	>80	<80
All subjects	3	2	nil
English	3	2	nil

Table 2: Literary competitions debate, essay, story writing, extempore

Participated	Won prizes
5	4

Table 3: Cultural competitions dance, drama, music, etc.

Participated	Won prizes
5	2

Table 4: Sports competitions

Participated	Won prizes
5	2

5. Findings

The Grade 10 students who wrote diaries were asked a set of questions, provided in the Appendix, after an academic year. Responses are shown below:

Table 5: Question 1 – When did you start writing your diary?

Grade	Number of students	Percentage
In Grade 5 or earlier	5	94
In Grade 10	1	16

Table 6: Question 2 – How did you start writing your diary?

Reason for starting to write diary	Number of students	Percentage
As an academic exercise	4	66.6
Parent initiated into diary writing (got a diary as a gift)	2	33.3

Question 3: In which language do you make your diary entries?

All the participants made their diary entries in English.

Question 4: Does the support from your family matter in writing and keeping a diary?

'Yes' was the answer. Those who have been keeping diaries for many years reported that they would not have been able to continue writing if parents had objected. It gives them peace of mind that parental consent is there. In fact the parents of most of the participants either initiated them or encouraged them in keeping a diary.

Table 7: Question 5 – Do you feel compelled to write? Do you write daily?

Those who had been writing diaries:	Yes I have to write/I do write and confide in my diary everyday	Makes only random entries
for more than 5 years	3	1
less than a year	1	1

Question 6: What sort of entries do you make in the diary?

The students made entries about their thoughts and feelings, and recounted the events of the day, the things that happened in school, fights with friends, disappointments, about getting scolded by parents, etc. One participant wrote down the exchanges between her friends and rehearsed them at home. This student reported that it helped her overcome her communication problems over time.

Question 7: How do you feel after making your entries?

'Relieved', 'happy', 'unburdened' was how the participants described their feeling. They felt they had come to terms with their issues.

Table 8: Question 8 – Do you share the contents of the diary with anyone?

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Response
I don't like to share the contents of my diary with anyone	4	66.6
I don't mind sharing the contents of my diary with a select few (either a parent or grandparent or best friend)	2	33.3

Question 9: How has diary writing helped you?

The responses were 'built confidence in speaking and writing', 'helped overcome communication issues' (stammering, not knowing how and what to communicate), 'helped to overcome shyness and win friends', 'helped build confidence to state my opinions' and 'helped to be more open to criticism'.

Question 10: What sort of words have you started using more?

The students were not able to pinpoint what sort of words they had started using more, but they felt that they generally started using more words, 'all sorts of words'.

One student, who started writing a diary for the first time in Grade 10, and wrote for the course of one academic year said he started using more verbs and adjectives.

Question 11: Do you read the entries you have made earlier?

All the six students read their previous entries frequently.

Question 12: How has diary writing helped you to improve your written expression?

The majority of respondents reported that they read through earlier entries and this helped them to find out their mistakes and sharpen their expression.

Table 9: Question 13 – What do you like about diary writing?

Some of the responses:	
I have a secret friend.	I got over my fear to write.
I can tell anything to my diary.	Learned to schedule my time.
I do not face criticism for what I write.	I began to reflect on my actions.
It is ok if I make mistakes.	I stopped feeling guilty as I disclosed my personal anxieties with my diary.
I get to solve my personal problems by writing.	A problem discussed with my diary is over and done with. I do not have to think about it anymore.

Question 14: Does your diary have a name?
Almost all the diary writers gave their diaries a name and made their entries addressing it by that name.

Table 10: Question 15 – Will you continue to make diary entries?

Response	No. of Respondents
Yes	5
No	0
Maybe	1

Analysis of academic performance – Grade 10 (Table 12)

Score in annual examination	>90%	>80	<80
All subjects	5	1	nil
English	5	1	nil

Table 11: Literary competitions debate, essay, story writing, extempore

Participated	Won prizes
6	6

Table 12: Cultural competitions dance, drama, music, etc.)

Participated	Won prizes
2	nil

Table 13: Sports competitions

Participated	Won prizes
2	2

6. Discussion and final reflections

6.1. Diary writing is a highly personal form of written expression

The Grade 10 students were reluctant to share their diaries with anybody, their parents or best friends. The Grade 6 students did not feel inhibited to share their diary- maybe as they did it more as an academic exercise and they were younger.

6.2. Diary writing leads to retrospection and reflection

Most of the diary writers reported that they periodically read through their previous entries and this helped them to solve their personality issues (they laughed at their own mistakes) as well as problems with ease of expression in a foreign language. One participant did not know how to hold a conversation, so she used to eavesdrop on her friends on the sly and note down their jokes and conversations in her diary and rehearse them and this she said gave her confidence and won her many friends.

Two other participants were very shy and diary writing helped them to partially overcome their fear as they jotted down their personal fights and problems and became willing to accept their shortcomings and laugh at their mistakes. This gave them strength to move on without getting weighed down by past failures and setbacks.

Ninety percent of the participants reported that they learned how to narrate an incident - as they had to recollect what happened during the course of the day to make the entries.

6.3. Diary writing fills a human need to communicate

All the participants felt that they were talking to a friend as they wrote in their diaries. Most addressed their diaries by name and felt the need to talk to their 'friend' on a daily basis and disclosed all their secrets to it and never wanted to share their diaries with anybody.

Four of the diary writers were single children and another one was temporarily staying separated from his sibling when they took to diary writing. This indicates that the basic human need to communicate, to open up, can be fulfilled by diaries. To communicate you need to understand your feelings and emotions, categorise them and sequence them and put them in the right order. This promotes vocabulary building.

6.4. Takes up challenging topics

Students' performance varies with academic expectations and the training provided. Depending upon the syllabus they studied, and the examination pattern, the academic writing of the students varied. It was observed that the diary writers took up more adventurous topics for their longer compositions. Their compositions were marked by personal touches and observations. It was also observed that diary writers wrote lengthier pieces of composition. There are excellent writers among non-diary writers too, who can write with more precision and accuracy. But what sets the diary writers apart is that they have overcome personal issues and bettered their previous performances.

6.5. Errors

Do diary writers make mistakes? Yes, they do make spelling as well as grammatical mistakes but they were more adventurous in their usage of vocabulary and the treatment of the topic they chose to speak or write on. One participant made frequent spelling errors but had a strong voice and put her point forward more confidently. This same participant had won many inter-school debate and elocution competitions. This indicates that clarity of expression will eventually follow content.

The Grade 6 students who took to diary writing were found to have improved in their ability to frame sentences with new words they learned.

6.6. Diary writers have high creativity

Most of the diary writers were highly creative taking part in art and literary competitions, in writing, painting, singing, acting, etc., whereas they seemed to participate less in sports and physical activities.

6.7. Diary writers are high achievers

Diary writers performed well academically, figuring in the top ten in their respective classes. They were above average students even when they took to diary writing.

6.8. Diary writing imparts confidence

It is not only writing skills that the diary writer develops. All the diary writers regularly took part in literary and non-literary programmes and competitions at intra- and inter-school levels. They felt confident to face an audience, deliver a speech or speak impromptu. Three of the participants were school leaders and regularly made speeches to large audiences that comprised the whole school as well as guests from other walks of life. This does not mean that they were confident initially. They learned to overcome their shyness and hesitation as they jotted down their personal issues in their diaries and as one of the participants said, 'got it over and done with when I wrote it down'.

Those who had been regularly writing a diary for more than five years reported that they felt confident as writers and felt no inhibition in using English language – in speech or writing. Those who had been writing a diary for a year reported that they use more verbs and adjectives in their compositions now.

6.9. Diary writing gives them a sense of accomplishment

The diary writers felt that their diaries were their personal achievement, in which no one shared a part. This boosted their self-worth and self-confidence.

In retrospect, the diary writers felt they had achieved something.

