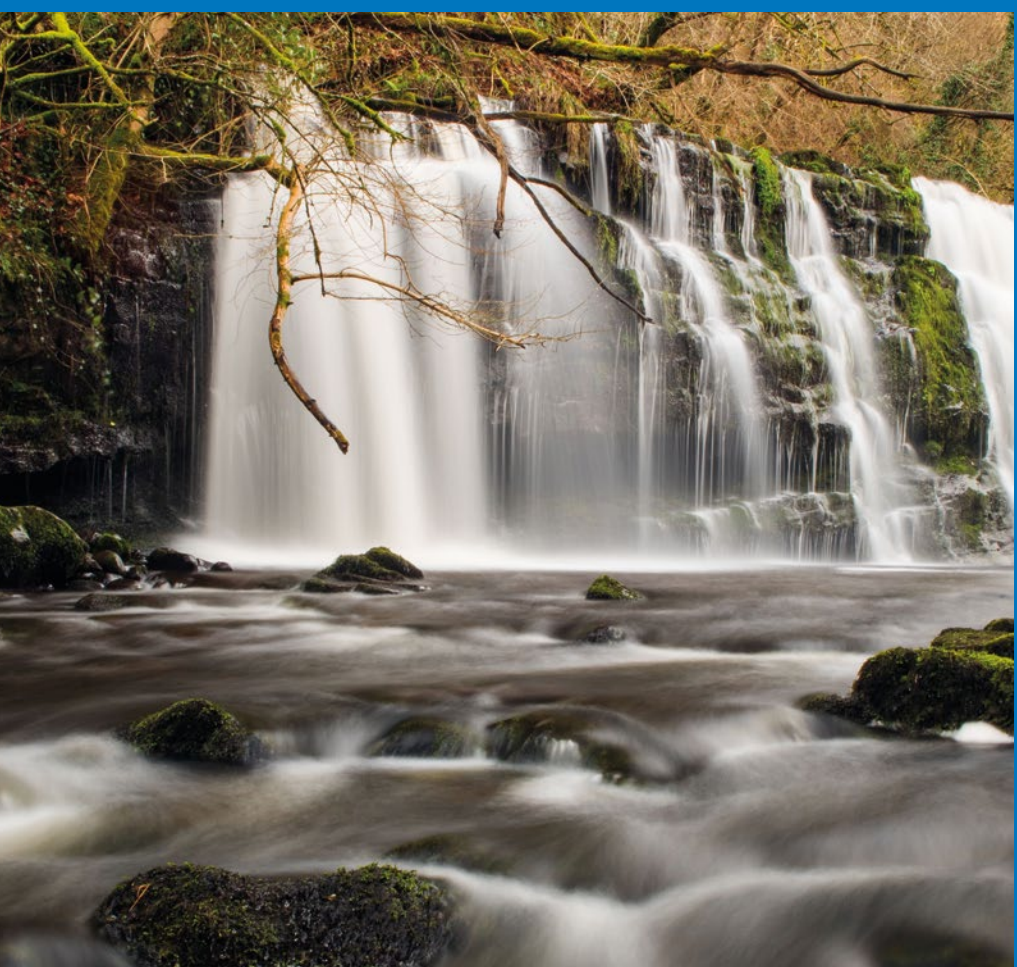
INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING ENGLISH IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES

Contexts, Challenges and Possibilities



International Perspectives on English Language Teaching

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International Perspectives on English Language Teaching

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International Perspectives on Teaching English in Difficult Circumstances

Contexts, Challenges and Possibilities

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Foreword

I (Fiona) began my teaching career in a government secondary school in central Nigeria. Class sizes were large (often 50+), resources were scarce (few of the children could afford books), and too frequently I would arrive in the classroom to find it empty; the children had been sent to the river to fetch water as the water delivery had failed to appear. Children would sometimes disappear for a term or even year at a time as parents could often not afford to pay either the state-imposed school fees or for a new school uniform—both mandatory.

Even though I was a young and naïve teacher, I realised I was teaching in 'difficult circumstances'. However, when I returned to the UK to a university teaching qualification in TESOL, my experience seemed mostly irrelevant. I was taught how to use group and pair work so that students could practise speaking, to supplement the coursebook through creative and often resource heavy activities and to conduct listening activities with cassette and video players. I did not feel alienated by the new approaches I was learning, but the kind of classrooms that the course tutors assumed seemed to be very different from the ones I had experienced.

I moved on from my training to work in a government secondary school in Hong Kong. Although an economic powerhouse, much of Hong Kong's wealth at the time was created by factory workers who lived in small densely packed flats but sent their children to school in pristine white dresses or shirts, fully equipped with stationery and PE kit. I taught in a school built for these children in the middle of a public housing estate in the New Territories. Some of the challenges of Nigeria were mirrored: each class had 40 students and there was no heating or air conditioning, so at different times of the year I and the students taught and learnt in our coats and boots or languished in

30+ degrees. Others were different: the children could not always envision a future for themselves beyond the factory and were uninterested in learning English, having neither instrumental nor intrinsic motivation. Many of the ideas I had learnt on the training course were impossible to implement: the open windows, large class size and flimsy classroom construction meant that the noise produced by 40 12-year-olds doing group work unsurprisingly attracted complaints from teachers in neighbouring rooms, while the school's focus on teaching the syllabus in order to assess learning fairly across the year groups resulted in a fairly rigid teaching schedule which left little time for creative supplementary activities.

Looking back, we can marvel that the experiences of Fiona and her colleagues in schools such as these were little represented in the texts devised to develop teaching skills, or in journal articles which presented research on second language acquisition and effective classroom pedagogies. While recent years have seen some recognition in the academic literature of what are sometimes termed TESEP (tertiary, secondary and primary) classrooms (e.g. Holliday, 1994), international publishing continues to focus on adult learning in small, well-resourced classrooms, and academic interest groups of learned societies rarely directly represent those teaching in difficult circumstances.

In the meantime, demand for English has increased not only among these wealthy elites but among the disenfranchised (e.g. prisoners), the poor (e.g. workers in Bangladesh) and the vulnerable (e.g. refugees). Unlike Fiona's pupils in Hong Kong, these students often show strong motivation to learn English as for them it represents the means to social mobility. Although the promises made for the power of English to transform personal circumstances have not yet been proven (see Block et al. 2012 and Coleman 2011 for strong critiques of the neo-liberal position that English can empower the poorest in society), learning English continues to provide hope to millions of students around the world who dare to imagine a better future for themselves through the access to the different worlds and circumstances that they believe English will provide.

A volume that represents the experiences and realities of teachers and students working and learning in difficult circumstances is long overdue for at least three reasons. First, despite the fact that the majority of English teaching happens in classrooms which are in some respect or other difficult, as a profession we continue either to overlook them or brush them under our global TESOL carpet; representation at international TESOL conferences from such contexts is often poor (these conferences are expensive, as is international travel), and academic colleagues working in these contexts can find it difficult

to get published in international journals which require papers to adhere to a set of strict, western, academic conventions. This volume ensures that some voices at least are heard.

Second, as countries such as the UK focus research funds on supporting development in low- and middle-income countries through such initiatives as the Global Challenges Research Fund (http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/gcrf/), researchers in high-income countries need a stronger understanding of the challenges that colleagues and students face in these contexts. Without this, they will not be able to design projects which are fit for purpose and provide a lasting and sustainable impact in the contexts they are designed to improve. This volume provides a fine overview of areas in education that could be addressed in research partnerships.

Third, educators across the world can learn from each other, whatever the circumstances. For years the direction of learning in TESOL has been from 'the west' to 'the rest'. In this volume, we can all learn how to be better educators from the experiences described by chapter writers, whether this is how we design mobile apps so that students can learn on the move or how we can teach students who use English as a second language in large classes in higher education.

Kuchah (Harry) Kuchah and Fauzia Shamin, both of whom research teaching English in difficult circumstances, have brought together chapters which truly present an international perspective on this important but often disregarded area. It makes a truly valuable contribution to the International Perspectives series.

Stirling, UK — Fiona Copland

Birmingham, UK — Sue Garton

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The original version of this book was revised: The affiliation of the book editor and author of Chapter 12, Fauzia Shamim, was corrected.
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Zakia Sarwar is a founding member and Honorary Executive Director of the Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT). She has over 45 years' experience of teaching English, experimenting in her classrooms with materials and project-based self-learning strategies to foster learner autonomy in large, under-resourced classes of adult learners.

Fauzia Shamim is a Professor and Coordinator in the English Language Center, Taibah University, Saudi Arabia. Her career as a teacher, teacher educator and researcher spans over three decades in a variety of settings in Pakistan and internationally. She is one of the pioneers of ELT in Pakistan and a founder member of the Society of Pakistan English teachers (SPELT). She is also a member of the TESOL International Association's Research Professional Council. Her current research interests include language teacher education, English as medium of instruction and teaching in large classes.

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Clare Woodward is a lecturer at the Open University, UK. She has worked on a range of international projects focusing on teacher professional development and curriculum reform in Bangladesh, Sub-Saharan Africa and South America. She has particular expertise in English Language teacher education, through the development of materials, delivery of workshops and the establishment of networks together with extensive experience in the innovative use of ICTs for teacher education. She is particularly interested in the use of accessible and affordable technologies as a tool for TPD, and her research interests are in participatory video and school-based professional development.

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Teaching English in Difficult Circumstances: Setting the Scene

Kuchah Kuchah

This book examines the contexts, challenges and possibilities of English language teaching (ELT) in a range of developing countries. The different chapters engage with a number of difficulties including large classes; lack of teaching resources; lack of exposure to English language outside the classroom; low student engagement and (teacher) proficiency; lack of knowledge about, and access to, teacher education and professional development opportunities; as well as challenges faced by practitioners working in contexts of conflict, confinement and special education needs. The common thread running through the chapters in this book is that (a) English language teaching and learning in the developing world is generally challenging, (b) teacher educators, teachers and learners face issues on a daily basis which are inconceivable to their counterparts in more privileged contexts and (c) these challenges offer opportunities for enriching our understanding of the complex terrain of English language education as well as for the development of alternative practices which can potentially enrich current theories in ELT.

The aim of this introductory chapter is to present an overview of the theoretical discussions underpinning the different chapters in this book. The chapter therefore discusses the socio-political and economic forces rendering teaching and learning circumstances difficult in developing world contexts as well as the diverse and complex nature of the challenges teacher educators, teachers and learners of English language in these less-privileged contexts face

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on a day-to-day basis. Then it revisits the key debates around the transfer of Northern-generated methodological principles and procedures to less-privileged Southern contexts and highlights the need for the development of contextually responsive pedagogic practices. Drawing from current literature on the subject of ELT in difficult circumstances, the chapter shows how language pedagogy has developed in recent years in response to the different contextual challenges imposed on learners, teachers and teacher educators in such contexts.

Defining Difficult Circumstances in English Language Education

The term *difficult* or *unfavourable circumstances* in relation to ELT was first used by Michael West in his book *Teaching English in Difficult Circumstances*, to describe 'a class consisting of over 30 pupils (more usually 40 or even 50), congested on benches… accommodated in an unsuitably shaped room, ill-graded, with a teacher who perhaps does not speak English very well or very fluently' (West 1960: 1). Nearly 60 years after the publication of West's book, very similar circumstances can still be found throughout the developing world. In addition to the characteristics identified by West, Maley (2001) suggests that there are also wider issues beyond the classroom which make learning/teaching difficult. He describes a classroom of 60 students who have walked for at least 5 miles to school after doing their morning chores and who find themselves crammed in a dirty classroom meant for 30 students with a pitted and grey blackboard and no chalk at times. These students are taught by a poorly paid teacher with rudimentary competence in English language and who uses a course book that represents characters from an unfamiliar luxurious culture. More recently a number of authors (e.g., Bertoncino et al. 2002; Copland et al. 2014; UNESCO-UIS 2016; Verspoor 2008) have drawn attention to a range of challenges faced by educational systems in developing world countries, which affect both the quality of education more broadly and English language education in particular. Shamim and Kuchah (2016) have examined these existing studies on difficult circumstances and conclude that:

> Difficult circumstances include, but may not be limited to insufficient and/or outdated textbooks, crowded classrooms with limited space, and lack of adequate resources and facilities for teaching-learning, including ICT. These difficult circumstances are compounded, particularly in resource poor environments, if teachers do not have adequate English language and/or pedagogical skills. (Shamim and Kuchah 2016: 528)

The list of challenges above is mainly limited to micro-level constraints (language classrooms) and does not take into account other macro and meso constraints that characterise ELT particularly in developing world contexts where ELT ideas are mostly imported (Smith 2011). This book extends the current conceptualisation of difficult circumstances in ELT to include the broader policy issues that might affect English language teaching and learning in mainstream educational settings in low- to mid-income countries as well as the challenges faced by practitioners and learners in contexts of confinement, conflict and special education needs.

Although there is considerable agreement in the literature cited above that certain contextual realities generally impede language education, some researchers have questioned the rationale for labelling some educational contexts as 'difficult'. Smith (2015) holds that such a label might limit us to 'pathologising' a context instead of helping us to acknowledge the real diversity of classroom situations as well as to notice what might be positive about such contexts particularly in developing countries. In the same light, Ekembe (2016:121) has argued that the conceptualisation of some ELT contexts as 'under-resourced' derives from the conception of what is believed to be 'standard' rather than what may be considered adequate and sufficient by stakeholders within the specific context. He suggests that perceived lack of resources might be a result of the difficulty in applying North-driven or North-derived methodologies in such contexts that are only different and not actually under-resourced per se. Because teachers and learners in such contexts share the same social, cultural, economic and political ecologies, in and out of the school environment, describing the contexts as they present themselves reduces the possibilities of becoming idealistic and directs our focus on what is realistic. Ekembe further draws attention to the centrality of so-called under-resourced contexts in innovating ELT methodologies by examining evidence from data from an ongoing teacher association research project in Cameroon (see Smith and Kuchah 2016). The data, consisting of accounts of, and reflections on, successful English language lessons by members of the Cameroon English Language and Literature Teachers' Association (CAMELTA) suggest that 'there seems to be an unconscious emancipation [by teachers in so called 'difficult' circumstances] from imported methodologies.' (Ekembe op.cit.: 135).

As with most labelling, comparisons and contradictions are inevitable; this is even more the case with ELT where the variety of contexts within which practitioners around the world work makes a definition of difficulty elusive. In fact it is likely that the circumstances which a practitioner might consider difficult in one context might be perceived as a favourable opportunity by another practitioner within the same, or in another, context (Kuchah 2016a).

