

ISSN 2321-189X



THE WATCHWORD

VOL. VIII, 2019

An Annual Peer Reviewed Multidisciplinary
Journal of ACTA, Jorhat Zone

Editor

Rabindra Bordoloi

Assam College Teachers' Association, Jorhat Zone
Jorhat, Assam, India

To Ms. Subkajjosi Chande
English Dept.

THE WATCHWORD

VOL. VIII, 2019

An Annual Peer Reviewed Multidisciplinary
Journal of ACTA, Jorhat Zone

Editor

Dr. Rabindra Bordoloi



Assam College Teachers' Association

Jorhat Zone, Jorhat, Assam, India

Email: actajorhatzone@gmail.com

THE WATCHWORD VOL. VIII. 2019

An Annual Peer Reviewed Multidisciplinary Journal of ACTA, Jorhat Zone, Assam uses blind peer review with regard to Research Articles and Essays. This Journal aims at dissemination of research findings and sharing knowledge in teaching fraternity of higher educational institutions as well as society as a whole (Published in Assamese and English).

Publisher : **Assam College Teachers' Association**
Jorhat Zone, Jorhat, Assam, India

Email : actajorhatzone@gmail.com

© : ACTA, Jorhat Zone

Place of Publication: Jorhat, Assam

Advisory Board : Bipin Bora
Dr. Lokesh Boro
Dr. Ananta Tamuli

Editorial Board : **President** : Kshirod Saikia
Editor : Dr. Rabindra Bordoloi
Associate Editors : Mrs. Chitra Duarah
Mr. Basanta Bora
Mr. Robin Saikia
Members : Dr. Pradip Kumar Sarkar
Mr. Kushal Das
Dr. Junti Boruah
Mr. Rupeswar Sonowal
Dr. Barnali Saikia
Dr. Amarjyoti Devnath
Dr. Partha Pratim Barua
Dr. Gayatri Chutia Bordoloi
Barasha Borah
Mr. Tarun Saikia

Frequency of Publication : Annual

ISSN : 2321 – 189x

Price : Rs. 300.00 (*Rupees Three Hundred Only*)

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in the research articles and essays in this Journal are the opinions of the authors. The Editorial Board/Peer Team/Publisher of the Watchword, Vol.VIII, 2019, issn: 2321-189X, is no way responsible for the opinions deduced by the authors. In case of plagiarism also responsibility lies solely with the authors.

Printed at : Barkataki Offset Printers, Malow Ali, Jorhat-1, Assam

MEMBERS OF PEER REVIEW BOARD

1. Dr. Surendra Kumar, Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Delhi
2. Dr. Vikash Kumar Singh, Asst. Professor, Centre of Advance Study, Department of AIHC& Archaeology, Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh
3. Dr. Paul B. Chonzik, Head of the Department of History, Assam University, Diphu Campus
4. Dr. Biswajit Baruah, Professor, Department of History, Dibrugarh University
5. Dr. Sagar Baruah, Rtd. Principal, Khagarijan College, Nagaon (Assam)
6. Dr. Rajesh Barman, Former HOD of Commerce, Bodoland University, Kokorajhar
7. Dr. Bolin Hazarika, Rtd. HOD, Department of Political Science, J.B College, Jorhat
8. Debajyoti Biswas, Department of English, Bodoland University
9. Dr. Gitanjali Gogoi, Department of English, N.N. Saikia College, Titabar, Jorhat
10. Mr. Diganta Gogoi, Department of Physics, Bahona College, Jorhat, Assam
11. Dr. Kiranjyoti Mohan, Department of Chemistry, Rangapara College, Sonitpur
12. Dr. Lakhinanda Bordoloi, Department of Political Science, Dhing College, Nagaon
13. Dr. Amiya Patar, Associate Professor, Department of Assamese, Nagaon Girls' College, Nagaon