7. What I learned as a researcher

7.1. Diary writing takes various forms in the present times

There are various other avenues for reflection and self-expression than diary writing these days. Those who had excellent inter-personal skills were not so keen on taking up diary writing. Many students used social media like Facebook, Hike, Skype, Instagram and blogs as forums to express their thoughts and feelings.

Those who had taken up diary writing improved their writing, fine-tuned their creativity and gained confidence in using varied vocabulary; their written as well as inter-personal communication skills developed too. They took up more challenging written assignments with confidence. Their oral communication also developed considerably. It can be deduced that writing continuously without external pressure or evaluation helped their ability to use language with proficiency.

7.2. Not everyone needs to be a writer

Everyone need not be a writer. There are students who excel in other things too. What matters is whether language can be used to communicate. There are students who have excellent oral skills, but are not good writers. Some are very brief and to the point, scoring high on accuracy.

Therefore, the ability to write at length should not be considered the only test to measure the skill in vocabulary use of a student.

I would recommend diary writing to those with emotional issues, slow learners and those who haven't found a way to ascertain their own self. The freedom of being able to express their feelings without restraint will enable them to find their own voice and gain confidence.

Diary writing should be introduced in lower grades. Starting late, as at Grade 10, when there is more academic pressure on the student, might be a little too late to introduce diary writing. Keeping a journal or diary will help the learner to organise their thoughts and reflect upon the day's events and write in an orderly manner. This will also help the learner to focus on quality over quantity as they learn to edit unnecessary detail and present the relevant with more accuracy.

Diary writing can be done in the school itself as an end of period activity or as a reflective exercise which the students should be able to do in a relaxed and enjoyable way. Irrespective of what they have written, the student must be appreciated for their entries.

Learning a foreign language as a first language is not very easy. The fluency and the ease will come gradually with practice. Vocabulary building will be greatly aided by diary writing, which in a way forces the writers to make entries about details from their own experiences and surroundings, which can be different from what they have hitherto encountered in any prescribed text and thus enrich their writing. As more and more words are needed to give expression to the writer's thoughts and feelings, the very act of writing improves writing. It builds confidence in the learner and helps them to gain their own voice.

8. Areas for further research

- How can diary writing help build the vocabulary of those who take English as a second language?

- How can diary writing help non-diary writers build their vocabulary?

- Does the usage of English as a mother tongue or use of English at home help learners to build their vocabulary to aid their written work?

- How can diary writers be helped to lessen their errors in spelling and grammar?

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Appendix 1

Open-ended questions asked to the students who made diary entries

1. How did you start writing the diary?

2. Which language is used to make diary entries?

3. Does the support from your family matter?

4. Do you feel compelled to write? Do you write daily?

5. What sort of entries do you make in the diary?

6. How do you feel after making your entries?

7. Do you share the contents of the diary with anyone?

8. How has diary writing helped you?

9. Has it helped you to improve your written expression?

10. What sort of words have you started using more?

11. Do you read the entries you have made earlier?

12. What do you like about diary writing?

13. Will you continue to make diary entries?

Appendix 2

Observation framework

1. Takes part in literary competitions in school

2. Takes part in inter-school literary competitions

3. Takes up leadership roles

4. Makes presentations in class

5. Makes presentations in school assembly

2

Exploring theatre in language learning in ELT in an L2 environment with special reference to government aided/sponsored schools in West Bengal

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1. Background

1.1. Introduction

This report aims to explore the complex ELT scenario in government aided/sponsored schools in West Bengal. It seeks to delve deep into the 'real' practices as well as the psyche of all the stakeholders a) to find out the root cause/causes behind the present ELT scenario and b) to find a viable model of culturally appropriate pedagogy for ESL based on application of drama - one of the most popular cultural activities in these schools.

1.2. Working context

India is a land of legendary linguistic diversity (1635 languages, 2011 Census) and its constitution guarantees linguistic rights to its citizens. Yet the social aspiration to speak English is remarkably high. English is believed to be a way to climb the social ladder. West Bengal is no exception to this. Last year more than 1.2 million students took their grade 10 board examination with English as a second language. Though 11 languages are available as first language in the state-run schools the only second language at secondary level is English. The social aspiration is so high that a low ranking political party (usually with a single member in the 295 seat strong State Legislative Assembly for the last two decades)

was successful in calling a statewide general strike demanding the re-introduction of English at primary level.

But the irony that defines the ELT scenario in government aided schools in my state is that a *Madhyamik* (Board grade 10 examination) passed student finds it hard to conduct day-to-day communication in English. The parents and guardians put a special emphasis on 'English learning' as do the governments and the boards. Neither this social aspiration or the concern of the other stakeholders are reflected in the students' attitude to ESL classes. The graveness of the apathy is an offshoot of a social attitude that attaches a higher status to the English language. Most of the parents and guardians perceive a good teacher as one who can read out and make students read aloud, manage the class well and even punish students in innovative, ways bypassing the Supreme Court's directive against any kind of corporal punishment, and more than anything else maintain an image of awe and fear. These ideas do get reflected in the classrooms. Most teachers deal with a Functional-Communicative-Approach driven course book only by translating the text into Bengali. Moreover a high social aspiration to speak English leads to a deficit paradigm and consequently induces an inordinate level of anxiety and stress in the young

learners. Students with varied mother tongues, cultures, and levels of language acquisition hardly find any relation between their study and its consequences. Students have scarcely any scope for using English in real life. SSA (*Sarva Siksha Aviyan*, a government scheme) qualifies every student for auto-promotion till eighth grade. In such big classes they get personal attention only rarely. Unmotivated, these students take examinations which put their reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary skills to the test armed with only a few half memorised answers to the questions which they can only vaguely remember and hardly understand. If they fail in the examination, they are supposed to be given remedial tuition in the school. But in reality, they are promoted to the next class, in most cases even without any supplementary test.

To bridge the gap between the social aspiration and the actual condition of English language acquisition, a unique practice has begun to be more popular – 'Private Tuition in group'. These tuition classes with a group of students ranging all the way from 4 to 60 are in no sense a private affair but for the fact that they are privately funded.

In spite of the state of things what makes the scenario all the more interesting is a belief in English as a ladder to a good life and success, cutting across all rural-urban divides, castes, and class barriers. On the other hand, theatre is highly accepted among students in schools. Be it the annual cultural programme or drama competitions, enthusiastic participation is a common scenario. Theatre does command respect in our state. The Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, conducts theatre workshops in their orientation course for the secondary and higher secondary teachers throughout the country throughout the year. This initiative aims for a culturally appropriate pedagogical approach using theatre as a central tool.

1.3. Motivation behind the project

All over the world, research in the application of theatre in language learning has generated

an interest among scholars. The conceptual framework of Theatre in Education (TIE) was established in Britain by Bertha Waddell in 1937, when she was given permission by Glasgow's Director of Education to take performances into primary schools. Scholars in one way or another dealt with language learning issues with varied seriousness. In India we have an age-old tradition of theatre. We have a context which demands something to be done differently because here, ELT policy is still aspiring to realise the vision of the National Curriculum Framework 2005 which hardly recognises second language learning as a separate field of study. ESL is seen as just language learning. Teachers have been without workshops or seminars or any orientation programme on ELT for the last five years. In this study, I sought to utilise the knowledge I gathered from the past attempts to apply theatre in ESL with special emphasis on the TiLL (Theatre in Language Learning) model propounded by Vienna's English Theatre in partnership with Austrian Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst and Kultur (BMUKK) in an action research approach in Curriculum ELT in West Bengal government sponsored schools.