The literature does indeed suggest that even insiders, that is, English language practitioners in developing world contexts (see, e.g., Khadka 2015; Kuchah and Smith 2011; Shamim et al. 2007), perceive their circumstances as difficult although the nature and extent of these difficulties might be different from those which an outsider to the context perceives. Bearing this in mind, and while acknowledging the complexity of using blanket labels in ELT, the use of 'difficult circumstances' in this book is not meant to convey a reductionist/deficiency perspective of certain contexts. The concept of difficult circumstances is used here to draw attention to, and help us reflect more critically on, the wide range of issues that language practitioners in low- and middle-income countries (see World Bank 2016) face as well as the pedagogical possibilities that emerge from these contexts in order to contribute to existing research, ideas/theory and pedagogy in the field of ELT. In other words, our use of West's (1960) conceptualisation and other definitions derived from it is guided both by the perceived realities of practitioners in these contexts and by the need for some kind of label which, as Smith (2015: n.p.) suggests, will enable us to draw attention to the working conditions of the majority of English language teachers around the world, conditions which are not often included in the ELT literature in northern/western journals or books.

Why Write a Book on Difficult Circumstances?

Since West (1960) first described difficult circumstances in ELT, the number of English language students and range of teaching-learning contexts around the world has grown exponentially especially in developing world countries where proficiency in English is increasingly perceived as a prerequisite for economic development (Coleman 2011; Dearden 2014). In addition to growing numbers of English language learners, forced and voluntary migrations resulting from economic factors as well as from conflicts and natural disasters have further complicated teaching and learning conditions in many parts of the world. In fact as Maley (2001: np) has argued, 'a majority of the world's English classrooms…is far from the ideal world of pedagogical excitement and innovatory teaching' that western ELT researchers and practitioners inhabit. Yet, as Smith (2011) suggests, less-privileged contexts have, paradoxically, remained under-considered in 'mainstream' ELT discourse. Instead, UK-based ELT research, which is a major source of influence on language education policy in many developing countries where English language is taught, still continues to focus on relatively well-resourced settings (cf Rixon and Smith 2010). What is more, the focus of language teacher education is

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still primarily on the theoretical aspects of learning, teaching and management (Bolitho 2016). West (1960) asserted that:

> …teacher-training colleges tend naturally to advocate and demonstrate the best possible methods; nor should they be criticised for doing this. But in training their students to use such methods, they naturally assume the favourable conditions in which such methods are practicable. (West 1960: 2)

In the same light, Hayes (1997) and Lovitt (2010) observe, respectively, that few teacher preparation programmes address issues such as large classes or offer assistance in dealing with children living and schooling in dysfunctional or other challenging circumstances. Consequently, teachers are not adequately prepared for coping with the problems they face, including how to teach and assess large classes, different age groups and abilities in one class' (Samb 2013; Smith et al. 2012). Yet, as West (1960) earlier suggests, there is now a growing need for teacher education programmes to train language educators on what can best be done under unfavourable conditions, in case they find themselves in such conditions or are called upon to inspect or train teachers who work in such circumstances.

The difficulties explored in this book include challenges emerging from the complex social, economic and geopolitical environments of English language education today and provide a basis for thinking about difficult circumstances and context-based strategies for addressing context-specific challenges. The different contributions to this book each highlight one or more contextual challenges and, more importantly, share context-based solutions developed through systematic inquiry-based and/or pedagogic interventions. In other words, these challenges are presented as opportunities for developing contextually appropriate research and practice-based interventions for improving English language teaching, learning and teacher education. In this way, the book aims not only to enhance our understanding of the wide range of context-specific challenges and the resilience and agency of teachers and teacher educators in addressing them but also to provide a useful starting point for understanding and reflecting on issues of contextually embedded ELT policy and teacher education.

Policy Decisions and the Creation of Difficult Circumstances

Three important policy trends are identifiable in the recent literature on English language education in difficult circumstances, namely, the promotion and spread of English as a global language and its impact on language curricula, the

implementation of communicative and learner-centred approaches to language education and the Education for All movement and its impact on school enrolments, class size and resources (cf Shamim and Kuchah 2016). This section examines how these policy decisions together have 'created' difficult circumstances in developing world contexts and highlights the contribution of the chapters in this volume to the key discussions on the subject.

The rapid spread of English language worldwide (Graddol 2006), and its impact on language education policies and practices around the world, has been widely discussed in the literature (see, e.g., Bohn 2003; Copland et al. 2014; Nguyen 2011; Nunan 2003; Tembe 2006). Research studies have examined how this spread of English has influenced, and in turn been influenced by, two factors, namely, policy decisions lowering the age at which children are being exposed to English as a subject in the school curriculum (Cameron 2003) and the growing inclusion of English as a medium of instruction at all levels of the educational system (Dearden 2014). Different models of language education programmes are being promoted as a result of the increasing importance that policy makers give to English language education. These include models which promote English as a medium of instruction (EMI) such as content and language integrated learning (CLIL) (e.g., see Banegas 2013, 2015; Paran 2013) and full English immersion (e.g., Kuchah 2013a, 2016b) as well as monolingual/ English-only policies based on principles derived from communicative language teaching (e.g., Ismail 2012; Mandalios 2012). Such policies, it has been argued, are often based on the perceived economic benefits of English language (Dearden 2014; Pinon and Haydon 2010) and do not take into account the practical realities of educational settings especially in state sector institutions in developing world contexts. Muthwii (2001) argues that in such contexts, problems such as the lack of resources and low language proficiency of teachers already pose significant challenges to the attainment of quality education. Previous studies (e.g., Brock-Utne 2010; Clegg and Afitska 2011; Kamwendo et al. 2014; Williams 2006; Owu-Ewie 2006) have highlighted the problems which EMI policies pose to quality education in developing countries. What has not been fully investigated in the literature, however, is how indigenous multilingual teachers effectively navigate these policy challenges in teaching students, who rarely use English outside the classroom, in contexts where EMI or English-only policies exist. Phyak's contribution (Chap. 3) in this volume sheds light on the pedagogic practices of experienced teachers in such contexts.

Holliday (1994) draws attention to the potential disconnections between ELT methodological constructs such as the communicative language teaching approach developed in generally well-resourced contexts and their (mis)

application in mainstream state education contexts around the world. He highlights significant contextual differences between the contexts from which the dominant ELT literature promoted worldwide is generated—that is, generally well resourced, small group classes taught by highly trained native speaker teachers, with relative freedom to experiment on content and methodology—and the realities of mainstream educational institutions within which these methodological prescriptions are implemented. These mainstream institutions are, by their very institutional nature, constrained by the strong influences of the syllabus, the textbook and the examination. Even within these mainstream educational circles, there are large contextual variations in sociocultural, economic and human resources which account for disconnections between the policy-promoting CLT and learner-centred pedagogies and the actual pedagogic practices of teachers (see, e.g., Nguyen 2011; Nunan 2003; O'Sullivan 2004; Tembe 2006). McLaughlin (1987) explains that such disconnections exist because the dynamic character of the institutional settings in which implementation of policy takes place influences, and is in turn influenced by, factors such as local capacity and resources as well as the willingness and/or ability of educational actors to accommodate the policy.

The situation is even more complex in contexts where the expanding number of English language learners does not seem to be in tandem with the infrastructural as well as material and human resource provisions (Sawamura and Sufina 2008). In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, studies (e.g., Komba and Nkumbi 2008; Nakabugo 2008; O'Sullivan 2004, 2006) have revealed that the implementation of the Education for All (EFA) policy through the provision of free and compulsory basic education has created additional complexities to the number of challenges listed earlier in this chapter. In Uganda, for example, increased enrolments together with policies which impose communicative approaches to teaching English language place demands on teachers in terms of finding resources and being innovative, demands which they are unable to fulfil due to low proficiency and confidence levels, crowded classrooms and lack of materials (Tembe 2006) as well as the lack of libraries and students' poor exposure to English language (Muthwii 2001).

A large part of the early literature on teaching English in difficult circumstances (e.g., Coleman 1989; Shamim 1996; Watson Todd 2006) seemed to suggest that at the core of the challenges faced by teachers are large, heterogeneous classes. Yet policy decisions such as EFA and the socioeconomic realities of developing countries indicate that reducing class size is not even an option in under resourced educational settings where growing numbers of students and limited resources make adding a few more students to a class an easier policy

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option (Shamim and Coleman 2018). A recent survey of school resources and learning environments in 15 African countries (UNESCO-UIS 2016) revealed that there are more than 50 students per class in primary schools in a third of these countries with the average class size exceeding 70 in Malawi, the Central African Republic and Tanzania. Overall, the literature on class sizes particularly in developing countries reveals even larger classroom enrolments (see, e.g., Bughio 2012; Emery 2013; Kuchah and Smith 2011; Shamim et al. 2007). However, these numbers are based on official figures which, as Coleman (Chap. 2) argues, often give a seriously distorted under-representation of the reality of class size. This, Coleman further suggests, is because large classes are contextually defined/understood and therefore difficult to address at large scale/country level. However, at local/classroom level, teachers and learners' perceptions of large classes go beyond just numbers and often include, amongst other things:

> …factors such as the physical space in the classroom and the amount and availability of resources vis-à-vis the number of students … several learner and teacher-related factors such as teacher competency and learners' age and grade level, classroom processes including teacher-learner and leaner-learner interaction, the nature of the subject being taught, and, increasingly, teachers' aim to encourage learner participation and active learning in the classroom as manifested in the assessment and feedback strategies used as well as management of teaching-learning in the classroom. (Shamim and Coleman 2018)

Overall therefore, although large class sizes are often foregrounded in discussions of contextual challenges, they tend only to be representative of the several other contextual variables (listed above) with which they interact to create difficult circumstances. There is therefore still need for research which does not isolate large classes from the other interrelated difficulties but adopts a holistic approach to investigating difficult circumstances in order to inform broader policy on language education in such contexts. The particular merit of this volume is that although each chapter discusses different contextual challenges, these challenges are not addressed in isolation; individually and collectively, the chapters examine contextual difficulties and possibilities in an organic manner.

Developing Contextually Responsive Pedagogic Practices

In the foregoing section, it was argued that policy decisions such as those promoting free and compulsory basic education as well as communicative language teaching without a concomitant provision of necessary resources

have led to a range of difficulties in language education in developing countries. This section examines previous studies on teachers' contextual responses to the difficult circumstances, as defined in this book, and shows how the contributions to this book take the discussions forward, particularly in terms of investigating teachers' pragmatic responses in varied contexts.

Within the post-method era (Kumaravadivelu 2001) increasing emphasis has been given to the centrality of teacher agency in the development of contextually appropriate forms of pedagogy. To help practitioners take on a more central role in language education, Kumaravadivelu (ibid) proposes three pedagogic parameters—*particularity*, *practicality* and *possibility*—which he believes can reorient language pedagogy. The *pedagogy of particularity* aims at making practitioners aware of the specific backgrounds and needs of their learners and to engage in a continual cycle of observation, reflection and action as a prerequisite for the development of context-sensitive pedagogical knowledge. The *pedagogy of practicality* empowers teachers to 'theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize' (Kumaravadivelu 2006: 59) because 'no theory of practice can be useful and usable unless it is generated through practice… it is the practicing teacher who, given adequate tools for exploration, is best suited to produce such a practical theory' (2001: 541). The *pedagogy of possibility* links language teaching and social transformation by drawing from 'the sociopolitical consciousness that students bring with them to the classroom' (Kumaravadivelu 2006: 59). Proponents of context-appropriate methodology (e.g., Bax 2003; Holliday 1994; Kao et al. 2013; Rubdy 2008) have argued that pedagogic approaches should emerge from the affordances of the teaching environment as opposed to being imposed on teachers by policy makers. This is because there is evidence in the ELT literature (e.g., Holliday 1992; Wedell and Grassick Forthcoming) that pedagogic practices which are imposed on practitioners with no prior consideration of their beliefs and current practices tend to be resisted.

Underlying the foregoing perspectives is the perception of practitioners as active sense makers capable of generating knowledge from their understanding of the different contexts within which they interact with colleagues and learners. Studies which have examined the relationship between classroom challenges and student achievement (e.g., Buckingham 2003; Shamim 2012; Staasz and Stecher 2000; Stecher and Bohrnstedt 2000) suggest that it might be more beneficial to focus on the quality of teaching, rather than on classroom circumstances. Imposing on practitioners methodological ideas and procedures which are not determined by the local conditions of the context in which they work might not be a realistic way of dealing with difficult circumstances (Bax 2003; Maley 2001; Wedell and Grassick Forthcoming). This is more justified when we consider that teachers are at the interface between

curriculum demands, classroom realities and student learning and as such are often called upon to take on the spur-of-the-moment decisions in the teaching-learning process to adjust to emerging challenges.

Accounts, by practitioners themselves and researchers (see, e.g., Amritavalli 2007; Khadka 2015; Kuchah and Smith 2011; Smith et al. 2012 as well as the work of members of the TELC research and teacher development network, http://telcnet.weebly.com), draw attention to the importance of contextually generated pedagogic practices, materials and resources and the role of student autonomy in ensuring successful learning in difficult circumstances (see also Guatam and Sarwar, Chap. 5 in this volume). What is more, they highlight the important roles of teacher motivation, agency and resilience in difficult circumstances, themes respectively covered and extended in the studies by Khurram (Chap. 4), Tyers and Lightfoot (Chap. 6), Banegas (Chap. 7), Alyasin (Chap. 8) and Hillyard (Chap. 9) reported in this volume. These studies offer systematic intervention and/or research-based responses to calls for evidence of the contextual appropriateness of responsive pedagogic practices and resources (Shamim 2012; Shamim and Kuchah 2016; Smith 2011). They also showcase the value of bottom-up classroom/practitioner-based inquiry into the role of teachers in generating insights of value that can be shared with others (Smith 2015; Smith and Kuchah 2016). Given that difficult circumstances are contextually defined and as a result cannot simply be addressed by pedagogic practices imported from otherwise privileged resource-rich contexts, this kind of research might better describe 'good practices' or 'appropriate methodologies' for difficult circumstances.

Expanding Circles of Difficult Circumstances in ELT

So far, this chapter has focused attention on the issues, complexities and possibilities of English language teaching and learning in mainstream educational settings which fit into traditional conceptualisations of difficult circumstances (an exception is Tyers and Lightfoot's chapter which deals with out-of-school language learning). This section draws attention to the realities of the expanding circles of difficulties within which language education takes place. These are mainly non-mainstream contexts such as war/refugee camps, prisons and special needs institutions which have not yet attracted sufficient attention in the ELT research literature in developing countries, yet are increasingly becoming the reality for many students and teachers in these parts of the world. Over the last few decades, vast displacements of people due to ever-rising human and natural catastrophes have further added to the list of diffi-

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culties that language practitioners and learners have to grapple with (see e.g., accounts from Nigeria by Okpe (2016) and from Nepal by Phyak (2015)). Escalating armed conflicts in many countries of the world have seen the displacement of millions of people both internally and externally (IDMC 2015). Nicolai et al. (2016) report that 75 million children aged 3–18 years and living in 35 crisis-affected countries are in the most desperate need of educational support. Save the Children (2015) presents even more disturbing statistics: there are 300 million children out of school or learning in displacement camps in circumstances that are far removed from traditional conceptualisations of schooling. In Nigeria, for example, Ekereke (2013) confirms that about 10 million young people are out of school, thousands of people displaced, dehumanised and preoccupied with how to survive and escape cruel massacres by Boko Haram insurgents. In these circumstances, attention is most often given to issues of health, shelter and safety (e.g., see Save the Children 2015; WHO 2015) with little mention of education (Ekereke 2013; Kagawa 2005; Smith 2014).