CONTENTS

From the Desk of Editor

7-10

RESEARCH ARTICLES

- Variation of Chemical Constituents in the Host Plants of Eri Silkworm (*Samia Cynthia ricini* Boisduval) Anjumoni Saikia 13-18
- Combined Effect of Hall and Ion-slip Currents on Unsteady MHD Couette Flow in a Channel with Porous Walls Dr. Mahom Choudhury 19-31
- ত্ৰিভাসকলৰ পৰস্পৰাধাৰিত মাজপান আৰু আলাকাৰ : এটি অধ্যয়ন ড° জ্যোতিমতী বৰুৱা 32-44
- কলাতনক বিকল্পসমূহৰ ব্যৱহাৰ নীতিত অনুৰ্ণিত প্রকৃতিপ্ৰেম ভ্ৰমণ-এটি বিশ্লেষণাত্মক অধ্যয়ন অৰ্পিতা বৰুৱা 45-48
- Beyond Ethnicity: Exploring Female Voices in Arupa Patangia Kalita's *Peliance* Dr. Goutamali Goswami 49-56
- Baladev Suryakhari Darvajan and His book *Darrang Rajvansawal*: A Brief Analytical Study Mrs. Anurupa Borah 57-61
- Quality Management System in Select Private Hospitals in Guwahati City Barsha Borah 62-75
- Motivation of Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff of Provincialised General Degree Colleges of Jorhat District Dr. Sarita Deka 76-81
- TQM: A Changing Requirement of Customers Gita Sarma 84-89
- Job Satisfaction of Teachers: A Conceptual Study Mamika Saikia 90-96
- Golden Ratio: The Secret of Perfect Body Subhazita Kalita 97-101
- Socio-cultural Interactive Strategies in the English Classroom at the Tertiary Level: An Assessment Subhrajyoti Chandra 102-107
- হামপি ৰাহুল পোন্ধৰীৰ উপন্যাসত নৰীৰ সামাজিক অৱস্থান ড° অমলী শৰ্মা 108-114

Socio-cultural Interactive Strategies in the English Classroom at the Tertiary Level: An Assessment

*Subhrajyoti Chanda**

Abstract

The sociocultural aspect of the general Communicative English classroom at the tertiary level assumes a different dimension in contrast to the classes meant for other subjects. There are several factors which make the English class unique: it usually has the maximum number of students more than any other class, as all students compulsorily have English; students have varied levels of competencies in English depending on their own history of association with the language, world views and future goals and aspirations. These factors play major roles in the affecting the learners' use of language learning strategies and also the teachers' choice of teaching strategies. Since practice /interaction is key to mastery of a language, the communicative English teacher has to create scope for interaction in the class. But prior to that both the teacher and the learner should become aware of the sociocultural dimension of language learning strategies. The paper aims to assess the prospects of sociocultural interactive strategies in case of the English language teaching/learning at the tertiary level in the local context.

Key words: Socio-cultural, Interactive, Strategies (SI strategies), Strategic Self – regulation (S²R), Language Learning Strategies (LLS).

* *Subhrajyoti Chanda, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Jorhat College (Amalgamated), Jorhat, Assam, Email: chandasj@gmail.com*

1. Introduction

Sociocultural context in the language class is crucial for the development of the communication skill and probably it is more so in the case of a second language such as English which is 'feared' by most students especially by those who had their schooling in the vernacular medium. The Strategic Self – regulation or the S²R model of language learning of Oxford (2011) takes into consideration three layers of cultural contexts – the current or the synchronic, the historical or the diachronic and the imaginative which is said to consist of dreams, hopes and aspirations etc. The S²R model, which is one of the latest developments in strategies research, builds on the notion that sociocultural contexts are shaped by shared assumptions of learners – their imaginations, hopes and dreams; the activity of communication; and the social, cultural, cognitive, material, and political dimensions. Pintrich (cited by Oxford, 2011, p.86) describes learning as a 'hot' activity because of its essential connection with the sociocultural context which is a dynamic area involving emotions and motivations.