Source of inspiration

Annamaria Pinter's book (2006) helped me shape a holistic view of language learning. My faith in culturally appropriate pedagogy was reinforced by Claire Kramsch (1998). Faced with the issue of providing scope to the learners to experience an English language environment, I used to apply Augusto Boal's technique of Invisible Theatre. Simply put, it is a theatrical performance in a public place that never seeks to be recognised as performance: 'the goal is to make the intervention as realistic as possible so that it provokes spontaneous responses' (http://beautifultrouble. org/tactic/invisible-theater). I tried to adapt strategies to motivate young learners both from Zoltan Dornyei and Uma Ushioda. I tried to develop a good relationship with learners to increase their linguistic self-confidence and promote learner autonomy. Clare Wardman's paper (2012) encouraged me to think of my study. Two books, '*Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*' by Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers (2000) and '*Lessons from Good Language

Learners' by C Griffiths (2008), finally shaped my study. As a model, TiLL seemed closer to my needs. In the words of Sean Atia, (2009) 'the core objective of the model (TiLL) was to produce theatrical productions supporting the study of English as a foreign language by offering:

- professional theatre performances, acted by native English speakers

- the commission of age-appropriate and specifically targeted plays

- the publication and distribution of the play texts to students prior to performance

- the provision of educational support materials (exercises and questions based on the productions and texts).

The key pedagogical outcomes of this model were defined as:

- building cross-cultural understanding

- making the study of English fun

- taking language study out of the classroom context

- hearing English spoken by native speakers

- providing opportunities for conversations with native speakers.

It appeared to be a good starting point. My own experience in children's theatre along with the training in the orientation course at the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, New Delhi, by experts from the National School of Drama, New Delhi inspired me to plan a study of applied theatre with language learning as its primary focus in Government sponsored schools in West Bengal.

2. Statement of topic

This research project is devised in three phases:

- the first phase seeks to explore the nature and root cause of, as the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education admits in the foreword of the English coursebook, 'fear of learning English'

- the second phase is a pilot theatre project

- the final phase, based on reflection and review of the second one, seeks to deliver,

following an action research approach, a model of theatre in language learning with a focus on the government sponsored schools in West Bengal.

Research question:
The research question is whether a model of applied theatre would be effective in supporting ESL learners in government aided/sponsored schools in West Bengal.

The first phase attempts to explore the existing condition of ELT considering the following research question:

What is wrong with ELT in government aided/ sponsored schools in West Bengal?

In the second and third phase the focus is on:

What will be a good model of applied theatre in language learning in this context?

To arrive at an answer the following sub-questions are to be stressed.

What is the level of preparedness of the learners and ESL teachers for classroom transaction?

What do the students feel is necessary to make learning English fun?

What is the role of other stake holders with reference to the motivational aspect of learning English?

3. Research method

The research project follows a mixed method approach in the first phase comprising a questionnaire, different types of interviews (from one-to-one to focus groups) informal conversation, classroom observation and field notes. This mixed method approach is chosen only to decipher the subtle nuances of the complex situation where even the stakeholders prefer not to go on record with their honest observations.

In its second and third phase again with a mixed method approach, it will follow the following action spiral model propounded by Kemmis and McTaggart (2000: 564):
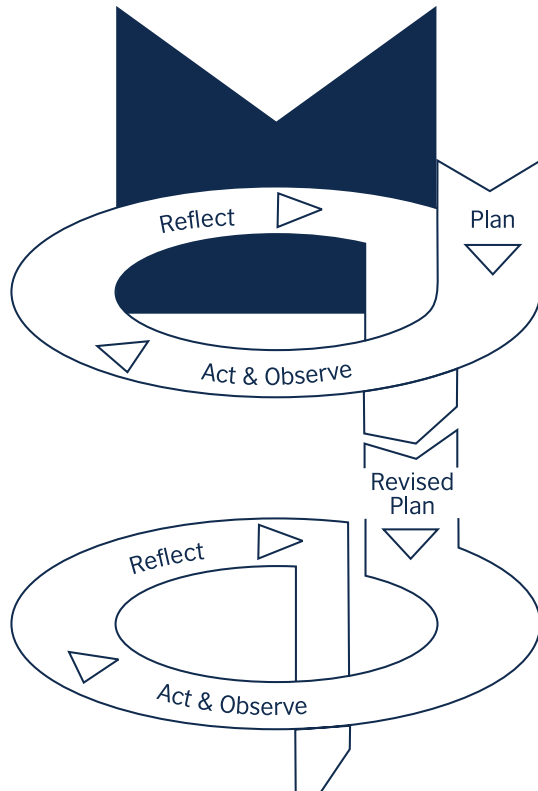
3.1. The research

The research is divided into three phases. In the first phase, nine schools, 28 ESL teachers, 48 guardians (eleven of them did not respond officially), four private tutors, five headmasters/ headmistresses/teacher-in-charge and more than 700 students are covered. Schools are from different parts of the state providing a variety of rural, urban and semi-urban areas. Care has been taken to cover students with different L1s and social and cultural backgrounds for the greatest generalisability. The principals/headmasters/ teachers in charge, class teachers, and English teachers are interviewed to explore the situation first. The semi-structured interviews as well as the informal conversation and questionnaire enquire into the reason for lack of interest on the part of the students and its possible impact on classroom ELT practice. All the interviews, whenever allowed, are recorded, for ease of analysis. Students' responses are video-recorded, as and when it is

allowed, for future analysis to cross-check their responses to the same issues at different points of time and development and even following different methods.

To collect students' responses, two questionnaires were prepared. The first is used to obtain a clear impression of their own schooling and also to familiarise them with the whole process of data collection (see Appendix 1). The second questionnaire is more specifically focused on their problems of language acquisition. However, in both cases, many students show reluctance to respond to the questionnaires. To collect their responses, structured group interviews were conducted and their responses were recorded in field notebooks. A cumulative record shows their general tendencies (see Appendix 2).

For the ESL teachers, semi-structured interviews were conducted but the issues with the private tutors were so complicated that only informal talking sessions were possible. To get the picture right, each of the four teachers were visited for more than four times at different times of the day. Lessons were planned to keep the students self-motivated. Informal conversation with four private tutors of ESL (who are giving private tuition to the students of the government aided or sponsored schools) with special emphasis on their evaluation of and attitude to the existing ELT situation was recorded (audio) with a hidden camera as none of them had earlier given us permission to record. However when permission was sought afterwards for the audio record, the tutors declined.

From the responses of the stakeholders (in phase 1) it seems that many problems originate from the stakeholder's uninformed way of dealing with the ESL issue. The guardians who give consent for participation in the project are requested not to 'teach' their wards English during the project period. Keeping in mind the demands of the students, their motivational lapses, and an assumed solution that could be delivered through a theatre-based pedagogical approach, a plan was designed by the researcher and executed by the theatre people from *Gayeshpur Sanglap* – a local theatre group.

BRITISH COUNCIL

Table 1: Early Literacy in English Diagnostic Tools

Source: Diagnostic Assessment Tools in English.
Available at www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/Pages/date.aspx

Diagnostic Tool	Skill *	Beginning	Progressing	Accelerating
Comprehend text	RC	Listen to story _____ and answer questions	Listen to _____ (book) and answer questions	Listen to _____ (book) and answer questions
Concepts of print	CP P	Front of book Where is title? Trace around a word	Where does the story begin? Which way to go Name and purpose of full stop	Name and purpose of quotation marks and question marks
Listening and recall	CR	Repeat sentences Follow simple directions with common positional language	Repeat sentences Follow instructions to construct a figure	Repeat sentences Follow instructions to construct a figure Ability to repeat instructions
Phonological awareness	WS	Identify syllables in words Identify words that rhyme	Identify words that rhyme	Generate words that rhyme
Oral language	OL:C OL:R	Name objects in a picture Describe actions in a picture	Use positional language to describe objects in a picture Describe clothing in a picture	Engage in conversation with the teacher with a picture prompt extent of utterance coherence vocabulary clarity
Reading	RA RF RC	Read environmental print	Listen to text and match words back to the text Identify common sight words in text	Read a story well supported by illustration with a simple repetitive structure fluency accuracy Answer questions about the story

Key

RC: reading comprehension CP: concepts of print P: punctuation	CR: comprehension of retell WS: words and sounds OL:C: oral language conversation OL:R: oral language retell	RA: reading accuracy RF: reading fluency RC: reading comprehension

- Theatre games have been devised using proven theatre workshop techniques including Yoga in such a way so as to make the students physically and mentally alert and to address vocabulary issues as well.