Nelson and Appleby (2014) argue that the unprecedented displacements caused by different types of crises around the world today impose the need to strengthen ELT teachers' capacities so that they can better serve the needs of English language learners living in and/or traumatised by such crisis. Studies (e.g., Hayes 2002; Kennett 2011; Whitehead 2011) have shown that English language can serve as a medium for encouraging communication, mutual understanding and peace building amongst different groups of people in fragile and conflict-affected communities. Kennett (op.cit.), for example, describes the role of English language in facilitating communication between Sri Lankan government soldiers (who do not speak Tamil), refugees (who do not speak Sinhala) and aid workers (who speak neither language) after civil war in the north and east of the country. The STEPS (Skills Through English for Public Servants) project in which Kennett herself is involved integrates ELT with the development of skills needed for negotiation and consensus seeking in order to encourage communication between civil servants at the local level with the public, NGOs, international humanitarian workers and central government. Okpe's (2016) survey of the practices of a group of 50 language teachers in the north of Nigeria identifies the use of 'restoration strategies'—that is, a combination of English lessons with counselling and other psychological activities to help restore victims to their former psychological state—to teach children in conflict-affected areas. In the area of prison education, there has been some focus, particularly in the developed world, on providing prison inmates with quality vocational education and skills necessary for post-confinement social integration and employability (Coates 2016). However,

this has not specifically addressed foreign or second language learning. There is yet, to the best of our knowledge, no such published account of education, in contexts of confinement from developing countries. Worse still, there seem to be little or no reported interest in these countries in ELT for social integration and employability despite political discourses of social justice for all.

The dearth of literature on ELT in contexts of conflict and confinement is also noticeable in the area of special needs education where greater interest has been on questions of education, inclusivity and equity more broadly (e.g., Westwood 2003; Turnbull et al. 2006; UNESCO 2005) and as part of the quality education imperatives within the framework of the Education for All goals (UNESCO 2013). Available research in this area (e.g., Kormos and Kontra 2008; Kormos and Smith 2012; Csizer et al. 2010; Kormos et al. 2009) has provided insight into the language learning motivations, experiences and processes of learners with enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disabilities, but these have focused on western contexts with considerable resource provision. One notable exception here is the work of Hillyard (2012, 2016) which has focused not only on creating enabling environments for young learners with special education needs but also on the role of drama in second/foreign language education for such children. Three chapters in this book address these expanding circles of difficulty in ELT—conflict (Alyasin, Chap. 8), confinement (Banegas, Chap. 7) and special needs education (Hillyard, Chap. 9)—and present insights for understanding teacher motivation, agency, resilience and the development of contextually appropriate pedagogies for such contexts.

Teacher Education, Professional Development and Research in Difficult Circumstances

In the two preceding sections, I have discussed the literature on pedagogic practices in both 'traditional' and 'expanding' difficult circumstances showing how insights from research into, and accounts of, teachers' pragmatic responses to their day-to-day challenges can enrich our understanding of appropriate teaching in these contexts. Building on such evidence (of successful practices in difficult circumstances), it seems appropriate to examine the role of teacher education and professional development in such contexts. Teacher quality has continued to be highlighted as an important factor in the attainment of quality education (Bolitho 2016; Wright 2010), but at the same time issues of teacher shortage continue to be reported, particularly in state school systems in developing world countries (UNESCO 2015). Shamim and Kuchah

(2016) suggest that in state sector institutions in developing world contexts, factors such as teacher shortage and other resulting professional pressures make it difficult for teachers and educational authorities to make time to engage in sustained professional development activities especially when these entail taking away the few available teachers from their classrooms. In this regard, traditional training-transmission models (Borg 2015; Maingay 1988), which require teachers to attend workshops and seminars, might not be a viable option for dealing with teacher shortage since removing teachers from class for a day might mean depriving students from a day of learning. Besides, such training workshops may not address the real concerns of teachers especially where, as is often the case, they are organised by external experts or ministry officials with little understanding and experience of teachers' real day-to-day conundrums (Kuchah 2008).

The sheer range of difficult circumstances within which English language teaching and learning takes place around the world today requires teacher education programmes to equip language practitioners with the pedagogic and human skills and attitudes necessary for adapting to the changing dynamics of the world. In this regard, development-constructivist models of teacher education (Borg 2015) seem to offer opportunities for teacher educators and teachers to collaboratively construct good practice that can impact positively on classroom teaching and learning (Cordingley et al. 2003) and on the overall conception and dissemination of innovative practices (Hayes 2014). This is because such models recognise and acknowledge the value of teachers' prior knowledge, beliefs and experiences as well as their social and collaborative professional interactions on their professional learning (Darling-Hammond 2013; Kao et al. 2013). As a result, encouraging a combination of teacher-learner, teacher-teacher and teacher-researcher collaborations might be a viable enhancing strategy for promoting teacher professional development in difficult circumstances where, as has been argued earlier, there is need to generate insights about contextually responsive pedagogies from the bottom up.

Achieving this kind of collaboration might take many forms, including traditional forms of classroom observation, action and reflection as well as technology-enhanced procedures where these are available. An increasing number of studies (e.g., Arya et al. 2016; Gakonga 2013; Kuchah 2013b) have highlighted the benefits of video in teacher education. Besides being less intrusive than groups of teachers observing a class at the same time, authentic classroom videos can potentially promote the generation of knowledge about pedagogic practices through reflective tasks that help teachers focus on the videoed case teacher's, as well as their own experiences (Jiménez Raya and Vieira 2010; Jiménez Raya 2011). For example, Kuchah (2013b) found that

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making use of authentic classroom videos of local practitioners as a basis for focus group discussions and collaborative reflection with teachers has the potential to generate and disseminate contextually grounded pedagogies. This is because teachers seem more likely to accept pedagogic innovation when it is seen to emanate from, or be endorsed by their peers (Kao et al. 2013) than when it is imposed upon them by outside experts or policy makers who have little understanding of the realities of teachers' working contexts and lives.

More recently, there has been a growing body of evidence that teacher research—that is, 'systematic self-study by teachers (individually or collaboratively) which seeks to achieve real-world impact of some kind' (Borg and Sanchez 2015: 1)—can help foster not only the professional development of teachers involved in it but also the quality of teaching and learning. However, in contexts where opportunities for sustained inquiry-based research and in-service teacher education are rare, there is the need to explore realistic approaches to harnessing, understanding, refining and disseminating successful practices in ways that are both motivating to teachers and less demanding on teachers' time. Studies from developing world contexts (see, e.g., Bughio 2012; Gnawali 2013, 2016; Naidu et al. 1992; Padwad and Dixit 2014; Smith and Kuchah 2016) have demonstrated how individuals and groups of professionals, supported by more experienced and research capable peers, may benefit from working collaboratively to develop teacher knowledge and skills from the bottom up. One of the earliest forms of English teacher professional development through collaborative classroom-based research in difficult circumstances was that carried out by Naidu et al. (opt cit) in India with the aim of seeking and disseminating pragmatic solutions to classroom challenges identified by the teachers themselves. More recently, Padwad and Dixit (2014) have reported on how members of English teachers' clubs in India enhance their awareness of the profession, their professional context and their own needs through engagement in collaborative professional development within a centralised and prescriptive system with limited provision for professional development. Similarly, Bughio (2012) shows how his role as a teacher-collaborator with a group of Pakistani teachers led to improved classroom interaction and learner responsibility for self and peer learning. Smith and Kuchah (2016) describe the early stages of a teacher association (TA) research project—that is, a systematic inquiry which is based on members' priorities and officially endorsed by a TA and which engages members as active participants in their own collective project (Smith and Kuchah ibid: 212). Initial insights into the impact of the project indicate that participating teachers show evidence of motivation and self-fulfilment, self-reflection and a sense of ownership of their own professional development. The authors suggest that

resourceful teachers working in difficult circumstances can be encouraged to collaboratively evolve their own research and/or professional development agendas and overcome the day-to-day challenges they encounter in their profession. Similarly, chapters by Focho (Chap. 10) and Solly and Woodward (Chap. 11) present evidence of the respective impacts of traditional collaborative teacher development and mobile technology-enhanced teacher education programmes on teacher learning. What remains to be investigated is how such context-based forms of professional development might impact on learning outcomes of students at different levels of the school system.

The Structure of This Book

Given the realities of English language teaching and learning contexts around the world today, and the rising impact of forced or voluntary migrations on educational systems even in developed world contexts, it seems plausible to suggest that the circumstances described in this book will continue to be the reality of many language teachers and learners around the world. There is therefore a compelling need for continuous research- and practice-based accounts which offer insights into the complexities of these circumstances. The distinctive feature of this volume is that it offers a holistic practice and research-based perspective to existing knowledge on the subject of English language learning, teaching and professional development in difficult circumstances. It aims to enhance an understanding of the sociocultural, economic and political relationships that underpin ELT in otherwise underprivileged circumstances and to provide valuable insights for teachers, teacher educators, materials developers, researchers and policy makers.

The contributions to this volume are organised into four main thematic sections and cover a wide range of contexts in Africa, Asia and South America. Section I examines policy decisions which compound teaching and learning in developing world contexts. Coleman (Chap. 2) compares official figures on classroom enrolments in countries in Southeast Asia and Francophone West Africa with actual figures from classroom observations to show that there are significant discrepancies between official figures and classroom realities which tend to conceal the true extent of teaching challenges. He concludes that these additional difficult circumstances (undeclared numbers of students in classrooms) need to be systematically and consistently brought to the attention of stakeholders and education authorities so that they can be more explicitly addressed. In Chap. 3, Phyak explains how unplanned language education policies in Nepal have led to monolingual ideologies in language teaching,

causing additional difficulties to already existing resource challenges. Drawing from vignettes of successful multilingual/translanguaging pedagogy, the chapter concludes that appropriate language policy and planning, which embrace students' existing linguistic knowledge as a resource in teaching English and other subjects through English, would minimise the effects of existing challenges in contexts such as Nepal.

The three chapters in Section II focus on different research and practical interventions for developing contextually responsive pedagogies and materials for teaching in different difficult circumstances. Chapters by Khuram (Chap. 4) and Guatam and Sarwar (Chap. 5) represent practitioners' attempts to explore context-appropriate solutions to classroom challenges in large class contexts. Guatam and Sarwar's account of how a successful intervention in Pakistan is adapted in Nepal shows the power of contextually grounded grassroots innovation in effecting change across national boundaries. A key feature of these chapters is the place of teacher and learner agency in facilitating engagement with learning. Chapter 6 (Tyers and Lightfoot) reports on the introduction of a mobile app for language learning in Bangladesh and India, two countries where English language constitutes an important skill for employability yet large numbers of young people have relatively little access to quality and affordable face-to-face English language education. The chapter describes and evaluates the outcomes of a two-phase process undertaken by the British Council team to develop appropriate m-learning content to enable young people in India and Bangladesh to develop their English proficiency, with a specific focus on the language needed for improving employability prospects. Tyers and Lightfoot provide evidence of large-scale improvements in language proficiency and self-confidence in participants who would otherwise not have the opportunity to learn English in formal classroom settings.

Section III consists of three chapters examining ELT in non-mainstream contexts of confinement (Banegas, Chap. 7), conflict (Al-Yasin, Chap. 8) and special education needs (Hillyard, Chap. 9). Banegas examines the motivations of two teachers who teach English in prisons in two different Argentinian cities and reveals the inherently dialogical, dynamic and relational nature of the teaching profession. He then suggests that teacher education could benefit from more explicit exposure to, and understanding of, different challenging contexts of work as well as of the motivational dynamics of the individual teachers. Alyasin's chapter extends the concept of difficult circumstances to conflict-affected and war-related situations and throws light on the challenges and coping strategies of an English teacher in a Syrian refugee camp school in Southern Turkey. The teacher's pedagogic practices, based on her own previous experiences, her understanding of her learners and the specific contextual

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constraints in which they operate, provide an exemplary model for confronting difficult circumstances with the capacities available rather than surrendering to the chaotic realities of war. The final chapter in this section (Hillyard) describes an intervention programme (English in Action) which makes use of drama as a resource to teach English in under-resourced state sector special needs primary schools in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The contexts of intervention include remedial schools, hospital schools, homes and orphanages as well as a school for mobility disability, and the range of special needs in the chapter covers illness, trauma, diagnosed ADHD, phobia, emotional disorder, physical impairment, general learning difficulties, selective mutism, Asperger's and Down syndromes, autism and immigrant children who speak neither Spanish nor English.

Section IV examines context-specific approaches to teacher development in difficult circumstances where opportunities for continuous professional development are scarce. Focho (Chap. 10) reports on a project on the design and implementation of a one-year Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plan of two teachers in Cameroon. She explains that, due to various work-related challenges and pressures, Cameroonian teachers are likely to experience burn out early in their careers. State sector teachers in this context work in overcrowded classes, with no resources other than the blackboard and chalk, they have to assess large numbers of students every six weeks in addition to lesson planning and teaching. What is more, because of huge gaps between the content of their training and the realities of the workplace, teachers become generally resistant to top-down CPD activities organised by the school authorities and, as a result, are unaware of and/or unable to benefit from existing professional development opportunities. Drawing from her own professional development experience and from the literature on project-based CPD, Focho's project with two of her colleagues builds on their contextual difficulties and provides them with mentoring support. In Chap. 11, Solly and Woodward describe and examine a large-scale in-service training (INSETT) project for primary and secondary English language teachers in Bangladesh, a country where, because of poverty, infrastructural and resource challenges make it difficult for government to provide face-to-face training at scale that is affordable and effective. The INSETT project makes use of mediated authentic video with commentary from a local narrator to reach large numbers of teachers through their mobile phones. The two chapters in this section demonstrate that teacher education projects which are rooted in the contextual realities of practitioners have the potential to help teachers acquire and generate innovative pedagogic principles and practices.

Overall, the chapters in this volume are grounded in different local contexts, and the projects and processes described reflect the specific issues and dynamics of the contexts within which they are conducted. However, the discussions generated by these projects and processes are of wider significance because they resonate with pedagogic and professional exigencies in other contexts around the world and provide new insights into ways in which context-appropriate pedagogy and professional development in difficult circumstances can be developed and disseminated both locally and globally. Each chapter concludes with a set of 'engagement priorities' in the form of questions which are meant to generate further reflection on the issues raised. The concluding chapter summarises some of the key issues raised in the volume and highlights possible pathways for addressing and further investigating difficult circumstances for improved pedagogy and student learning outcomes.