The assumption behind S²R model is that language learning is a social activity which asks for the appreciation of the fact that the language learner employs meta sociocultural interactive strategies along with sociocultural interactive strategies for the fruitful learning of a language. Oxford categorizes 'meta - Sociocultural Interactive strategies' (meta SI strategies) into eight categories:

1. Paying attention to Contexts, Communication and Culture
2. Paying attention for Contexts, Communication, and Culture
3. Obtaining and Using Resources for Contexts, Communication, and Culture
4. Organizing for Contexts, Communication, and Culture
5. Implementing Plans for Contexts, Communication, and Culture
6. Orchestrating Strategies for Contexts, Communication, and Culture
7. Monitoring for Contexts, Communication, and Culture
8. Evaluating for Contexts, Communication and Culture.

She also categorizes the Sociocultural Interactive strategies (SI strategies) into three categories into the following three types:

1. Interacting to learn and Communicate
2. Overcoming Knowledge Gaps in Communicating
3. Dealing with Sociocultural Contexts and Identities.

2. Objective

The paper aims to critique the prospects of sociocultural interactive strategies in case of the English language teaching/learning at the tertiary level in the local context. The researcher/paper writer wishes to draw from his own experience of teaching English at the tertiary level in Jorhat, Upper Assam.

3. Rationale

Extensive research in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) have all pointed out to the fact that the employment of strategies does aid in the learning of languages. Among the pioneers in the field of strategies research are Chamot and O'Malley who proposed the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) which, inter alia, stresses on the importance of practice, interaction with peers for monitoring and problem solving purposes: "CALLA teachers provide students with repeated opportunities to practice the new strategies on a variety of tasks, so that eventually the strategy itself becomes part of students' procedural knowledge. Strategy practice can take place during all types of learning activities in both large groups and cooperative learning teams" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1995, p. 200). It is a matter of common observation of language teachers of this region that students of English tend to look upon English more as a subject and less as a language or a medium of communication. Given such a mindset, it becomes pertinent to attempt a study of the prospects of social interactive strategies in the English classroom of the region.

4. Methodology

The paper is based on close reading of available secondary sources on second language strategies research.

5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical Underpinnings

a. The crucial role of communication

Various scholars have defined communication in various ways but there is a consensus that communication is key to language learning. One of the crucial theoretical models is the Vygotskyian notion of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). It states that the task at hand should be challenging and at the same time achievable with the help of a little suggestion and help from teachers, parents or peers. It highlights the crucial role of communication in language learning.

b. The communicative interactive classroom

Oxford (2011, p. 89) states that the meaning focussed classroom involves both semantic meaning as well as pragmatic meaning (the contextual appropriateness). Ellis (cited in Oxford, 2011, p.89) notes that the development of fluency requires opportunities to create pragmatic meaning.

c. Learning while communicating

Language learning and communicating happens together (Oxford, 2011, p. 90). Dewey (1956/1990) noted that learning takes place through experiences and not in the absence of experience.

d. Discourse factor

Oxford (2011) notes that discourse in the "sociocultural/ socio-political perspective" is "situated" in a given time

and place and “involves particular people” (p.93). She also states that there are certain crucial sides of the discourse factor in communication – the social identity of the speaker or writer, the social activity being performed, the particular setting, prior communication, shared assumptions and the social, cultural, cognitive, material and political effects of all these (p 93).

e. Cultural Model

Again, Oxford (2011, p 93) notes that there are different “cultural models” available in a group and it is this model which “organizes knowledge, thought, and situated meaning in various groups”. It is possible to have different cultural models in the same class – there can be a cultural model promoting a lot of competition among learners; and there can also be one that promotes cooperation and respect for wisdom. Consequently, there would be as many variations in the choice of learning strategies.

f. Social Identity

Another important area is the question of social identity which may not be constant, rather it is dependent on the context; the same learner may feel comfortable, uncomfortable; relaxed, agitated; accepted, excluded and so on, depending on the variations in the contexts.