- Theatre workshop techniques that are employed to make the students receptive and responsive are pre-planned and age-appropriate.

- The teacher employs age-appropriate techniques while transferring prose and poems into drama.

The entire Action phase consisted of the following steps.

1. After engaging the students in theatre games and thereby liberating them from regular-class monotony they are given a text to read both silently and aloud. A model reading demonstration is given by the teacher.

2. The teacher then discusses the text with the group clearly emphasising their acquired skills and providing enough scaffolding to enable them to get to the learning outcome of the present lesson. In these discussion sessions actors, if possible, are included. Next, the students are given the 'Drama' which has been written by changing the original narrative of the text.

3. The performers perform only after having a conversation with the students regarding the drama.

4. During performance, kinaesthetic attachment with the students is ensured through pre-planned movements of the actors.

5. An after-performance conversation between the students and the performers is arranged. At this phase learners ask the performers questions regarding the play.

3.2. Points kept in mind
- During this phase two wide-angle cameras, fixed prior to the entry of the students in the hall, record the activity.

- The teacher in question is the researcher.

- Actors are trained prior to the performance how to deal with the linguistic aspect of the drama while discussing with the students. It is ensured that their role in this regard is minimal.

- To get the 'authentic' picture of the student's behaviour even in front of a camera the students are regularly exposed to video recording.

- Consent for participation is taken from all the participants, which they will be free to withdraw at any point of time. All personal details of students involved in action research activities should be treated anonymously to ensure their open participation and ethics of research.

3.3. Observation mechanism
1. During the entire period the teacher takes note of all that appears to him/her as a lapse in the planning and whatever appears to be going in the right direction.

2. One videographer, wherever allowed, records the whole of the action.

On analysing the class notes and the videos after the first phase of conducting classes, it was found that some positive developments had occurred along with a few problems.

3.4. Positive changes
The reaction of the students was analysed in two aspects: a motivational aspect and linguistic aspect.

The change in their level of involvement was measured based on six factors:
1. average regular attendance

2. absence from particular classes

3. availability of textbook, exercise book, pen or pencil with the students

4. regularity of participation in activities

5. demand for better facility for conducting activity sessions

6. use of library/ internet in relation to their linguistic activity.

On all counts the participating students have shown signs of enthusiasm (Appendix 3).

A conventional graded test based on the lessons in the textbook is conducted on a monthly basis to evaluate their progress. The participating students have done well in the tests (see Appendix 4).

3.5. Experts' suggestion

In the TEC 2015 Pre-Conference Meet in Hyderabad, experts reviewed the progress of the project and had some interesting observations on possible future developments. Professor Rama Mathew suggested a small scale but more intensified approach. Dr Richard Smith also suggested a review so as to make the model a feasible one.

Now to address the concerns (from Phase I and II), I started with re-planning of the lesson specially keeping in mind the suggestions and observation of the experts. Moreover the focus was shifted towards three groups of students of three different classes in my school and a six-step programme was conceived:

- the formation of buddy groups with some advanced students based on the assessment of level of motivation and level of language acquisition in each group

- 'personalisation' of lessons with reference to the personal lives and surroundings of the learners

- challenging but attainable tasks for both individuals and groups in a graded manner are given to make use of their learning outcomes in the next lesson

- withdrawal from the regular classroom to an open stage is presented as an incentive

- design of theatrical games in such a way as to provide enough linguistic scaffolding that the students could easily transform a story into dramatic situations which are but part of a bigger story

- dramatisation of a story in the syllabus with the help from the lesson-specific theatrical games played under the guidance of their teacher. This step could well be curtailed

if the desired level of motivational and linguistic development has already been achieved during the fourth step

- on-stage performance by a group and participation of other students in pre- and post-performance discussion of the performed text (either in its entirety or any part). During this stage guardians are encouraged to be spectators.

4. Findings

4.1. Findings

Lack of training camps or workshops in the recent past and the absence of any continuous professional development mechanism are putting the teachers in a challenging situation. To the question of spoken competence, some teachers have admitted their inadequacy which most of them believe to be a result of their use of only the mother tongue in the class room to reach the 'very poor quality of students'. Their lack of confidence along with a demand to teach English as a content subject leaves the teacher unmotivated. Even in a school where an ESL teacher is scheduled to take only 18 periods out of 52 periods a week, the classes hardly get any personal attention, and the 'class work', which is in itself a very rare phenomenon, is rarely checked by the teacher. Group activity is rare. Some of the teachers believe teaching 'these kinds of students do not require any kind of study at all'.

The way the private tutors conduct their tuition is like a regular class in school. In most cases, these unorganised and ill-managed 'classes' are conducted by those who don't have any kind of exposure to ELT practices (see Appendix 4). Here the goodwill and desperation of the private tutors to secure a higher number of students replaces the structured mandate of any syllabus. Some school teachers do take part in this money-making business knowing full well that it is illegal and the process they follow is detrimental to any language learning initiative. These private tutors generally take care to translate the English text into Bengali. Far from the desired skill development, what these 'batches of students' develop is camaraderie especially in believing,

as their private tutors believe, 'this textbook is pathetic', a 'good grammar' book is essential, 'ideally English can only be learned through Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Keats and the greats like them', and the school routine must have a separate 'grammar class'.

The guardians, many of whom are first or second generation learners, are made to believe that the 'new books' (Functional Communicative Approach driven textbooks) are 'bad', the new learning system is all the more worthless and must be replaced with 'learning grammar' from books which they and their teachers used decades earlier (quotes from informal interviews with the private tutors and guardians).

Headmasters, headmistresses, teachers-in-charge and class teachers claim to be so overburdened with extra academic activities that they hardly find any time for looking into a subject which they are not asked to teach in class. Their academic activity is limited to framing class routines, and conducting two to three meetings annually through academic councils in their schools. They claim to be supportive to 'academic initiatives which could be good for the students' But, in most cases, school administrations can afford to appear nonchalant as auto-promotion of students up to class 8 extends them an opportunity not to be held responsible for the failure of these students in the public opinion. A close look at the class routine or even at a prescribed book list reveals a lack of awareness. Some are of the view that 'an overcrowded class is better managed in traditional method'- which is in effect talking and only talking! Booklists abound with supplementary books with Bengali translation of the original texts and Bengali meaning of the words. Writing skill is replaced by rote learning and the examination, as it has hardly any consequence, at least up to class 8, is practically being reduced to a farce.

However, during these phases, students have shown tremendous enthusiasm in the project, as their performance with regard to the six points noted earlier was even better (see Appendices 3 and 4). Doing away with professional actors has eased the logistic burden. Partial dramatisation has been beneficial, especially for the not-so-confident students. Dramatisation of smaller parts with definite expected learning outcomes provided the not-so-confident students an opportunity to come forward and participate. There has been a significant change in the approach of the students to ESL and recognisable improvement has been observed in their results. Guardians appear to be convinced and teachers satisfied. On the whole application of theatre to ESL appeared to be a highly feasible and valuable proposition.

4.2. Newer challenges

Vocabulary deserves serious attention and specific and dedicated planning which is lacking in this model. As their dictionaries are with Visual Vocabulary Builders, activities relating to verbs became popular. More research is needed to find ways to enable students to write writing abstract ideas. Moreover, in order to be a highly feasible model of teaching the proposed one should be shaped in such a way that an ELT professional with a little effort and enthusiasm could easily handle it. It would be great if in any way this model could win over the confidence of all the stakeholders and inculcate a belief in school teaching as well.