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Section I

Policy Decisions and the Creation of Difficult Circumstances

2

An Almost Invisible 'Difficult Circumstance': The Large Class

Hywel Coleman

Introduction

For more than a century, questions have been raised about class size in schools, primarily to establish whether there is a relationship between the number of learners in a classroom and the amount of learning that occurs (Shamim and Coleman 2018). The findings have been contradictory and inconclusive (e.g. Glass et al. 1982; OFSTED 1995; Blatchford 2012), because of the twin difficulties of (a) defining the class size variable and (b) separating out class size from all the other variables which probably impact on learners' learning. Partly because of the absence of any definitive answers, education authorities have tended to lose interest in class size issues.

For many teachers, however, class size is one of the most prominent aspects of their professional experience. In contexts such as Pakistan 'large classes' are associated in teachers' minds with emotional stress, physical exhaustion and professional frustration (Shamim 1993; Coleman 1995). For example, a teacher in Nigeria complained 'The size of the class alone is enough to weaken the zeal which I earlier had for my teaching assignment', and another said 'Sometimes I become nervous to face about a hundred students in a class' (Coleman 1989: 23). Meanwhile, a primary school teacher in Sabah, Malaysia, said 'I have to volume my voice every time I begin a lesson. (It hurts my throat.)' (Coleman 1991: 158).

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Class size is a matter of interest to teachers of all subjects, but teachers of English have been particularly active in exploring the issue. The Lancaster-Leeds Language Learning in Large Classes Research Project, in the late 1980s, and the Teaching English in Large Classes Network (http://telcnet.weebly.com/), more recently, have given much attention to teachers' perceptions of and responses to the challenges of teaching in large classes. The work of these two groups has had some modest influence on the practice of individual teachers and small groups of teachers, but there is no evidence that it has impacted on policy at the level of school systems. Teachers are being left to fend for themselves in addressing class size issues whilst the attention of national and local education authorities is focused elsewhere.

This chapter explores the possibility that education policymakers and managers at international, national and local levels do not appreciate the class size reality that many teachers and learners experience. This lack of understanding, it is suggested, is caused by the widespread use of a statistical indicator—the teacher:pupil ratio—which can create a misleading impression of the number of learners in classrooms.

The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the teacher:pupil ratio and the ways in which it is often employed. The core of the chapter then consists of three case studies: primary schools in Malaysia, primary schools in eastern Indonesia and secondary schools in six countries in West Africa. The original studies were carried out at different times—1994, 2005–2008 and 2011–2012, respectively—but, in their different contexts, they reveal a similar problem. The West African investigation was primarily concerned with English language teaching and learning. In the Malaysian schools, however, English is just one of the core subjects taught while in Indonesia, at the time of the case study, English was taught in only a few primary schools.

The case studies draw on teacher:pupil ratios calculated by international, national and local agencies as well as by individual schools. They also make use of teachers' accounts of their classroom experiences (in Malaysia), class size data (Indonesia) and classroom observations (in West Africa). Class sizes in these three case studies range from two to 142. In each of the case study contexts, there was only one teacher per class.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the types of information that are required in order to achieve a proper understanding of class size and the burden that, in certain circumstances, it constitutes for teachers. Without such information, it is argued, policy decisions will be ill-informed.

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The Teacher:Pupil Ratio

The teacher:pupil ratio (TPR)—sometimes known as the pupil to teacher ratio (PTR)—is one of the most widely used indicators of the extent to which an education system satisfies the needs of the community which it serves. It is defined by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) as the 'average number of pupils per teacher at a given level of education, based on headcounts of both pupils and teachers' (UIS 2015a; the UIS databases have no page numbers). The ratio is calculated very simply by dividing the number of pupils in a school (or a region or a country) by the number of teachers in that school, region or country. For example, a primary school with 150 pupils and ten teachers has a TPR of 1:15.

According to UIS (2015a), the purpose of the TPR is:

> To measure the level of human resources input in terms of the number of teachers in relation to the size of the pupil population. The results can be compared with established national norms on the number of pupils per teacher for each level or type of education.

The TPR is employed by UIS in its education databases as one of three indicators of human resources at all levels in national education systems (UIS 2016). (The other two human resource indicators are the percentage of females among teachers and the percentage of trained teachers among all teachers.) The UIS database is a collation of statistics provided by national governments. However, if national governments are unable to provide the required data, UIS makes its own estimates based on whatever alternative information is available.

The TPR is also used in the UIS publication *UNESCO eAtlas of Teachers* (UIS 2015b) which analyses teacher recruitment needs, country by country, at the primary school level. This is done by dividing the 'expected enrolment' of pupils in the future by 'the most recent pupil-teacher ratio'. The *eAtlas* is intended to assist national ministries of education in their planning of how many teachers they will need to train and recruit over future decades. For example, UIS predicts that China, India, Indonesia, Nigeria and USA will each need to recruit more than one million new primary teachers by 2030. (Note the assumption that individual countries' current TPRs should be maintained at the level that they are at in 2015. UIS believes that no reduction is called for unless the current ratio exceeds 1:40.)

The Case Studies

As already noted above, three cases are examined here: primary schools in Malaysia, primary schools in eastern Indonesia and lower secondary schools in six West African countries.

Case Study 1: Primary Schools in Malaysia

UIS records that, back in 1994, there were 20 pupils for every primary school teacher in Malaysia (UIS 2015b). This sounds like a reasonable ratio and it differed hardly at all from the ratios found in Western European countries at the same time. For example, in the UK in 1994 there were also 20 pupils for every teacher (UIS 2015b). Consequently, national level managers of the Malaysian education system would appear to have had grounds for feeling that the number of teachers they were employing in their primary schools was adequate for the number of pupils in the system.

However, in the same year, official statistics from one of Malaysia's states, Selangor, gave a rather different picture. Doctoral research carried out at the University of Leeds by Nor Hashimah Hashim looked at 34 primary schools in four rural and urban districts in Selangor. She found that, on average, there were 27 pupils for every teacher in these schools, considerably more than the national figure of 20 pupils per teacher. In fact the national average figure was exceeded in 28 of the 34 survey schools (Hashim 1997: 135).

The researcher then noted that when the total number of pupils was divided by the number of *classes* in schools, the mean was much higher: 1:40. In other words, on average there were 40 pupils in each class, double the national TPR. In all 34 schools, the TPR was consistently lower than the average number of children per class. Hashim (1997: 136) offers this possible explanation:

> … the number of teachers obtained from office records includes not only the number of teachers in that particular school but also the administrators such as the Head Teacher, Assistant, Supervisor, etc. These people were more involved with the administration of the school rather than teaching.

From this we conclude that the national TPR did not provide a useful indication of how many pupils there were in the classrooms of Selangor.

Next, if the data are sorted according to the size of the school (measured in terms of the total number of pupils), as in Table 2.1, it becomes clear that the average TPR of 1:27 across the 34 schools disguises considerable variation

Table 2.1 Pupils and teachers in 34 primary schools, Selangor, Malaysia, 1994

School size (pupils per school)	Number of schools	Location	Teacher:pupil ratio (pupils per teacher)	Class size (pupils per class)
<201	4	Mainly rural	13.9	22.1
201–700	8	Mainly rural	22.0	34.8
701–1400	14	Mainly urban	26.3	39.1
>1400	8	Mainly urban	29.9	43.2
Total	34		27.0	40.0

Adapted from Hashim 1997: 135

between individual schools. This ranges from 14 pupils per teacher in small schools (i.e. schools with under 200 pupils in total, located in rural areas) to almost 30 pupils per teacher in very large schools (those with over 1400 pupils, located mostly in urban areas). Not only that, but the average number of children per class also varies from school to school, ranging from 22 in the smallest schools up to just over 43 per class in the largest schools.

It is interesting to look at the profiles of some individual schools in Hashim's sample:

- In terms of TPR, School 8 had the lowest figure with just 10.5 pupils per teacher. This was a rural school consisting of six classes with 115 pupils and 11 teachers to teach them. In contrast, School 33 had the largest TPR with one teacher for every 33.0 pupils. This was also located in a rural area. It had 2804 pupils in 64 classes and employed 85 teachers.
- In terms of average class size, School 25 had the lowest figure with 16.3 pupils per class. Again, this was also a rural school; it had six classes with 98 pupils and eight teachers. At the other extreme, the largest average class size was found in School 6 where there were 46.4 pupils per class. Situated in an urban area, School 6 had a total enrolment of 2365 pupils taught by 75 teachers in 51 classes.

Here again we find that the TPR is consistently more favourable than the average class size.

It is also important to bear in mind that the numbers of pupils recorded in official statistics indicate the number of children *enrolled* in school. As will become apparent when we examine the situation in Francophone West Africa below, enrolment statistics are not necessarily an accurate representation of the actual number of children present in the classroom.

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Note that we are still looking at average figures here. If an individual school has an average class size of 16, it is likely that some classes in that school will be even smaller than 16. Similarly, if a particular school has an average class size of 46, we should be aware that certain classes in that school will be smaller than this and that others will be larger. To explore this possibility, Hashim then checked the official statistics against the experiences of a sample of 556 teachers teaching in the same 34 primary schools. The teachers told the researcher that the average 'usual' class size that they experienced was 40.1—thus confirming the official class size figure—but they also reported that their classes actually ranged in size from two to 60 (Hashim 1997: 120). Moreover, the 'usual' class sizes faced by many teachers were so large that they experienced problems which were difficult for them to overcome.

From the Malaysian data, we can draw several conclusions:

- Firstly, the conventional indicator—the TPR—tells us nothing about how many pupils a teacher is likely to face when he or she enters the classroom. The TPR may give an unrealistically favourable picture of the staffing situation in schools because some of the people who are counted as teachers are involved in management rather than teaching. (Nevertheless, it is not easy to understand why School D might need 24 'managers' in addition to its 51 classroom teachers! Remember that these are primary schools, which are unlikely to require many specialist teachers other than, perhaps, teachers of religious studies, sport, arts and music.)
- Secondly, the national TPR is considerably smaller than the ratio in particular districts and individual schools. The national figure, therefore, creates a relatively favourable impression that is not borne out when we look at individual schools.
- Next, the average number of pupils in a class may be a more meaningful indicator of the situation in the classroom. We have seen that the average class size is consistently larger than the TPR.
- Fourthly, average class sizes and TPRs are larger in larger schools.
- Similarly, average class sizes and TPRs are larger in urban schools.
- Finally, individual teachers may experience a range of class sizes which are considerably smaller or larger than official statistics indicate.

Malaysia's 1994 national primary school ratio of 1:20—identical to that in the UK at that time—is now beginning to look anomalous. To what extent are policymakers and senior managers in central government aware of the stark difference between the national average of 20 pupils per teacher and the reality of 60 children enrolled in some classes? Do they realise that, as actual class size increases, teachers are more likely to feel uncomfortable and experience difficulties?

Case Study 2: Primary Schools in Eastern Indonesia

Between 2003 and 2008, the Decentralised Basic Education Project (DBEP)—funded with a loan from the Asian Development Bank—provided support for 'basic education' (primary and lower secondary schools) in 20 districts in three provinces in eastern Indonesia. The project's principal objective was to encourage the adoption of school-based management practices, including community participation in school decision making. I joined the project in 2005 and stayed with it until it came to an end in 2008.

Nearly 4000 schools—just over half of all schools in the targeted districts—received assistance from DBEP. The most important criterion used in determining which schools would be supported was that of poverty: about 55 per cent of pupils in the beneficiary schools came from poor families.

In 2008, according to UIS (2015b), there were 1.4 million teachers in Indonesia's primary schools and 28.7 million children of primary school age (although not all of them were actually in school). This means that the national TPR for primary schools was 1:22. For comparison, the TPR in UK primary schools in 2008 was 1:18 (UIS 2015b).

The data used here come from primary schools (secular and denominational, state and private) in 19 of the 20 districts supported by DBEP (Coleman et al. 2008). A total of 1290 annual school data returns provided usable information about the numbers of pupils, teachers and classes in each school. (Some schools provided data once a year for three years, some for two years and some for just one year.) The findings are summarised in Table 2.2.

From the table, we can see that the average teacher-pupil ratio across the 19 districts was a very generous 1:16, far below the Indonesian national average and lower than the UK figure at that time. In some districts the ratio was even more favourable, as in the Municipality of Bima and the rural district of Bima, both of which had one teacher for every 11 pupils. The national TPR was exceeded in only two districts, the Municipality of Mataram (1:25) and the Municipality of Denpasar (1:23).

However, these generally very favourable TPRs were not reflected in classrooms. As the table shows, on average there were 24 pupils per class across the 19 districts, but there was considerable variation between districts. For example, Tabanan had the smallest classes (16 pupils on average) whilst the Municipality of Mataram had the largest with 35 pupils per class. As we saw in the case of Malaysia, above, schools in the largest urban areas also had much larger average class sizes than those in the rural areas. (But the Municipality of Bima is an exception to this pattern: the average class size was smaller than in several rural areas.)

Table 2.2 Class size, teacher:pupil ratio and efficiency of teacher utilisation in primary schools in 19 districts of Indonesia, 2003–2008

Districts (ranked by class size)[a]	Class size (pupils per class)	Teacher:pupil ratio (pupils per teacher)	Efficiency measure (teachers per class)
1. Mataram, Municipality	35.5	25.7	1.38
2. Denpasar, Municipality	34.9	23.5	1.49
3. Lombok, East	27.7	20.3	1.36
4. Badung	27.4	14.0	1.96
5. Jembrana	26.7	18.9	1.42
6. Bangli	26.6	18.0	1.48
7. Lombok, West	26.5	17.8	1.49
8. Dompu	25.8	16.1	1.60
9. Bima, Municipality	25.4	11.5	2.20
10. Lombok, Central	24.7	15.9	1.56
11. Sumbawa, West	24.0	16.8	1.43
12. Buleleng	23.1	19.0	1.21
13. Bima	23.1	11.9	1.94
14. Sumbawa	22.6	14.1	1.61
15. Klungkung	20.7	13.6	1.52
16. Rote Ndao	20.6	14.0	1.47
17. Karangasem	19.7	16.6	1.19
18. Gianyar	19.4	15.7	1.24
19. Tabanan	16.8	12.3	1.37
Overall	24.0	16.3	1.50

Adapted from Coleman et al. 2008

[a]All districts are rural (*kabupaten*) except for the urban municipalities (*kota*) 1, 2 and 9

Apart from class size, this table also reveals how efficiently—or otherwise—teachers were being used. Overall, across the 19 districts, 1.5 primary teachers were employed for every primary class. It might be expected that this high number of teachers relative to the number of classes meant that teachers would be able to team teach or that some teachers would provide additional support to small numbers of pupils with special needs while their colleagues taught the majority of pupils in normal size classes. But in fact this was not the case: the 'superfluous' teachers were not obviously being utilised in any way. Instead, teachers in the least efficient districts were simply allocated fewer teaching hours per week.