5.2 Critiquing the prospect of language learning through interaction in the classroom in the local context

The General English Communication classrooms (at the tertiary level in Provincialized colleges in Upper Assam are large having 100 to 150 students coming from different cultural backgrounds. Here are a few possible instances of cultural models in the English classroom:

- a. Students from vernacular medium schools – Assamese, Bengali, Hindi etc;
- b. Students from English medium schools;
- c. Students from Major / Honours group;
- d. Non-Major / Non-Honours students will form another category;
- e. Students from different caste and religious backgrounds etc.

The list is not exhaustive but only indicative, the practising English teacher would be aware of many other ‘cultural models’ in the classroom which definitely affect the teaching and learning process. It is a matter of common understanding that addressing the different cultural models in the classroom is not easy for a teacher and more so for an English teacher given the size of the class. Another crucial question is that of time management – it is definitely not easy for the English teacher to address the very many issues in the given time frame of 45 – 60 minutes where 10 – 15 minutes are exhausted in the mandatory calling of rolls. Despite odds, the English teacher needs to remain aware of the aforementioned aspect of cultural identities of

learners and try his/her best to address students from all categories. It is a matter of common agreement that most students feel agitated when it comes to communicating in English and therefore it should be one of the primary concerns of the English teachers to make all the students (especially those from the marginalized section of the society) feel comfortable and relaxed in the class for learning to take place.

Language learning takes place during communication and the English teacher has to create scope for students' communication in the classroom for learning to happen. Interaction of hundred plus students would cause commotion which might disturb the adjacent classes. The paper writer, as a practising English teacher, is aware of the fear of being branded a failure in the teaching fraternity when the teacher's voice fails to silence the entire class into becoming obedient listeners – that is the usual picture of the traditional teacher centred English classroom. But in a communicative classroom, the learners need to do much of the talking with the teacher going into the background. Here the institutional authority must grant leeway to the English teacher in view of the fact that English (despite its reclamation as an Indian language) is still a foreign one for a majority of the students and unless they are made to interact in English they will not learn. Ergo, in a 100 plus English classroom a little 'noise' should be considered normal (and by implication, 'silence' of the students – abnormal). Accuracy may not be a crucial factor in

communication but fluency is, and students can be fluent when they are encouraged to communicate. The strategies that the learners use for communicating in English also help them in learning the language.

A diagnostic test in the English class at the very beginning of the session would give the teacher a general view of the standards of the students and help the teacher in setting tasks that are just challenging enough to rouse (and not douse) their 'flames' of interest to complete it with a little help from peers and teachers. The Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) devised by Oxford (1990) could be used (with necessary adaptations) for a survey of the students' language learning strategies. When students take such surveys, they become aware of the different language learning strategies and the English teacher also gets a suitable starting point to facilitate the use of such strategies in the classroom. The teacher also develops a working knowledge of the language learners' history, their current status as learners of English and their hopes (and fears) about the language. With such knowledge, the teacher does get better equipped to deal with learners in a large class; however, there is no sure – fire method of successful teaching, each teacher has to develop his own strategy albeit with the help and guidance of scholars and experts.

6. Conclusion:

The discussion establishes the idea that English teachers have to bear in mind the

sociocultural aspect of teaching which is crucial for employment of language learning strategies. There are practical challenges in it but the English teacher, keeping the importance of the sociocultural aspect in mind, must try to create a suitable ambience for the meaningful employment of sociocultural interactive strategies.

Reference:

1. Dewey, J. (1956/1990). *The Child and the Curriculum. The School and Society.* (Combined edition) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
2. O'Malley & Chamot, A.U. (1995). *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Oxford, R. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
4. Oxford, R. (2011). *Teaching and Researching Language Learning Strategies.* Pearson: Harlow
5. Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.