The subtleties of this situation could well be addressed with the proposed model of Applied Theatre in the ELT curriculum. It seeks to address the following obstacles which are pointed out by the practising teachers and supported by observation during the research:

1. a classroom with students whose levels of language acquisition are extremely varied

2. lack of language exposure

3. absence of scope of application of the second language

4. lack of recognition (for the students) in the traditional classroom practice

5. boredom in the traditional classroom

6. lack of scope for identity building for the teenagers

7. absence of any mechanism to address adolescent-issues

8. discrimination with regard to sex, caste, class, and creed

9. fear of not being correct with regard to pronunciation, vocabulary, structure etc.

10. lack of integration of English with other subjects

11. absence of any mechanism for motivation

12. no use of English for inculcating positive attitudes about other cultures.

4.3. Problems with the proposed model of teaching

In spite of the evidently visible enthusiasm among the students, the logistics of organising a theatre-workshop-like class is an administrative challenge that these schools with somewhat poor infrastructure can hardly meet. Again the use of professional actors is neither allowed by the current system nor desirable as knowledge of ELT is not expected of them. The theatre people generally tend to be more concerned with production values. Speaking and listening skills, which are the most neglected ones in the ESL curriculum, could well be addressed by this way of teaching. However, in the case of writing skill development a more supportive environment and relevant materials need to be created. Again, the proposed model, as it stands, does not include ways to maintain and protect the learner's motivation. Since in both the text transformation (dramatisation) and production stage the responsibility lies with the teacher and theatre people respectively, the conditions for self-motivation are not fulfilled. In reality, the process does not provide the young learners with enough scope to practise what they have learnt that can help learners feel positively about their learning. Again, training ESL teachers with knowledge of theatre in education in every school is highly unlikely so leaving a text to be transformed into drama by the teacher can hardly be feasible. Moreover, hiring professionals would be a financial burden on the schools.

Some out-of-school academic practices, private tuition in particular, do hamper the teaching learning process. A detailed study of the private tuition practice is needed. The motivational factors behind the participation of the students in private tuition need special attention.

5. Recommendations and final reflection

The success of any language programme in such a complex situation as ours is affected by a great many contextual variables. With social aspiration and a lack of knowledge of ELT, the stakeholders in desperation make the situation all the more complex. The attitudes of the teachers and the students play a pivotal role. The students, whenever given a supportive and motivating atmosphere, actively participate in the teaching learning process. A small gesture of recognition has a cascading effect. The research project has brought about considerable changes in my perception of the ELT situation as a whole in general and my students in particular. It has inculcated in me a belief that application of theatre in ELT classes can yield wonderful results. Now I understand the pressure that the students are faced with is enormous and that so little an effort has brought about a recognisable change in their psyche is true. They have performed considerably well in tests and moreover factors such as increasing demand for English story books in the school library is a positive indicator of change. In spite of having earlier experience of the magical power of theatre, I had some doubts about the success of the project. Moreover, on quite a few occasions, I found myself a little short of preparation. I felt a little intimated at times also, especially while facing the teachers with a firm belief that theatre in an open space, will only 'destroy the discipline' among the students. However, some of the teachers did appreciate the project later as well.

As a teacher I am more inquisitive and more confident now – I would now love to watch my students taking the centre stage of learning with me as an informed facilitator assisting them throughout with a confidence that I am on the right track.

To understand the private tuition craze, I personally approached two private tutors for their participation in this research project and was emphatically rejected. Later I informally talked with four private tutors from four different areas and recorded the conversation with a hidden

camera for future analysis. However it put me in a dilemma as to my own ethical stance as a researcher so I did not ever disclose their identity or even refer to the interview excerpts.

5.1. Proposed model

a) Steps to create supportive, pleasant and motivating conditions for learning

1. Formation of buddy groups ensuring presence of some advanced students, based on the previous assessment of their level of motivation and level of language acquisition in each group should initiate the process.

2. A file containing weekly reports regarding the activity, the individual participants and their progress is to be kept.

3. Lessons are to be 'personalised' with reference to their personal lives and surroundings prior to reconstructing them into a drama. In this regard the teacher will give additional linguistic inputs like use of polite language, self-introduction, seeking help etc. if required.

b) Steps to introduce initial motivational techniques of promoting positive values, creating appropriate material, and establishing expectations of success

1. Challenging but attainable tasks for both individuals and groups in a graded manner to make use of the learning outcome of the previous lesson.

2. A group activity in three steps: a) breaking of the story into small sequences. Smallest possible sequencing is to be encouraged b) 'personalising' the sequences c) dramatisation of the sequences.

c) Steps to protect and maintain learners' motivation by promoting ownership and thereby fostering self-confidence, self-esteem and an environment of co-operation

1. Withdrawal from the regular classroom to an open stage is to be presented as an incentive. It is to be offered only after the completion of the group activity of

transforming a text into drama along with a teacher. A class is to be divided at least into four groups and inter-group cooperative activities could well be encouraged.

2. Theatrical games are to be devised in such a way so as to provide enough linguistic scaffolding that would help the students to transform the sequences of the stories in in the textbook into drama pieces which are but part of a bigger story.

3. Dramatisation of the sequences of the stories in their syllabus with the help from the lesson specific theatrical games under the guidance of their teacher. This step could well be curtailed if the desired level of motivational and linguistic development has already been achieved during the fourth step.

d) Final step for the teachers to present evaluation and feed back in a positive way

1. On-stage performance by a group and participation of other students in pre- and post-performance discussion of the performed text (either in its entirety or any part). During this stage guardians could be encouraged to be spectators.

5.2. Need for further research

This project calls for further detailed studies into three specific topics:

a. the relation between student's freedom in a controlled atmosphere and language learning and its implication in ELT. (While conducting classes outside the classroom a system of students' self-governance was introduced. In this phase students, especially the less confident ones, did comparatively better in the written graded tests conducted).

b. ways to effectively practise an integrated approach in an ESL class while applying theatre in ELT. (Language learning cannot thrive in isolation. During the project classes whenever a text was 'personalised' the interest and enthusiasm was multiplied).

c.   retention of students' motivation after the novelty of this model of teaching fades away. (The application of theatre made the apathy to learn English, to a considerable extent, give way to enthusiasm but in the final leg of workshops/classes some of the students, especially the advanced learners, showed complacency).

5.3. Applicability of this model

Though this research project is primarily concerned with ELT in West Bengal, its research output could well be applied anywhere with similar obstacles in ESL teaching and learning. The research outcome better places a teacher to efficiently deal with motivational issues of the students of the 12 to 16 year age group. The knowledge of this is sure to equip the school administration to deal with the students in a more productive way even if there is a scarcity of resources. As the research project seeks to explore the source and nature of the 'fear of English' its revelations from a socio-psychological perspective are sure to help the policy makers in dealing with 'youth issues'. Policymakers may benefit from the knowledge of the real ELT scenario in West Bengal as well as that of the effectiveness of applied theatre in regular classroom situations. Though the study is primarily concerned with ELT in the school curriculum its findings could well be applied in any ESL course such as in adult education, or even in non-formal English courses. Even children with special needs may benefit from the research findings. Promoting theatre as pedagogy that thrives on a democratic cultural ethos, hopefully, will inculcate among the students an attitude of cooperation, mutual respect, and celebrating togetherness for a better world.