The most inefficient district of all was the Municipality of Bima, which employed 2.2 teachers for every class. Compare this with Karangasem, where only 1.19 teachers were employed for every class. If all districts had adopted the same policy as Karangasem, it would have been possible to make consider-

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able reductions in class size, even without employing any new teachers. If the Municipality of Bima, for example, had implemented the same policy as Karangasem, it would have been possible to almost halve the average size of primary classes from 25 pupils to just 13 pupils. Apart from the Municipality of Bima, other districts with very inefficient schemes for utilising their primary teachers were Badung, Bima, Sumbawa and Dompu. Moreover, there is no clear correlation between efficiency in employing teachers and class size. The most efficient district, Karangasem, had one of the smallest average class sizes (19 children).

Why efficiency varied so much from one district to another is not immediately apparent. It requires further investigation. One factor may be the availability of classrooms; however many teachers a school employs, it will always be constrained by the number of classrooms it has. But another factor is probably convention: there is no tradition of team teaching in Indonesia or of providing additional support during class time for certain pupils.

The data from eastern Indonesia enable us to conclude:

- Firstly, the district TPRs are consistently smaller than average class sizes, as in Malaysia. Next, the national TPR does not provide an accurate picture of local realities. In 17 of 19 districts, the TPR is *smaller*—sometimes much smaller—than the national figure (the reverse of what was found in Malaysia). For both of these reasons, therefore, the TPR cannot be taken as a meaningful indicator of the number of pupils that a teacher is likely to face in the classroom. Average class size is probably a more useful indicator of classroom realities.
- As in Malaysia, average class sizes and TPRs tend to be larger in urban areas (but this is not uniformly the case).
- Thirdly, the teacher:class ratio reveals wide differences in the efficiency with which the teacher resource is utilised. Although there were more than enough teachers in the system, class sizes in some districts were much higher than they needed to be. (But increasing efficiency might require some teachers to teach longer hours.)
- Finally, employing teachers more efficiently does not imply either that teachers would have to teach larger classes or that the number of teachers should be reduced. In fact, greater efficiency could lead to smaller classes in some contexts.

These findings lead us to wonder whether local policymakers are aware of variation in average class size between one district education authority and

another. What are they doing that leads class sizes to vary so much between districts? Do local policymakers take into consideration the efficiency with which teachers are deployed in their districts?

Case Study 3: Secondary Schools in West Africa

Both the Malaysian and Indonesian case studies above made use of quantitative information provided by school authorities, supplemented in Malaysia with information provided by individual teachers. However, it was not possible in either case to double check these figures with direct classroom observations. A different approach was adopted by a survey of English language teaching and learning which I undertook in Francophone West Africa in 2011–2012 in collaboration with a team of 14 local teachers, teacher advisers and school inspectors. The survey team members carried out observations in 75 secondary schools; the schools were selected to include urban and rural areas and were located in a sample of districts across the region. The team members recorded the number of children enrolled in each class that they visited and they also counted how many children were actually present at the time of the observation (Coleman et al. 2013).

In Table 2.3 these findings are summarised and compared with national statistics obtained from the UIS database (UIS 2016). (Unfortunately, in some cases the available UIS data are out of date. In 2016 the most recent information available for Côte d'Ivoire had been collected in 1999.)

The national figures in Table 2.3 show that TPRs ranged from 10 pupils per teacher in Benin to 29 pupils per teacher in Côte d'Ivoire. For comparison, in 2011, the average TPR in secondary schools in all the countries of Sub-

Table 2.3 National teacher:pupil ratios and class sizes in secondary schools in six West African states

		Class size in observed lessons[b]					
			Enrolment		Attendance		
Country	National teacher:pupil ratios[a]	N	Mean	Range	Mean	Range	%
Benin	9.8 (2013)	5	48	29–56	45	29–52	95
Burkina Faso	26.3 (2012)	16	86	28–142	81	28–136	94
Côte d'Ivoire	29.4 (1999)	14	69	24–95	32	16–56	46
Mali	19.3 (2013)	16	67	36–114	60	30–112	89
Senegal	27.4 (2011)	16	65	48–83	52	21–72	81
Togo	26.2 (2011)	8	85	53–117	82	48–114	81
Total	–	75	71	24–142	59	16–136	82

[a]UIS 2016
[b]Coleman et al. 2013

Saharan Africa was 26—similar to that in Togo and Burkina Faso—whilst in developed countries, the ratio was less than half that, with one teacher for every 12 pupils (UIS 2016).

On entering the classroom, however, we find a situation which differs markedly from the picture created by the official national figures. In Togo, for example, where eight classrooms were observed, it was discovered that pupil enrolment ranged from 53 to 117 per class (average 85), although the national TPR was only 1:26. In Burkina Faso, 16 classes were observed and were found to have enrolments ranging from 28 to 142 (average 86), even though the national TPR was also just 1:26.

When the survey team members counted how many pupils were actually present in the classes which they observed, they found that in some cases substantial numbers of pupils were absent. With the exception of Côte d'Ivoire (which we will discuss separately below), pupil absenteeism ranged from five per cent in Benin to 19 per cent in Senegal and Togo. (For comparison, the absenteeism rates of secondary school pupils in state schools in England in 2010–2011 were 5.1 per cent 'authorised' absences—e.g. because of illness—and 1.4 per cent 'unauthorised' absences. See Department for Education 2011.) To some extent, therefore, high pupil absenteeism helped to ameliorate the difficulty of the situation which teachers faced. (In Pakistan, Shamim [personal communication] has also observed that many government school teachers count on high student absenteeism, especially if their classrooms are small and there are not enough seats to accommodate everyone.)

After taking pupil absenteeism into account, we find that some of the *smallest* observed classes had fewer pupils than the national TPR (e.g. in Senegal, where the smallest class to be observed had just 21 pupils in it whereas the national TPR was almost 27). But *average* class sizes were generally much larger than the national TPRs (e.g. in Mali, where on average there were 60 pupils in each class compared to the TPR of 1:19). The *largest* classes, then, were larger still. Classes with more than 100 pupils present were seen in Mali (112) and Togo (114), while in one urban school in Burkina Faso 136 pupils were present—more than five times larger than the official TPR for that country—as can be seen in Fig. 2.1.

A special mention must be made of Côte d'Ivoire, where the number of pupils counted in the classes observed by our team members was only 46 per cent of those registered. Why were more than 50 per cent of pupils absent? At the time that the survey was carried out in late 2011, Côte d'Ivoire was still recovering from a civil war which had severely disrupted the education system, as well as all other aspects of civilian life. Schools were just reopening, parents were starting to enrol their children in school once again, but day-to-day

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Fig. 2.1 In this secondary classroom in Burkina Faso, 136 pupils are present from 142 enrolled. Yet the national teacher:pupil ratio in secondary schools is 1:26 (Photograph: Godefroy Gaméné)

school life was not yet fully back to normal. It was expected that the school participation rate would gradually return to normal and that class sizes would again be as large as in other countries in the region. (A study carried out in Côte d'Ivoire before the beginning of civil disruption [Kouassi 1996: 33] found that classes ranged in size between 40 and 100 with the majority falling into the range 65–80.)

We can also add a note about Benin. The observations carried out there showed that, on average, there were 45 pupils present with 52 in the largest class. On paper, then, conditions in Benin appear to be relatively conducive, compared to other countries in the region. But take a look at Fig. 2.2, which shows a classroom in a secondary school in an urban area in Benin where 47 of 49 pupils are present. If we look closely we will see that another class—also with approximately 50 pupils—is sharing the same room. One class is facing the front of the room while the other is facing the rear: two classes, two teachers, one room. Thus this 'relatively conducive' classroom context turns out not to be very different from the very large classes occurring in Mali, Togo and Burkina Faso. (The phenomenon of shared classrooms is not unique to Benin, by the way. I have observed shared primary classrooms in Sri Lanka and Indonesia and shared lecture rooms in universities in Indonesia.)

This survey of secondary education in six countries of Francophone West Africa permits us to draw the following conclusions:

Fig. 2.2 This classroom in a secondary school in Benin is occupied by two classes, each with around 50 pupils. But the national teacher:pupil ratio at this level is 1:10 (Photograph: Arnauld Aguidissou)

- As we have already found in Malaysia and Indonesia, yet again national TPRs do not tell us anything useful about the numbers of pupils which teachers have to deal with in their classes.
- The numbers of pupils enrolled in individual classes may vary widely, even at the same educational level and in the same country.
- The number of pupils actually attending a lesson may differ from the number enrolled. Absenteeism is caused by many factors, including civil unrest, and—at least in this region of the world—it may reach 50 per cent. Absenteeism is not reflected in national TPRs.
- Even with high absenteeism, there may still be very large numbers of pupils present.
- Direct observation of classrooms reveals features of class size which may not be apparent from analysis of quantitative data.

Lessons Learnt

There is much that we can learn from these case studies in Malaysia, Indonesia and Francophone West Africa. In each case we have seen that TPRs published by international, national and local authorities must be treated with great caution because real class sizes may differ markedly from them. It is not an

exaggeration to say that the official figures obscure—or make invisible—the true class size conditions that teachers have to face. If this is so, then policy-makers who refer to TPRs when drawing up their policies are not being well informed.

To some extent the limitations of the TPR have already been recognised. UNESCO, for example, suggests that 'while national indicators [such as the ratio] are important, attention should also be paid to what happens below the surface' (UIS 2009: 6). But UNESCO does not spell out the risks of overdependence on the TPR nor does it indicate what supplementary information needs to be collected in order to make sense of the ratio. So what steps can be taken to interpret T:P ratios appropriately and to gain a fuller picture of class sizes and the burdens that they pose for teachers?

Caution is needed when interpreting official ratios because, as we have seen, the numbers of pupils in a class can vary sharply from one school to another and from one district to another. Class size data therefore need to be disaggregated to the furthest possible extent so that the precise contexts in which larger classes exist can be identified. Only then can pro-learner and pro-teacher policies be drawn up.

A parallel exists in the work of Angus Deaton, winner of the 2015 Nobel Prize for Economics. Deaton and his colleagues have demonstrated that national aggregated accounts of consumption in poor countries such as India show poverty reduction to be taking place much more rapidly than is revealed in detailed local surveys of poverty. National aggregate figures paint an unrealistically positive picture of the extent of poverty, they fail to identify where pockets of extreme poverty occur and they obscure differences between states and between urban and rural areas. As such, they provide an extremely unreliable foundation for the formulation of poverty eradication policies:

> It is impossible for a country to pursue a coherent antipoverty strategy without an adequate poverty monitoring system. (Deaton and Kozel 2005: 194)

What is required, they argue, is detailed micro-level socioeconomic data about the experiences and needs of individual families. Only on the basis of such information can meaningful pro-poor policies be developed.

In interpreting official statistics, we also need to know exactly who is being counted in the 'teacher' component of the T:P formula. Is it only classroom teachers or are head teachers, managers, assistants, technicians and other personnel who are not involved in classroom teaching also included? If non-teachers are included then, of course, the ratio will appear to be more favourable than is actually the case. (This seems to be what happened in the Malaysian case above.)

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Furthermore, we need to know who is included in the 'pupil' component of the formula. Are there substantial numbers of pupils who are repeating years? Class size can be reduced significantly if efforts are made to reduce pupil repetition rates (Coleman 2013). Are there 'phantom' pupils whose names appear on the register but who are unknown to the school? Or are there children who are unregistered but who attend school unofficially (such as younger siblings who cannot be left alone at home or children whose parents cannot afford school fees yet but hope to be able to do so in the near future)? Such unregistered pupils do not appear in official statistics but they still require the teacher's attention.

We also need to know what teachers' teaching hours are. A large class may be more manageable for the teacher concerned if he or she is required to teach only a few hours each week, compared to a more moderate number of pupils but with a very heavy timetable which allows no time for preparation and individual attention.

We need to know how many classrooms there are, how many classes meet in these rooms, how many pupils are enrolled in these classes, the range of enrolment sizes and the average enrolment. Then we need to know what actual attendance rates are and the extent of learner absenteeism. Data gathering must start at the level of the classroom. When numbers are aggregated at the school, district and national levels, we need to know not only the mean but also the range (from smallest to largest) and the mode (the most commonly occurring class size).

We need to know how accurate education statistics are. A very common problem is that national, district and school figures for the numbers of teachers and pupils in the system do not match up. Whose numbers are most reliable? Why do discrepancies occur?

We also need to investigate *why* class sizes are the size that they are (an almost completely unresearched area). What decisions have been made, by whom, that lead to classes being of particular sizes? On what grounds are these decisions made? Similarly, on what grounds are decisions taken regarding acceptable TPRs? UIS suggests that 'A PTR [pupil:teacher ratio] of 40 is widely accepted as sufficient to provide quality instruction' (UIS 2009: 32) and yet our third case study indicates that even education systems with TPRs of under 40 are very likely to have classrooms with much larger numbers of pupils in them. This statement from UIS is revealing in that it illustrates the widespread tendency to confuse TPR with actual class size. There may indeed be some authorities who will argue that 'quality instruction' can take place in a *class* of 40 learners, but there is no evidence whatsoever that an *education system* with a TPR of 1:40—which may include classes with very large numbers of learners—is 'sufficient to provide quality instruction'.

Only when all of this information is available will we be in a position to make sense of class size. On its own the TPR is simplistic, may be misleading and may lead to inappropriate decision making. In recent years the World Bank has repeatedly drawn attention to what it sees as the inefficient deployment of teachers in Indonesia, but its emphasis has been on the financial burden which this creates for district education authorities rather than on the pedagogical consequences. One of the Bank's recommendations to the Government of Indonesia has been 'to reduce the size of the teaching force at the district level' (World Bank 2004: Volume 1, 40). Elsewhere the World Bank (2007) has suggested that there should be a gradual increase in the TPR in Indonesia 'from 18:1 to 25:1 at primary level and from 13:1 to 20:1 at secondary level'.

These recommendations, not surprisingly, have not attracted much support from teachers themselves. Much more information is needed—as I have suggested above—before we can think about 'reducing the size of the teaching force.' In any case, more effective reform could be achieved if policymakers and teachers themselves could be introduced to more flexible alternatives, so that—for example—the feasibility of mixed age (multigrade) classes could be explored as an alternative for very small schools, while collaborative teaching could be examined as an alternative for the largest classes.

Teachers gallantly struggle to carry out their professional responsibilities in extraordinarily challenging situations, as the quotations from teachers in Pakistan, Nigeria and Sabah at the beginning of this chapter illustrate. Perhaps they are too successful in managing their large classes! These difficult circumstances will not be ameliorated unless teachers systematically and consistently draw the attention of stakeholders and education authorities to the discrepancy between official figures and classroom reality, the almost invisible 'difficult circumstance' of class size. Bureaucrats and policymakers are lulled into complacency by the TPR and, in consequence, teachers' struggles are ignored.