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Appendix 1

Students' attitudes to ELT in their school : a summative report (percentage) Total number of students responding: 718			
Most interesting subject	English (ESL): 6		
Why (reason cited for choosing English)	It helps: 22	Stories: 21	High scoring: 19
Favourite language	L-1: 89	Hindi (Not L1): 5	English (Not L1): 3
Why	Comfort: 63	Acceptance: 11	Cultural Identity: 6
Language you desire to talk in (Not L1)	English: 56	Hindi: 32	Sanskrit: 4
Why	Social Prestige: 34	Coverage: 24	Employability: 20
One thing you like about English language	Acceptance: 19	Employability: 17	Social prestige: 16
One thing you don't like about English language	Tests: 23	Grammar: 21	It's tough: 18
One thing you like about English teaching	Exam tips: 41	Nothing: 32	Recitation: 6
One thing you don't like about English teaching	It's boring: 32	It's tough: 26	No response: 21
Given a chance you would replace English class with:	Games and sports /coaching: 31	Theatre: 28 workshop	Music class: 19

Appendix 2

Key:

A- Hardly ever

B- Less than three times a week

C- More than three times a week

D- Almost always

ELT practice in schools: a summative report (percentage) Total number of students responding: 718				
	Yes	**No**		
Do you like your language class?	82	18		
Do you like your English class?	38	62		
Do you have a private tutor?	94	6		
Is your private tutor a school teacher?	26	74		
	A	B	C	D
How often do you bring your textbook to your class?	4	9	71	16
How often do you bring an exercise book in your class?	0	0	14	86
How often do you read in your English class?	54	46	0	0
How often do you read other books in English?	74	26	0	0
How often do you participate in listening activities?	92	8	0	0
How often do you write in your English class?	24	71	5	0
How often do you take part in language activities?	88	12	0	0
How often do you do individual tasks in class?	0	91	8	1
How often do you work in pairs in class?	92	8	0	0
How often do you work in groups in class?	86	14	0	0
How often does your teacher check your classwork?	49	46	5	0
How often do you use your library?	39	42	11	8

	A	**B**	**C**	**D**
How regularly are the tests conducted?	0	0	12	88
How regularly are the supplementary tests conducted?	92	8	0	0

A*-Hardly ever

B*- Irregularly

C*- Not so regularly

D*-As per schedule

Appendix 3: Student responses (percentage)

	Class A			Class B		
	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Average regular presence	45+	62+	59+	48+	75+	75+
Absence from English class	8	1	0	5+	0	0
Availability of textbook, exercise book, pen or pencil with the students	74+	98+	100	85+	100	100
Regularity in participation in activities	NA	80+	90+	NA	90+	90+
Demand for better facility for conducting activity sessions	NA	30+	5+	NA	35+	5+
Use of library/internet in relation to their linguistic activity	NA	35+	40+	NA	50+	45+

Phase 1: At the beginning of the project

Phase 2: On completion of the pilot project

Phase 3: During the final leg of the project

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Appendix 4: Results of the participating students in regular tests (percentage)

	Class A			Class B		
	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Less than 20%	8	2	0	4	0	0
20% to 40%	47	31	32	41	32	22
40%+ to 60%	36	53	42	36	40	40
60%+ to 80%	6	8	18	14	23	24
80%+ to 100%	3	6	8	5	5	14

Phase 1: At the beginning of the project

Phase 2: On completion of the pilot project

Phase 3: During the final leg of the project

3

An assessment of ICT implementation for English language teaching in secondary schools in Bihar

Chanchala Tiwari and Ranjit Singh

1. Introduction

The application of computers and the internet to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data is known as information technology (IT) (Murray, 2011). ICT is related to technologies that facilitate the transfer of information and various types of electronically mediated communications. It stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals), computers as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage and audio-visual systems, which enable users to access, store, transmit and manipulate information (Zuppo, 2012).

1.1. ICT in education

ICT plays a significant role in the teaching–learning process. Patra (2014) has identified various benefits of ICT in the secondary school teaching–learning process such as greater learner autonomy, tailoring tasks to suit individual skills and demonstrating students' achievement in ways which might not be possible with traditional methods. Patra emphasises that the use of ICT unlocks hidden potential for those with communication difficulties, provides new ways for teaching the same things and focuses on each and every child, learner style and preference. It tackles barriers to engagement and reduces administrative burdens on teachers.

However, there are certain challenges to ICT use. These include a lack of infrastructure, equipment, the high cost of ICT devices and insufficient power supply, especially in rural areas. Teachers may lack competency and interest in handling ICT equipment and have fears regarding the misuse of ICT facilities by students.

1.2. ICT in English language teaching

ICT is increasingly used in teaching and learning English all over the world. ICT has been found to be very effective in facilitating the teaching and learning of English in large classes as, with the help of technology, the content can be transmitted easily by teachers with less effort (Sharndama, 2013). There are many positive effects of integrating ICT in teaching foreign languages, including English (Isisag, 2014; Njamanze, 2010).

1.3. Research questions

The study attempts to answer the following research questions:

a) What are the overall perceptions of English language teachers in secondary schools in Bihar of the use of ICT for English language teaching?

b) What factors affect the perceptions of English language teachers in secondary schools in Bihar of the use of ICT for English language teaching?

c) What are the overall expectations and experiences of English teachers of participating in training to support teaching with ICT?

d) To what extent does the experience of English teachers of participating in training for teaching with ICT meet their expectations?

2. Background of the study

All the educational planning commissions and committees in India have recommended blending technology with education. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) (2005: 121) lays significant emphasis on the implementation and use of ICT in the teaching–learning process. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009 recommends training for teachers so that ICT can be used effectively in the teaching–learning process in a sustainable way. The Government of India Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) releases huge funds every year for the implementation and maintenance of ICT facilities in schools.

Hartoyo (2008) states that English language teaching has been shaped by the search for the 'one best method' of teaching the language. English, being a foreign language, has certain limitations in many parts of the country, especially in Hindi-speaking states, and thus the teacher has to put in extra effort to teach the language by making the learner interested in learning it. ICT can play a vital role in making learning interesting. Adeyinka et al. (2007) mention that teachers perceive ICT as being easier and very useful in teaching and learning. Emphasis must be placed on the pedagogy behind the use of ICT for teaching/learning.

Teachers are the important link for implementing ICT facilities in schools. Therefore, it is important to study the perceptions of English language teachers of the use of ICT for ELT. Edmunds, Thorpe and Conole (2012) found that positive perceptions of ICT influence its further use. Keller and Cernerud (2002) found that the strategy of implementing ICT affects perceptions.

Giving training to teachers for using ICT is also essential to make its use effective. The key question concerns the ways and means of delivering this training. Since the teachers are under the direct control of their employer, it is expected that the employer should take responsibility for delivering training to English language teachers regarding the use of ICT for ELT.

The NCFTE 2009 recommends training for teachers so that ICT can be used effectively in the teaching–learning process in a sustainable way. Galanouli, Murphy and Gardner (2004) also emphasise that funded training is a measure of success in increasing teachers' confidence in using computers in their teaching. Teacher-training and professional development-oriented policies should support ICT-related teaching models.

Teachers' expectations of receiving training from the employer are often high. Singh and Bhowal (2010) found that a difference exists between expectations and experience of employees of getting training from the employer. In this study, it was found that there were some variables where the employees' expectations do not meet with their experiences of participating in training and getting an opportunity to participate in workshops and in-house training programmes etc.

Therefore, the study also investigates the differences between the expectations and experience of English language teachers of participating in training provided by their employer with respect to the use of ICT for ELT.

There has been little research carried out on the perceptions of secondary school English language teachers of the use of ICT and possible differences between their expectations and experience of ICT-related training in Bihar. This study aims to bridge the gap in the existing literature.

3. Research methodology

A questionnaire was designed to find out the perceptions of secondary school teachers of the use of ICT. On the basis of the literature review, experts' opinions and results of pilot surveys, 18 items were included in the questionnaire.

Respondents were asked to rate on a five-point rating scale where 5 denotes a very high level of perception/expectation/experience and 1 denotes a very low level of perception/expectation/experience. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix 1. The survey for collecting information on the basis of the developed questionnaire was conducted between April 2016 and July 2016. Analysis of collected data and preparation of the report was carried out from September 2016 to December 2016.

There are approximately 3,500 English language teachers in Bihar. For this study, a sample of 352

English language teachers was selected. Tables 1 to 4 show a profile of these respondents, based on questionnaire responses.
To analyse the data, statistical methods such as mean, standard deviation, factor analysis and Kendall's tau-b correlation test, etc. were used.

The niyojit teachers are those who are appointed by the district council on a consolidated emolument and they are not entitled to many facilities available to regular teachers.

Having an email ID is, prima facie, an indication of familiarity of a person with information and communication technology.

Table 1: Gender of respondents

Gender	Number of teachers	Per cent
Male	232	65.9
Female	120	34.1
Total	352	100.0

Table 2: Nature of appointment

Types of appointment	Number of teachers	Per cent
Regular appointment	130	36.9
Niyojit appointment	189	53.7
Not disclosed	33	9.4
Total	352	100.0

Table 3: Age of the respondents

Age group of teachers	Number of teachers	Per cent
20–30 years	74	21.0
30–40 years	176	50.0
40–50 years	54	15.3
50 years and above	48	13.6
Total	352	100.0

Table 4: Respondents having email ID

	Number of teachers	Per cent
Not having email ID	224	63.6
Having email ID	128	36.4
Total	352	100.0

4. Analysis and findings

The analysis and findings of this study are presented in this section.

4.1. Measuring perceptions of English language teachers of use of ICT for teaching English

Table 5 presents the perceptions of English language teachers towards the use of ICT for teaching English.

It can be seen in Table 5 that the majority of teachers (60.8 percent) have favourable perceptions of the use of ICT, with 35.8 percent having a moderate perception. This indicates that teachers are in favour of using ICT for teaching English language in secondary schools.

Table 5: Perceptions of English language teachers of ICT

Levels of perception	Number of teachers	Per cent
Unfavourable perceptions of the use of ICT	10	2.8
Moderate perceptions of the use of ICT	126	35.8
Favourable perceptions of the use of ICT	214	60.8
Very favourable perceptions of the use of ICT	2	0.6
Total	352	100.0

Table 6: Mean value of different variables considered to measure perception

Variables	Mean value
Sufficient ICT infrastructure is available at our school	2.5
ICT is available, but whenever I want to use it electricity is not available	2.55
ICT is used by the students for watching adult content	2.76
The scope of committing unintentional error is more while using ICT	3.01
Teaching English by using ICT is a waste of time	3.12
ICT is used by the students more for playing than studying	3.16
Monitoring the proper use of ICT is difficult	3.22
Implementation of ICT is very costly in comparison to its benefits	3.36
Implementing ICT for teaching English is a waste of money	3.48
There should be a proper log book for use of ICT	3.49
There is scope for using ICT in teaching English	3.74
Use of ICT increases indiscipline among students	3.79
Use of ICT saves time in teaching English	3.86
Effectiveness of teaching English is enhanced by using ICT	3.88
ICT is important for the teaching of English	4.08
Training is required to use ICT to teach English	4.10
ICT is simple to use to teach English	4.21
Use of ICT makes the teaching of English easy	4.38

Table 7: Interpretation of mean value

Mean value	Interpretation of mean value
Less than 3.00	Items having relatively less contribution in building favourable perceptions of using ICT
Between 3.00 to 4.00	Items having relatively moderate contribution in building favourable perceptions of using ICT
More than 4.00	Items having relatively higher contribution in building favourable perceptions of using ICT

In order to identify the impact of different variables considered for measuring perceptions of the use of ICT in teaching English and its contribution in building the favourable perceptions of English teachers, the mean value of each variable was calculated. For each variable, respondents were asked to give their opinion in the form of 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'moderately agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. Based on responses, scores were given. For the response of 'strongly agree' a score of 5 , for 'agree' a score of 4, for 'moderately agree' a score of 3, for 'disagree' a score of 2 and 'for strongly disagree' a score of 1 was given. Thus for every item, a total score comprising the responses from 352 respondent was obtained. The total score thus obtained for each variable was divided by 352 (number of respondents) to give the mean value for each item. The mean value is shown in Table 6. The interpretation of the mean value is shown in Table 7.

It is evident from Tables 6 and 7, that the variables such as 'ICT is simple to use to teach English', 'Training is required to use ICT to teach English', 'Use of ICT makes the teaching of English easy', etc. have more than 4.00 mean value and thus they are highly contributing in building favourable perceptions of the use of ICT in teaching English, whereas items including 'Sufficient ICT infrastructure is available at our school, 'ICT is available, but whenever I want to use it electricity is not available' and 'ICT is used by the students for watching adult content' have least impact in building favourable overall perceptions of English language teachers of the use of ICT for teaching English, as these variables have a mean value less than 3.00. Other variables which have a mean value of 3.00 to 4.00 are contributing to moderate perceptions of the use of ICT for teaching English.

4.2. Factors affecting the perceptions of English language teachers of use of ICT

KMO and Bartlett's Test were performed to measure sampling adequacy and to identify the appropriateness of factor analysis. The result is 0.674. Any value of more than 0.50 gives an indication that the sample considered for the study is adequate. Factor analysis has been performed to identify the factors affecting the perceptions of English language teachers of the use of ICT for teaching English. Factor analysis is a statistical technique through which the latent variables, contributing in measuring one particular aspect, are identified from observed variables. It was carried out to explain the variation in different variables considered for measuring the perception of the use of ICT for teaching English. After completing the factor analysis on the variables, three factors have been identified which are important for building favourable perceptions of the use of ICT for teaching English.

Table 8: Factors affecting perception of English language teachers of use of ICT

Factors	Name of factors
Factor 1	Effective implementation of ICT infrastructure in schools
Factor 2	Ensuring effective use of available ICT infrastructure in schools
Factor 3	Channelling resources for ICT implementation

The identified factors are shown in Table 8. From Table 8, it can be concluded that if the policy makers carry out effective implementation of ICT infrastructure, ensure effective use of the existing ICT infrastructure and channel the resources for its implementation, then the teachers' perceptions of the use of ICT can be built favourably and blending of technology with teaching English could be easily undertaken.

4.3. Impact of gender, age, having email ID and nature of appointment on overall perception

In order to find out the impact of gender, age, having email ID and nature of appointment on overall perceptions of teachers of the use of ICT, correlation has been done by using Kendall's tau b test. The result of the test is shown in Table 9.

From Table 9, it is seen that none of the variables have any impact on perceptions of teachers of use of ICT for teaching English, since the significance value of all these variables with relation to overall perceptions of teachers of the use of ICT in teaching English is more than 0.05 (at five per cent level of significance). It is

also found that two variables (age and nature of appointment) have negative correlation. There is a fall of 0.024 per cent in overall perceptions of teachers with a change in age of a teacher from younger to older. This means that young teachers have 0.024 per cent more favourable perceptions than older teachers. On the other hand, in the case of nature of appointment there is a fall of 0.054 per cent in overall perceptions with a one unit change in nature of appointment from regular appointment to niyojit appointments. This indicates that niyojit teachers have 0.054 per cent more favourable perception than that of regular teachers.

4.4. Overall expectation and experience of receiving training for using ICT

The overall expectation and experience of teachers regarding participating in training for using ICT is shown in Table 10.

It can be concluded that the highest number of teachers responding to questions on expectations (36.4 per cent) have a very high level of expectation of receiving training whereas the highest number of teachers responding to

Table 9: Correlation between gender, age, having email ID and nature of appointment on overall perception

Variables	Test performed	Value	Approx. significance
Gender	Kendall's tau-b test of correlation	0.006	0.912
Age	Kendall's tau-b test of correlation	-0.024	0.296
Having email ID	Kendall's tau-b test of correlation	0.046	0.379
Nature of appointment	Kendall's tau-b test of correlation	-0.054	0.296

Table 10: Overall expectation and experience of receiving training for using ICT

Level of expectation and experience	Number of teachers (expectation)	Per cent (expectation)	Number of teachers (experience)	Per cent (experience)
Very low	7	2.0	75	21.3
Low	13	3.7	102	29.0
Moderate	81	23.0	86	24.4
High	123	34.9	78	22.2
Very high	128	36.4	11	3.1
Total	352	100.0	352	100.0

questions on experience (29 per cent) have a low level of experience of participating in training for using ICT in ELT. Thus it is evident that there is a gap between expectation of receiving training and experience of participating in training for using ICT in ELT.