Recommended Texts

Bray, M. (2000). *Double-shift schooling: Design and operation for cost-effectiveness* (2nd ed.). London/Paris: Commonwealth Secretariat/ International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO.

This practical booklet examines all the advantages and disadvantages of introducing double-shift schooling—an alternative to increasing class sizes—in order to accommodate growing numbers of learners.

Coleman, H. (2008). Darwin and the large class. In S. Gieve & K. Miller (Eds.), *Understanding the language classroom* (pp. 115–35). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

This chapter provides an analytical framework for describing and interpreting behaviour in large class contexts.

Shamim, F., & Coleman, H. (2018). Large sized classes. In J. I. Liontas (Ed.), *Wiley TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

This 6000-word encyclopaedia entry provides a comprehensive overview of large class issues, including definitions, causes, effects, perceptions of teachers and learners, processes, problems, solutions, teacher education and policy matters.

Shamim, F., Negash, N., Chuku, C., & Demewoz, N. (2007). *Maximising learning in large classes: Issues and options*. Addis Ababa: The British Council. Available online at http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/ELT-16-screen.pdf. Accessed 31 Jan 2016.

This is a unique book-length work on practical issues relating to class size which draws on the experiences of teachers of large classes and proposes classroom activities based on those experiences.

Engagement Priorities

- This chapter has argued that national pupil:teacher ratios often give misleading impressions of actual class size. Examine how true this is of a country with which you are familiar. (1) Begin by visiting the UIS database (http://data.uis.unesco.org/). Under 'Data by theme' click on 'Education' and 'Education' again. (2) Scroll down the menu until you come to 'Human resources' then click on 'Pupil-teacher ratio' and again on 'Pupil-teacher ratio by level of education'. (3) Data will begin to appear now. In the table heading, next to 'Indicator', choose the level of education that particularly interests you (from pre-primary to tertiary). (4) Next, scroll down the list of countries until you come to the country which is of concern to you. (It may be necessary to continue to pages 2 or 3 of the table because the list of countries is very long.) (5) Finally, adjust the table so that you can see the most recent data for this level of education.

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  - Does the pupil-teacher ratio which appears in the table match your own experience and observations in the same context? Have you seen classes with numbers which are significantly larger or smaller than this ratio? If so, why—in your opinion—is there a discrepancy between what you have experienced and what the table tells you?
  - Look again at the pupil-teacher ratio for the level of education which interests you in your country of choice. Trace the figures back over time to 1999. Has the ratio changed at all over this period? Has it increased or decreased? What do you think are the explanations for these changes (if any)?

- Are you aware of any official regulations or guidelines concerning the maximum number of learners per class in your country? Are those regulations or guidelines actually implemented? Why/why not? What is the basis for the recommended maximum number of learners per class?
- The chapter concludes that policymakers and education managers may not be aware of classroom realities because they are overdependent on national statistics. What is your opinion? How practical is it for policymakers and education managers to spend time learning about what actually happens in classrooms?
- The chapter recommends that teachers should 'systematically and consistently' draw the attention of stakeholders to the reality of their classrooms, especially if it differs from the picture created by national statistics. How realistic is this recommendation? How could it be implemented in your context?

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3

Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Resource in English Language Teaching: A Response to Unplanned Language Education Policies in Nepal

Prem Phyak

Introduction

While English language teaching is increasingly embraced as an important aspect of educational reforms in developing countries, local challenges, (lack of) resources, and pedagogical practices are often overlooked (e.g., Coleman 2011; Nunan 2003). Previous studies have paid much attention to material and infrastructural aspects in an attempt to analyse challenges associated with teaching English in difficult and under-resourced circumstances (e.g., Kouraogo 1987; Maley 2001; West 1960). These and other studies (e.g., Hayes 1997; Kuchah and Smith 2011) present large classes as a challenge and focus on various coping strategies to teaching English in such situations. Studies have also begun to pay attention to creative and innovative teaching ideas in difficult circumstances and large class contexts (Croft 2002; Kuchah and Smith 2011; Shamim et al. 2007). However, what is still lacking in the literature is the exploration of what factors, other than large classes or unavailability of material resources, create 'difficult circumstances' and how teachers deal with them using locally available linguistic resources.

Against this backdrop, this paper critically discusses how 'difficult circumstances' are constructed through 'unplanned' language education policies in Nepal and how the students' existing linguistic and cultural knowledge can be a significant resource for teaching English as a foreign language in Nepal's

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multilingual context. More specifically, I analyse how the unplanned aspect of English language education policy creates 'difficult circumstances' for both English as a compulsory subject and medium of instruction policies and discuss the relevance of a translanguaging pedagogy in teaching English and other subjects through English. While challenging the monolingual approach to classroom pedagogy, translanguaging pedagogy is suggested as a viable alternative which recognizes students' existing linguistic knowledge and literacy skills to engage them in a deeper understanding of subject matter, to keep classroom tasks/activities moving, and to negotiate meanings in classroom interactions (Baker 2011; Creese and Blackledge 2010; Hornberger 2003).

Unplanned Language Policies as Difficult Circumstances

As mentioned earlier, lack of sufficient reference materials, textbooks, teachers, and funding for teacher professional development are the major variables used to define teaching-learning English in under-resourced contexts (Maley 2001). Such a materials-oriented interpretation is linked with the economic status of a particular country. Thus teaching English in a context where adequate material resources are not available due to lack of sufficient allocation of budget is often described as teaching in difficult circumstances. However, this interpretation not only obscures the local sociocultural realities but also, most importantly, it fails to recognize the rich resources embedded in local linguistic, cultural, and social contexts. As Crandall (2006: 1) argues, 'there are many examples of language teaching and learning that have been successful without access to a variety of [reading] text[s] or technological resources'. Maley (2001) describes how engaging students in exploring local knowledge (e.g., deer hunting), needs, problems and activities is a useful way to foster English language development in Ghana. Most importantly, he contends that 'economic deprivation does not mean that the environment has nothing in it, or that the students are empty shells' (n.p.). Because the *materials-as-resource* interpretation focuses mainly on the external and surface level difficulties of teaching-learning, it conceals underlying factors that contribute to creating difficult circumstances for teaching English in many parts of the world. One of such factors in Nepal is its 'unplanned' English language policies itself.

Unplanned language policy in this paper has been defined as lack of appropriate planning to implement language policies (Baldauf 1994; Baldauf Jr et al. 2011; Kaplan and Baldauf 1997). This leads to mismatches between policies and on-the-ground practices. With regard to Nepal's current English language

policy, studies have shown that due to lack of competent teachers, English language teaching policy from the first Grade, particularly in public schools, has not been effectively implemented (Davies 2009). More importantly, students, particularly in rural areas, do not have any prior exposure to English before they come to school. The students who speak Nepali as first language learn it as a second language while indigenous/ethnic minority children have to learn it as a third/additional language. Most students rarely use English in everyday social interactions, but they still have to learn English as a compulsory subject from the first Grade (6 years) (Khati 2015; Phyak 2011). As teachers lack sufficient English language competence, students receive a minimal exposure to English in school (Baral 2015; Giri 2011; Kerr 2011). Yet, the official policy states that English should be taught in English (Phyak 2016). What is missing in the literature is the lack of analysis of how this monolingual approach itself is creating difficult circumstances in teaching English.

English as a Compulsory Subject from the First Grade

In 2003, the Ministry of Education (MOE) revised its existing policy of teaching English from Grade 4 and introduced English as a 'compulsory subject' from the first grade. In justifying the relevance of the new policy, the MOE, in its new primary level curriculum (CDC 2008: 52), claims that '[…] interaction programs held at different places, times, and with various groups […] have laid great emphases on introducing English as a compulsory subject'. The MOE further asserts that the new policy has been created with 'a view to catering to the *immediate needs* of children learning English and building a basic foundation for their *further studies* in and through English' (CDC 2008: 52) (emphasis added). The new curriculum focuses on developing communicative competence and language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The MOE expects that 'by the end of Grade 5 children will be able to use English effectively in a limited set of situations' (CDC 2008: 52). Most importantly, the MOE expects teachers to teach 'English in English' (CDC 2008). The policy mentions that all language subjects, including English, must be taught in the same language. This further implies that there is no room for using students' home language knowledge in the classroom.

The MOE also expects that students should develop basic interpersonal communicative competence and a mastery of the four language skills. For example, as can be seen in Table 3.1, the Grade 3 curriculum specifies student learning achievements for listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Most of the objectives of teaching English in the early grades are ambiguous

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Table 3.1 Learning areas and achievement for Grade 3

Learning area	Learning achievement
Listening	Respond to a wide variety of heard stimuli (words, sentences, questions, instructions, etc.) both verbally and non-verbally
	Understand and enjoy a song or story with a variety of visual clues
	Find out specific information (names, dates, time, etc.) from different kinds of listening texts (short conversation)
Speaking	Participate in short piece of conversation (e.g., apologizing, congratulating, etc.)
	Describe oneself or people, object, things, and so on using adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions
	Talk about the past and the future events
	Use telephone simply
Reading	Read silently
	Understand and enjoy different kinds of reading texts (charts, timetables, information, etc.)
	Use glossary
	Guess the meaning of unknown words from contexts and pictures
	Develop interest in reading short poems and stories
Writing	Write very short simple personal letters with correct format
	Understand and use capital letters, full stop, question mark correctly
	Write about oneself, people, things, and so on with the help of the given clues
	Write simple stories by completion, matching to pictures or ordering

(Source: CDC 2008: 54)

and unrealistic. For example, it is unrealistic to expect that primary level students will be able to develop English language foundations for 'further studies' (which is vague). Moreover, the students are also expected 'to use simple telephone language' and 'to understand and enjoy simple stories and songs' in English (CDC 2008: 55). But the students do not need to use English in their telephone conversations nor do those from predominantly rural areas listen to English songs. Most strikingly, despite the lack of appropriate planning, the MOE wants teachers to create a 'happy atmosphere' for children so that they hear and speak English in 'a natural way through a variety of activities' (CDC 2008: 57). Teachers are also expected to provide 'many opportunities [in the classroom] for pupils to talk to each other in pairs or groups or in front of the whole class' by using English 'creatively and independently'.

School Contexts and Talking with Teachers

To explore challenges that teachers and students are facing in the classroom due to the unplanned English language policy, I, in different times between 2012 and 2014, conducted ten in-depth interviews with teachers and a series

of informal interactions with teachers, parents, and students from two rural public schools (henceforth 'focal schools'). I also observed five classes from each school and analysed the relevant official language policy documents. All interviews and informal interactions were audio-recorded, and most observation data were video-recorded. The majority of students in the focal schools are bilinguals who speak their own mother tongues (such as Limbu and Rajbangshi) and Nepali in their everyday interactions. These students do not have to use English for social interactions. These focal schools teach English from the first grade and have introduced English as a medium of instruction (EMI) since 2014. The issues discussed during the interviews and interactions were focused on the relevance and challenges of both teaching English and its use as a medium of instruction in schools.

Teachers' Perspectives on Monolingual Approach

The teachers from both the focal schools revealed that the 'teach English in English' policy has posed tremendous challenges for teaching-learning in the early grades. For example, a teacher from one of the focal school asserts:

> Students don't have to speak English outside the classroom. Where do they speak English? At home? In community? Nowhere. Nobody speaks English in this community. Parents are farmers, and they speak Nepali and other local languages. Students have to help their parents in farming and other household activities. They don't complete their homework. I know…English is an international language …but it's not widely spoken in this community. ….I ask students to talk to each other in English. But they can't. They feel ashamed of speaking English. It's very unusual to force children to talk in English. It's a strange thing.

Although the teacher acknowledges the importance of English as an international language, for him it is difficult to teach English in English. He mentions that as parents and the whole community do not speak English for social interactional purposes, the students are unlikely to receive English language exposure outside the classroom. During my informal interactions with some of the students from both focal schools, I found out that they are 'hesitant and ashamed of speaking English due to their weak English speaking proficiency' (interview with a teacher). For both the students and teachers, speaking English outside the classroom is 'a strange thing' (interview with a teacher).

However, there is lack of comprehensive and effective plan for professional development activities for teachers. In most public schools, primary level

teachers do not have specialization in English language education. Although in-service teachers receive professional development trainings, the skills learned from such trainings are hardly transferred to the classroom. Effective monitoring, supervision, and continual teacher support programmes are other issues. As one first grade teacher from the primary school mentions below, public school teachers themselves lack confidence about teaching English in English.

> I myself don't feel confident in speaking English. I didn't have to teach English before. We've some trainings [sic]…, but we aren't able to transfer them into the classroom. We're trained how to teach students to communicate in English, but our students don't speak English. How can a student in the first grade speak in English? I need to use Nepali. Some trainings don't address my students' needs.

On the one hand, teachers are not proficient in teaching English (Davies 2009; Giri 2011), and on the other, the students who never had an exposure to English in the community are not well prepared to learn English in English. As Kerr (2011) reveals, English language pedagogies are still dominated by the teacher-centred approach even in the most resourceful schools, where teachers have access to technology, reference materials, and regular training. As the teacher questions above, students in the early grades cannot speak English although training programmes focus on communicative pedagogies. There is also a gap between training and classroom pedagogies. Shrestha (2012) argues that the current professional development programmes are unlikely to address teachers' attitudes and lack of transfer of training into the classroom. Most classes in the focal schools are teacher- and textbook-centred. The teachers from both focal schools during informal interactions said that they have to focus on textbook contents because students' learning achievement is evaluated based on the scores of the test items based on textbook contents. Moreover, tests encourage memorization of content knowledge rather than language skills (Caddell 2006; Phyak 2013). Although listening and speaking skills are included in the curriculum, they are not included in tests.

In sum, the current unplanned English language teaching policy which promotes both the monolingual and the earlier-the-better assumptions itself has created difficult circumstances for both the teachers and students towards achieving the national curricular goals for teaching English. Studies have shown that teaching a new language (English, in this case) without students' strong first language communicative and academic skills is detrimental to learning a second language and academic content (Baker 2011; Cummins 2006). Despite such difficult circumstances for teaching English from the first

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grade, the MOE revised its previous medium of instruction policy in 2006 and allowed public schools to introduce EMI policy. In what follows, I discuss how the new unplanned EMI policy has escalated the existing pedagogical difficulties for both the teachers and students.

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) Policy

The government's revised Education Act (2006) mentions that the medium of school level education shall be Nepali or English or both. It also states that children's mother tongues *can be* offered as a medium of instruction at primary level. Before this new policy, Nepali was the major language of instruction (except for English subject). However, private schools were still using English as a medium of instruction (except for teaching Nepali subject).

Because the new medium of instruction policy is flexible—schools can choose Nepali or English or mother tongue (at least at primary level)—most public schools are shifting from Nepali to EMI. Although English language teaching is different from EMI, it is important to consider the EMI policy for a discussion in this chapter for two reasons. First, the interviews and informal discussions with the teachers from the focal schools indicate that public schools are adopting the EMI policy to help 'students develop their English language proficiency'. They assume that private school students are good in English because they are taught in English. The schools are asked by the District Education Office to implement the EMI policy to compete with private schools. Second, classroom observation shows that the teaching of other subjects such as science, mathematics, and social studies in English, as is the case with English as a subject, essentially involves teaching of English vocabulary words, grammar, and composition.

The teachers also mention that the current unplanned EMI policy is shaped by the increased pressure to compete with private schools and the ideology of English as a symbol of social prestige (Davies 2009). My own study (Phyak 2016) indicates that parents want their children to be taught in English because they see that most elite families send their children to English-medium private schools. As private schools' EMI policy has been a major source of attraction for parents, public schools are replicating the same policy with an assumption that doing so will help them attract more students.

However, Baral's (2015) recent study shows that the EMI policy has exacerbated the level of difficulty for both teachers and students. His findings reveal that this unplanned policy negatively impacts on teaching-learning of the content area subjects such as science, mathematics, and social studies. For

example, he quotes a science teacher, 'I can't give 100% [sic] in my class when using English, only 5–10% students […] understand what I say or write [teach]. Rest [remaining] 90% only copy down from what I write on the board' (p. 44). Although schools are increasingly adopting the EMI policy, Baral (2015) contends that this unplanned policy has contributed to silencing of students' voices, poor understanding of content, limited creativity, and teacher-centredness and promoted students' reliance on memorization.

While lack of sufficient resources and teachers' English language proficiency certainly affect the implementation of EMI policy, the unplanned implementation of the policy has been a major factor to create difficult circumstances for both teachers and students. While public schools have misrecognized the EMI policy as the best way to promote quality education (Baral 2015; Phyak 2016), classroom observations (of English and other subjects) and interviews with teachers, from both the focal schools, confirm very minimal and formulaic use of English (Davies 2009). A second grade teacher from one of the focal schools recounts that:

> We're forced to do this. We thought it would work. But we've many difficulties. I can't teach social studies, science and mathematics in English. Students don't understand well. There're abstract and difficult concepts in social studies and science. We've English textbooks. Translated textbooks. More difficult to understand than Nepali textbooks. Teaching other subjects is more difficult than teaching English. Honestly, I don't think it's a good policy. I think it's just like a fashion. We ran after this fashion.

The 'fashion' metaphor implies that the current policy is heavily influenced by an emotional motive rather than the academic and educational motive (Davies 2009; Phyak 2013). As the teacher contends, public schools are forced to implement the EMI policy, because the current national language policy discourses put a greater emphasis on the importance of English as the most dominant language of the global market and educational and economic development (Sah 2015; Sonntag 2003). All the teachers in focal schools embrace the 'ideological hegemony' (Blommaert 2008) of English as the language of 'quality education'. However, this policy has posed serious teaching-learning challenges in actual classroom practices. As the teacher has mentioned above, teaching-learning content area subjects such as social studies, science, and mathematics have become more difficult than teaching English as a subject. The Curriculum Development Center has translated the national textbooks into English. Such translated textbooks are even more difficult to understand for both the teachers and students. Most strikingly, as the teachers struggle to

implement the English-only policy, student-teacher interaction freezes—most students remain silent—and classroom activities do not flow smoothly. Consequently, classroom practices become teacher-centred and students are not able to fully invest their existing knowledge in classroom interactions (also see Baral 2015). In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss how translanguaging pedagogy can be used as a resource in the English language classroom.

Translanguaging Pedagogy for Teaching English

Following García (2009) and Li (2011), I define translanguaging as a meaning-making process through functionally grounded hybrid and fluid language practices. As 'multiple discursive practices' (García 2009), translanguaging pedagogy engages (emergent) bi-/multilingual learners 'to gain knowledge, to make sense, to articulate [their] thought and to communicate about using language' (Li 2011: 1223). This pedagogy involves a systematic and strategic use of students' total linguistic repertoire, which includes their prior linguistic knowledge, to facilitate learning and 'to mediate mental processes in understanding' (Lewis et al. 2012: 641) the content of teaching and participate in classroom activities (Creese and Blackledge 2010). It should be noted that translanguaging differs from code-switching, although it includes code-switching. The notion of code-switching includes the 'shift or shuttle between two languages' (García and Li 2014: 22) in that 'two [or more] languages of bilinguals are two separate monolingual codes' (García 2011: 1). But translanguaging, which goes beyond code-switching, assumes that the (emergent) bilingual/multilingual learners' language practices 'cannot be easily assigned to one or another traditional definition of language, but make up the speakers' complete language repertoire' (García and Li 2014: 22).

Recent studies have shown that a monolingual approach to language education is both inappropriate for all (emergent) bi-/multilingual students and discriminatory, particularly for minority language speakers (e.g., García 2009; May 2014). These and other studies (e.g., Cummins 2006; Hornberger 2010) reveal that allowing students to use their home languages and language practices in school promotes their engagement in performing tasks, increases classroom participation, supports negotiation of multiple ways of learning, and encourages students' identity investment in classroom activities. Considering students' home languages as resource for learning, Cummins and Early (2011) argue that allowing students to use their total linguistic repertoire reinforces learning a new language, supports better task performance, and links students' own linguistic knowledge, experiences, and identities with

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classroom pedagogy. Highlighting the importance of students' existing linguistic knowledge in learning English, Crandall (2006: 1) claims that 'learners come to our English language classes or programs already having learned several languages, often doing so without formal instruction or access to textbooks or other resources'. Crandall (2006: 1) further argues that although children may not use those languages in literacy and public domains, 'they have language learning resources and strategies upon which to draw'.

It is important to point out that since translanguaging includes 'fluid, hybrid, and heteroglossic language practices' (Gutiérrez et al. 2001: 128), the L1–L2 distinction ceases in translanguaging pedagogy. Translanguaging in English language classes does not just refer to the use of L1, but it also recognizes students' existing total linguistic knowledge as a resource to learn a weaker language (English, in this case) and facilitate a deeper understanding of academic content (Creese and Blackledge 2010). In other words, translanguaging has to be understood as natural language practices that students learning a new language demonstrate, and it should not be considered as dismissal of the language being learned. I also reiterate that understanding translanguaging pedagogy requires us to reimagine language pedagogy from a multilingual approach which goes beyond the traditional notion of first-second language distinction and challenges the standardized monolingual ideology to language pedagogy. Translanguaging pedagogy embraces the assumption that the students learning English as a second/foreign language naturally push and break linguistic boundaries to negotiate multiple linguistic resources and use them appropriately to participate in classroom activities (García 2009; García and Li 2014).

Translanguaging for Breaking Students' Silence

Translanguaging can be used to break students' silence in the classroom. In contrast to the above-mentioned teacher's monolingual approach, a teacher from one of the focal schools uses and allows his students to use their home languages, alongside English. As seen in the following vignette, first, the teacher uses Nepali to break students' silence in the classroom.

Classroom Vignette 1: 'What Time Do You Go to Bed?' After the morning assembly, the teacher and I entered into the Grade 4 class. In a dusty classroom with stone walls and a tinned roof, there were 21 students sitting in six wooden desks. All the students stood up and greeted us 'Good morning, Sir.' Then, the teacher opened the textbook pages and wrote the topic 'Me and My

Habits' (page 11 from the textbook) on a rough-surfaced blackboard with a piece of chalk. The teacher started to revise the previous lesson. He said 'we learned about time, yesterday' and asked the whole class 'what time is it now?' Students started whispering to find the answer. But nobody responded to his question because they didn't have a clock. Then, he asked another question 'What time do you go to bed?' (This question is not mentioned in the textbook.) Again nobody responded. The teacher then repeated the same question in Nepali '*kati baje sutchau bhaneko?*' Then, two students simultaneously responded 'nine', and the other students said 'ten', 'eight', and 'half past nine'. The teacher then asked 'what time do you have [your] dinner?' The class was silent. After a while one student stood up and asked 'Sir, dinner *ke ho*?' The teacher asked 'you don't know dinner? Dinner *pani jaandainau*? Dinner means *khaanaa.*' Then another student responded 'Sir, 9 o'clock'. The teacher asked him, 'full sentence *ma bhanata*' (say in a full sentence). The student smiled, but did not say anything. The teacher kept encouraging him, by giving a prompt: 'I… dinner… 8 o'clock.'

The above vignette shows that it is hard not to translanguage while teaching English to the bi-/multilingual students who have not yet mastered strong English language proficiency to participate fully in negotiation of meaning and classroom interactions (García 2009). Here, the teacher does not force the students to speak English only in his class; rather he purposefully uses Nepali to push them towards speaking English. The teacher adopts a flexible approach and uses students' existing linguistic knowledge as a resource to engage them in the lesson. Initially, the teacher uses English. But he opens up space for Nepali when he knows that his students are unable to understand his question; subsequently he translates the question into Nepali to check the students' understanding. Although most students in this class are from different ethnic minority communities such as Limbu, Rai, and Magar, all of them have acquired bilingual language competence—Nepali and their mother tongue—in their own family. However, these students dominantly speak Nepali, the country's official language, in the community and have learned Nepali language literacy skills in school.

After the teacher uses Nepali, the students understand and answer his question in English. The students also translanguage to ask a question from the teacher. They retain 'dinner' while using Nepali 'ke ho?' (What is?) to know the meaning of 'dinner'. The teacher also uses translanguaging to clarify the cultural meaning of the word 'dinner'. First, he rearticulates his monolingual question 'you don't know dinner?' bilingually 'dinner *pani jandainas*?' to explain his question. While explaining the meaning of 'dinner' as 'khaanaa',

he uses both Nepali and English. This encourages the students to use English to respond to the teacher's question. Although the students do not use a full sentence, the teacher keeps encouraging them to participate in classroom interactions by using both Nepali and English.

Translanguaging for Increased Student Classroom Participation

Low student participation in classroom activities and interactions is one of the major challenges in teaching English and through English in Nepal, particularly in the lower grades (Baral 2015). As students are not fully competent in English, they do not fully participate in performing classroom activities that require interactions in English. In a series of interviews with the students in both the focal schools, I gathered that primary level students' participation in classroom activities is very minimal due to lack of English language proficiency. For example, in an hour-long interview, one second grader from one of the focal schools says:

> I can't speak English very well. I don't know right vocabulary words to speak in English. Our teachers ask us to speak English, but we can't. We can't do classroom activities and homework ourselves. How can we do activities in English? We just listen to them [the teachers] and copy answers from the board and the textbook.

The teachers in the focal schools are facing the challenge of engaging students in classroom activities. On the one hand, they have to follow the school's mandated EMI policy, but on the other hand, they have to understand students' learning difficulties as well. In this circumstance, translanguaging pedagogy provides a significant space for students' full participation in classroom activities and helps them build confidence in the learning process, regardless of their low English language proficiency (Baker 2011; Ramanathan 2013). As seen in the following excerpt from the classroom observation in one of the study schools (secondary one), translanguaging helps students to engage in peer interactions, and it recognizes their world views about the topic of discussion.

Teacher: Now look at the pictures and describe them. Pictures *herera* answer *lekha* [write down the answers by looking at the pictures]. (Students start talking to each other about their task.]

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Student 1: *yo budo ta haamro kaakaa jasto cha ta* [this old man looks like our uncle]. *Ani yo keti ta* Rabi (pseudonym) *ko aamaa jasto cha* [the woman looks like Rabi's mother.] (the student talks to his friend sitting next to him.)
Student 2: (with a laughter) *katti motto cha ta* [he is too fat.] *tara tyo keti chai* tall *ki* short *cha*? [But is that women tall or short?]
Student 1: *ke bhaneko?* [What did you say?]
Student 2: *agli ki hochi bhaneko*. [I said whether she is tall or short.]
Student 1: heighti *jasto cha*. [She looks tall.]
Student 2: *dui* number *ko* question *le ke bhaneko?* [What is the second question saying?]
Student 3: Sir, second question *bujhina*? [I didn't understand the second question.]
Teacher: wearing *bhaneko laaunu… jastai, lugaa* wearing. [Wearing means put on… for example, clothe wearing.]
Student 4: Sir, *tesle topi lagaako cha*. [Sir, he is wearing a topi.]
Student 5: Sir, *tyo keti le ta sari lagaako cha*. [Sir, she is wearing a sari.]
Teacher: *lu aba* sentence *maa lekha ta.* [Now, write down your answers in a sentence.]
[Students start writing their answers.]

We see that the teacher repeats his instruction in English by using the features of both English and Nepali in his repertoire: 'pictures *herera* answer *lekha*'. Here, the teacher mixes both languages to help students understand the task: writing the description of the people shown in the pictures. As the teacher begins translanguaging, the students also feel comfortable to use Nepali to express their understanding about the task. The teacher deliberately mixes Nepali in his repertoire to address students' disengagement in classroom activities. Although the teacher does not ask them to talk to each other, they constantly do so to seek each other's help to better understand the topic.

Most importantly, translanguaging encourages the students to connect the lesson with their own communities and gain a deeper understanding of the topic of discussion (Hornberger and Link 2012; Lewis et al. 2012). In the above excerpt, the students compare the images in the textbook with the people in their own community and ask questions to each other in Nepali. Students demonstrate their prior knowledge about the people from the local community and use that knowledge to describe the pictures in the textbook. While Student 1 connects the old man with his own 'kaakaa' (uncle), Student 2 notices the similarities between the woman and his friend *Rabi's* (pseudonym) 'aamaa' (mother). Similarly, Student 2 says '*katti motto cha ta*' (he is too fat) to

share his thought about the picture with his friend, Student 1. He also uses Nepali with key describing words 'tall' and 'short' in English to ask his friend whether the woman in the picture is tall or short. Student 1 shows creative use of Nepali female gender maker '-i' with 'height' to describe the woman in the textbook.

The fluidity of language practices, as seen in the above excerpt, promotes peer interactions, co-learning and co-construction of meaning and encourages students to perform classroom tasks (Creese and Blackledge 2010; García and Li 2014). Later, the students invest the understanding they gain from the above interactions while writing the description of the people in the textbook. Although there is a prevalent assumption among teachers and policy-makers that languages are best learnt through the increased opportunities for interactions in that language, as the above discussion shows, that assumption is less relevant for the students whose proficiency in the language of instruction is not strong enough to perform classroom activities (Baker 2011). We see that the teacher strategically uses 'lugaa' (clothe) to explain the meaning of 'wearing'. Although the students' language practices, as discussed above, gives an impression, at least at the surface level, that the students are not learning English, such translingual practices are an important resource for bi-/multilingual students who are yet to develop a mastery of a new language.