The difference between the expectation and experience of receiving training for using ICT in teaching English from the employer is shown in Table 11 by calculating the mean values. The mean value has been calculated in the same way that it was calculated in measuring perceptions of the teachers for using ICT in teaching English.

Table 11: Differences in expectation and experience of receiving and participating in ICT-related training from employer

Item	Mean value of expectation	Mean value of experience	Difference
Training in the use of ICT will be arranged in the school itself by the government	3.263	2.398	0.865
The Head Teacher will take the initiative to send us for a training programme relating to the use of ICT	3.743	2.778	0.965
I will be sent by the government to a training programme to learn about the use of ICT	4.000	2.938	1.063
Training in the use of ICT will be arranged in the school itself by the Head Teacher	3.680	2.602	1.078
Information will be provided by the Head Teacher about the various workshops relating to the use of ICT for teaching English	3.794	2.676	1.118
Leave will be granted by the Head Teacher for teachers to participate in workshops/ training sessions related to the use of ICT for teaching	4.149	2.977	1.171
Encouragement will be given by the Head Teacher to implement ICT at school	3.806	2.551	1.255
Encouragement will be given by the government to learn new ICT at school	3.897	2.631	1.266
Encouragement will be given by the Head Teacher to learn new ICT at school	3.709	2.421	1.288
A travel grant will be provided to teachers by the government to attend ICT-related outstation workshops	3.726	2.341	1.385
Training will be facilitated to learn about the maintenance of ICT in our school by the Head Teacher	3.743	2.307	1.436
Encouragement will be given by the government to implement ICT at school	4.046	2.546	1.500
Training fees will be paid by the government to teachers to learn about ICT to support the teaching of English	3.937	2.330	1.608

Table 11 shows that there is a difference in the expectations and experience of teachers of attending training programmes for using ICT in teaching English organised by their employer and the experience they have actually had. The minimum differences are with respect to initiatives taken by the Head Teacher and the government for sending teachers to participate in training. On the other hand, the greatest differences lie with respect to the Head Teacher facilitating learning about the maintenance of ICT, encouragement by the government to implement ICT at school and payment of training fees by the government to learn ICT for teaching English.

5. Conclusions and policy implications

It can be concluded from the discussion above that the perceptions of English language teachers of secondary schools of Bihar of the use of ICT for teaching English are favourable. This is a positive sign for implementing ICT infrastructure in secondary schools in Bihar. However, there is still scope to improve their perceptions to make them very highly favourable.

Ease of use and simplicity of ICT and the fact that ICT saves time for teachers are some of the factors which have a relatively higher influence in building favourable perceptions of the use of ICT for teaching English. On the other hand, non-availability of sufficient ICT infrastructure and power and concerns about the use of ICT to watch adult content by learners are some of the factors which are causing serious challenges to effective implementation of ICT for teaching.

The three factors that affect the overall perceptions of English language teachers of secondary schools of Bihar of the use of ICT for teaching English are the effective implementation of ICT infrastructure, ensuring effective use of available ICT infrastructure and channelling resources for ICT implementation in schools. There is a need to pay more attention to effectively implementing ICT. Effective ICT implementation requires using ICT as knowledge construction tools rather than instructional tools.

It was also found that there is no impact of age,

gender or having an email ID on the overall perceptions of English language teachers of the use of ICT. Therefore, the policy makers should frame policies regarding implementation of ICT infrastructure irrespective of these variables. In order to realise the benefits of ICT, there is a need to exhibit some kind of leadership skills so that ICT implementation can be made a priority in the schools and this will promote its implementation.

There are differences between the expectation and experience of receiving training related to the use of ICT. In the majority of cases, the expectation of participating in training provided by the employer is higher than the experience of actually having the opportunity to participate. This gap needs to be filled through adopting appropriate measures. Therefore, the Government of Bihar should adopt a policy and strategy to deliver ICT-related training to its teachers so that the use of ICT can be improved in the secondary schools of Bihar, which will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching in the schools.

Suggestions

- An adequate supply of power must be ensured in all the schools in Bihar funded by the state government.

- There should be proper monitoring of ICT infrastructure so that it cannot be used for watching any adult content or for playing non-English language games.

- Proper training at regular intervals should be provided so that the scope of committing errors can be minimised and at the same time teachers will become more efficient in handling equipment.

- A log book should be maintained for the use of ICT facilities which are used by multiple users.

- Software and programs specifically designed for teaching English language should be procured, installed and used in schools to make the teaching of English language more effective and efficient.

- The government should provide incentives to teachers to encourage the implementation and use of ICT in schools.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Assessment of ICT implementation for ELT by English language teachers in secondary schools: an evaluative study in Bihar

Dear Sir/Madam

This survey is being conducted to gather information about the assessment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) implementation for English language teaching (ELT) by English language teachers in secondary schools in Bihar. ICT for teaching includes use of computers, projectors, internet and other modern devices. This is to inform you that the survey is without any prejudice to any group or party and exclusively meant for academic purposes. You are therefore earnestly requested to fill it up in a spirit to help us.

1. Name:

2. Gender: Please tick (✓) the appropriate box

Male	
Female	

3. District:

4. Nature of appointment: Please tick (✓) the appropriate box:

Regular	
Contractual (Niyojan)	

5. Email (if any):

6. Age: Please tick (✓) the appropriate box:

20–30 years	
30–40 years	
40–50 years	
50 years and above	

7. Please tick (✓) whichever you think is appropriate.
SA=strongly agree, A= agree, M=moderately agree, D=Disagree SD= strongly disagree

	Item	SA	A	M	D	SD
1	ICT is simple to use for teaching English					
2	Sufficient ICT infrastructure is available at our school					
3	ICT is not essential for teaching English					
4	Use of ICT makes the teaching of English easy					
5	For use of ICT some kind of training/coaching is required					
6	Using ICT for teaching English is a waste of time					
7	Using ICT for teaching English is a waste of money					
8	ICT is used by the students more for playing than studying					
9	The scope of committing unintentional error is more while using ICT					
10	There should be a separate class equipped with ICT infrastructure in schools					
11	Monitoring the proper use of ICT is difficult					
12	ICT is used by the students for watching adult content					
13	Use of ICT for teaching English saves time					
14	Implementation of ICT is very costly in comparison to its benefits					
15	There should be a proper log book for use of ICT					
16	ICT is available, but whenever I want to use it, electricity is not available					
17	Use of ICT enhances the effectiveness of teaching English					
18	Use of ICT promotes indiscipline among students					

8. Please tick (✓) the appropriate option for each statement relating to your expectations and experiences regarding the employers' role in providing training relating to the use of ICT for ELT.

A score of 5 means that you have high expectations for this option or you have fully experienced this option.

A score of 1 means that you have low expectations for this option or you have not experienced this option.

S. No.	Particulars	I expected					I experienced				
		5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
1	I will be sent by the government to a training programme to learn about the use of ICT										
2	The Head Teacher will take the initiative to send us for a training programme relating to the use of ICT										
3	Training will be arranged about the use of ICT in the school itself by the government										
4	Training will be arranged about the use of ICT in the school itself by the Head Teacher										
5	Leave will be granted by the Head Teacher for teachers to participate in workshops/ training sessions related to the use of ICT for teaching										
6	Training will be facilitated to learn about the maintenance of ICT in our school by the Head Teacher										
7	Information will be provided by the Head Teacher about the various workshops relating to the use of ICT for teaching English										
8	Training fees will be paid by the government to teachers to learn about ICT to support the teaching of English										
9	A travel grant will be provided by the government to teachers to attend ICT related outstation workshops										
10	Encouragement will be given by the government to implement ICT at school										
11	Encouragement will be given by the Head Teacher to implement ICT at school										
12	Encouragement will be given by the government to learn new ICT techniques										
13	Encouragement will be given by the Head Teacher to learn new ICT techniques										

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