Translanguaging for Teaching Academic Content

Translanguaging has also been an important resource for teaching academic content for English language learners (García and Li 2014; Mazak and Herbas-Donoso 2014). It is important to discuss why translanguaging is relevant to teaching academic content through English. First, as mentioned above, in the case of EMI policy in Nepal, the teaching of content area subjects through English most dominantly involves English language teaching. Second, the current EMI policy in Nepal is guided by the assumption that students become more competent in English if they are taught all the subjects in English from the early grades (Baral 2015). In other words, the goal of the EMI policy is to provide students with more English language exposure. In what follows, I discuss how teachers and students use translanguaging to negotiate meaning on various issues concerning the topic of teaching.

Classroom Vignette 2: Animals Reproduce Babies First, the teacher writes the topic 'Animals reproduce babies' on the board. Then he asks the students to look at the pictures in the textbook. The pictures include a breast-feeding

woman, cow, goat and dog, a fish with fingerlings, and a hen with chicks. Then, the teacher asks the students to describe how these animals *reproduce* babies. But the whole class remains silent. Then, the teacher asks whether they know the meaning of 'reproduce'. Nobody responds to him. Some students at the back of the class start talking to each other in Nepali. But the teacher asks them to speak English, otherwise 'keep quiet'. He says 'this is English medium class. Speak English'. The teacher tries his best to explain the meaning of the word 'reproduce' by giving them the other related words such as *hatch*, *give birth*, and *lay*, but the students do not know the meaning of these words either. They look confused. The whole class remains silent. The teacher tries to relate the words with the pictures in the textbook, but that does not work either. The students do not find appropriate words to describe what the words mean. Then, the teacher explains two of his previous questions in Nepali 'maanchele bachchaa kasari paauchan? ani kukhuraale'? (How do human beings reproduce babies? What about a hen?). Then, the students slowly begin to speak and start to talk to each other. As the teacher uses Nepali, they think that they could also speak Nepali.

Student 1: Sir, reproduce *bhaneko janmaaunu ho*? [Sir, does reproduce mean to give birth?]

Teacher: *ho…ho… tara sabai* animals *le eutai tarikaale* reproduce *garchan ta*? No. *kukhuraale kasari paaucha challaa?* [yes… yes… but do all animals reproduce [babies] in the same way? No. How does a hen reproduce chicks?]

Student 2: *kukhuraale ta andaa paarcha*, sir.

We see that the objective of the lesson—to enable students to describe the characteristics of living beings—is difficult to achieve because of students' lack of English language proficiency. Like the class mentioned above, the teaching of content area subjects such as science, mathematics, and social studies in the current EMI policy has become primarily the teaching of the English language. This phenomenon is common in the context where students learn English as a foreign language (Kirkpatrick 2013). However, as seen in the above vignette, translanguaging pedagogy creates a safe space for students to use their total linguistic repertoire to acquire both content knowledge and English language proficiency.

As the students cannot explain the meaning of 'reproduce' and the other words associated with it in English, the teacher puts his questions in Nepali. This helps them think more about how different living things reproduce their

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babies. In the beginning, the teacher does not allow students to speak Nepali. However, he purposefully mixes Nepali to help students understand the meaning of 'reproduce'. After the teacher explains the meaning of 'reproduce' in Nepali, the students begin to engage themselves in comparing the reproductive characteristics of other animals. While asking a confirmation question, Student 1, for example, links the meaning of 'reproduce' with 'janmaaunu' (to give birth) and the teacher builds on this to scaffold the class to describe how other animals reproduce babies. The teacher then draws the pictures of a hen and a goat and asks the students to describe how they *reproduce* babies. Although the students understand the concept of reproduce now, they do not know appropriate English words to describe the reproductive characteristics of a hen and a goat. But they use 'andaa paarnu' (lay eggs) and 'paathaa janmaaunu' (give birth to a kid) to describe how a hen and a goat reproduces babies. Building on this knowledge, the teacher writes 'lay eggs' and 'give birth' for the hen and the goat that he has already drawn on the board. After the teacher engages the students to write what they learned in complete sentences in English.

The above discussion shows that students' existing linguistic knowledge provides them with a significant space for negotiating meaning and interrogating issues surrounding the content of teaching. It provides a significant basis for scaffolding students towards learning new concepts in English so that they are cognitively engaged in exploring and acquiring academic content knowledge. As they keep transferring the knowledge they acquired in their home language, they feel more confidence in learning new English words and concepts in English and other content area subjects. Translanguaging also helps them engage in classroom interactions and tasks. This further implies that for the students with a negligible prior exposure to English, it is important to acknowledge their total linguistic repertoire and use them strategically and purposefully to support them learn English and content knowledge through English.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have discussed two major issues that are least explored in teaching English in an EFL context. First, I have analysed how the unplanned English language education policy has played a critical role in creating 'difficult circumstances' for teaching English and other subjects through English. As seen in the Nepal context, the unplanned expansion of English both as a *compulsory subject* and *the medium of instruction* from the early grades creates pedagogical difficulties in public schools (Phyak 2011, 2013). While lack of

resources, trained teachers, funding, and technology always affects English language education, I have argued that the 'monolingual mindset' (Clyne 2005) to English language education policies and pedagogies that derecognizes local conditions and linguistic resources is in itself a major contributing factor to difficult circumstances in teaching English. Although the class size in Nepal's public schools, particularly in rural villages, is shrinking, classroom interactions and student engagement in task performance are very negligible due to the absence of an appropriate language planning that embraces students' existing linguistic knowledge as resource in teaching English and other subjects through English. I have also discussed that forcing young children to learn English and through English by ignoring their existing linguistic knowledge and skills silences their voices and disengages them from classroom activities.

Second, I have argued that the current difficult circumstances created by unplanned English language policy can be addressed by using translanguaging pedagogy that builds on students' existing linguistic knowledge as a resource to reinforce new language skills. As discussed above, teachers can use a translanguaging pedagogy to engage students in classroom interactions, activities, and task performance, to help them explain and negotiate meanings, to check comprehension, and to raise questions on the topic of discussion. This pedagogy embraces a 'multilingual turn' (May 2014) in English language education which recognizes students' emerging fluid, hybrid, and dynamic language practices as resource for teaching-learning English (Flores and García 2013). As Crandall (2006: 1) argues, we need to pay attention to what linguistic and cultural resources students bring into English language classroom, 'rather than focusing on what instructional resources we lack in our classes'. Thus, I argue that the materialistic interpretation of 'difficult circumstance' is extremely limited, and it conceals the actual difficulties of teaching English in an EFL context and devalues profound resources that are built around students' total linguistic repertoire.

However, there are two major challenges in implementing translanguaging pedagogy. First, there is a need of a strong teacher education programme to support teachers build awareness and confidences in implementing translanguaging in their pedagogical practices. Teachers must have knowledge of both theories and practices of translanguaging as a legitimate pedagogical practice in English language education. Second, the policy-makers, school administration, and parents should also be engaged in dialogue for ideological awareness about how students learn English better if they allowed to build on their home languages in classroom. Importantly, all of these require us to see English language education from a multilingual epistemic stance.

Recommended Texts

García, O., & Wei, L. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book provides a comprehensive analysis of how a translanguaging pedagogy is a relevant approach to teaching and learning languages and content area subjects. As it includes a lot of classroom data from different multilingual contexts, this book is important for teachers and teacher educators to understand how students' multilingual practices serve as a resource for teaching English.

May, S. (Ed.). (2014). *The multilingual turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL, and bilingual education*. New York/London: Routledge.

While challenging the domination of 'monolingual bias' in language education, this edited volume critically examines ideologies that impose monolingualism in research and pedagogical practices in language education. The strength of this volume lies in its focus on how a multilingual approach is adopted in actual teaching and learning processes in different contexts.

Baldauf, R. B, Kaplan, R. B., Kamwangamalu, N. M., & Bryant, P. (Eds.). (2012). *Language planning in primary schools in Asia*. New York: Routledge.

This edited volume covers various language planning issues such as language planning failure, gaps between official policies and actual practices, and space of English in local multilingual context.

Cummins, J., & Early, M. (Eds.). (2011). *Identity texts: The collaborative creation of power in multilingual schools.* London: Institute of Education Press.

In developing multilingual pedagogies, this book presents 18 different case studies of actual classroom teaching practices that highlight how allowing students to use their multilingual repertoire helps them engage in production of creative work (e.g., dual language story books) collaboratively. This book is very helpful for teachers teaching English in multilingual contexts.

Engagement Priorities

The chapter raises some critical questions with regard to ELT language policy and pedagogy in a multilingual EFL context like Nepal. Some major questions for further engagement are as follows:

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1. Does a monolingual approach to ELT policy and pedagogy support effective learning and use of English (both within and across curriculum) in the contexts where students have a limited exposure to English in society? Does such a policy and pedagogical practices recognize children's prior or existing linguistic knowledge as a resource to learn English?
2. How can teachers create a motivating learning space in which students can use their own multilingual abilities to engage and perform classroom tasks to achieve curricular goals? How does the use of students' home languages cognitively and conversationally engage them in achieving learning goals?
3. How can teachers and policy-makers be engaged in understanding the importance of multilingual practices in teaching English in multilingual EFL contexts? What resources do we need to develop to (re)imagine multilingual approaches to ELT?

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Section II

Developing Contextually Responsive Pedagogy and Materials for Teaching English in Difficult Circumstances

4

Promoting Learner Engagement in a Large University-Level ESL Class in Pakistan

Bushra Ahmed Khurram

In the majority of public sector universities of Pakistan, teaching and learning of English takes place in difficult circumstances. These circumstances include, among others, large classes, lack of adequate resources and facilities for teaching-learning and lack of student engagement (Shamim 1993, 1996; Bughio 2012). In addition, Bughio (2012) observes that students lack enthusiasm and commitment towards English lessons held in most of the public sector universities of Pakistan. This is manifested either through irregular and low attendance rates or passivity in classroom activities (ibid.). From a pedagogical perspective, for many teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL), the absence of learner engagement in a large class is problematic (Exeter et al. 2010) since having passive students in the class adds to the challenge of finding ways of following principles of 'good practice' in a large class (West 1960; Smith 2005).

This chapter discusses an attempt to increase learner engagement in an ESL class through a classroom-based intervention study carried out at a public sector university in Pakistan. The chapter starts with a discussion of large classes as well as the construct of learner engagement, particularly in the context of such classes. This is followed by a brief discussion of the context and process of the study and a presentation of some of the strategies used during the intervention. The chapter then presents the outcome of the study by integrating teachers' and students' voices on what happened in the lessons to present a

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multi-layered perspective on the experience. Lastly, the chapter suggests that the contextually grounded and locally produced strategies reported here may have wider significance and contribute to the repertoire of ESL strategies teachers may use to engage learners in similar or even otherwise favourable circumstances.

Large Classes

There is no agreement in the field of language education as to the precise definition of what constitutes a large class (Shamim and Kuchah 2016). Large classes have been defined variously by different practitioners and researchers (Shamim et al. 2007). In some developed countries such as the USA, 22–25 students in a class are considered large (Finn and Achilles 1990), while in some developing countries such as Pakistan, this will be regarded as small by many practitioners (Shamim 1993; Sarwar 2001; Bughio 2012). However, even within a country, the perception of a large class can vary depending on the level of education and educational context (Hayes 1997). Research indicates that a large class cannot be defined simply in terms of number of students present in a class (Ajjan 2012; Kuchah 2013; Shamim and Coleman, in press). In fact, teachers' definition of large classes depends on a range of contextual factors such as the space and resources available in a class, teachers' previous experience of class size, the average class size in the context (Coleman 1989), the content being taught (Watson-Todd 2006) and teachers' threshold levels (Shamim 1993) in addition to number of students present in the class (see also Shamim and Kuchah 2016; Shamim and Coleman, in press). The class reported in this chapter is comprised of 39 first year undergraduate students in an under-resourced classroom in a public sector university in Pakistan.

Learner Engagement

Learner engagement is considered a pedagogical goal in educational settings because of its high potential for generating learning. It is usually portrayed as a 'condition', 'predictor' or a 'prerequisite' of learning (Solis 2008). Caulfield (2010: 1) argues that 'creating classroom conditions that enhance student engagement leads to increased student learning'. This is probably because 'being engaged creates a sense of purpose and accomplishment among students and promotes the development of important "dispositions" toward learning' (Herrenkohl and Guerra 1998: 433). In the context of language

learning, learner engagement is defined as affective and cognitive participation in the learning experience (Svalberg 2009). The affectively engaged student has a positive, purposeful and willing disposition towards language learning (ibid.). He/she experiences affective reactions such as interest, enjoyment or a sense of belonging (Trowler 2010). The cognitively engaged student is alert, pays focused attention and constructs his/her own knowledge (Svalberg 2009). In line with the ideas discussed above, the key markers of cognitive and affective engagement identified in the context of the study reported here are increased students' attendance, positive changes in students' behaviour evidenced in increased participation in classroom activities and students' heightened interest in learning English.

Although learner engagement is a 'multidimensional phenomenon' (Handelsman et al. 2005: 185), the research literature on large-class teaching tends to look at learner engagement in cognitive and behavioural terms only. For example, learners' on-task behaviour and active participation are considered as markers of learner engagement in a large class (Felder 1997; MacGregor et al. 2000). It is suggested that students in a large class can be engaged through making greater use of active modes of teaching (National Institute of Education Report 1984; Felder 1997; McGroarty et al. 2004; Teixeira-Dias et al. 2005; Clark et al. 2008). Researchers have also used novel technologies to engage learners cognitively in lessons (Martinez-Torres et al. 2007; Poirier and Feldman 2007; Scornavacca et al. 2007; Sitthiworachart and Joy 2008; Heaslip et al. 2014). However, these researchers do not discuss ideas for increasing learner engagement by taking affective measures in a class. In the study reported in this chapter, therefore, I attempted to increase my learners' engagement by engaging them not only cognitively but affectively as well. In so doing, I kept in view the human side of the learners and their basic psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy (Deci and Ryan 2000).

The Context and Process of the Study

The classroom-based study described in this chapter was undertaken in the mathematics department of a public sector university of Pakistan in which English is taught as a compulsory course in the first year of all undergraduate programs. The curriculum for English is designed by the English department of the university. However, the teachers select their own teaching materials for translating the curriculum into practice. Drawing on the course requirements,

the lessons designed in this study aimed to develop the reading skills of the students through teaching them reading strategies.

The study was undertaken in a class comprising 39 students following an observation that the students were generally passive. Their lack of engagement was evident in their classroom behaviours such as low level of participation and inattentiveness during English lessons. More specifically, the students were found either talking to each other or looking out of the windows during lessons; a large number of students remained absent from the lessons or arrived just before the end of the class so as to be marked present for the class. Furthermore, students did not display an interest in developing their reading skills and almost always forgot to bring the reading material for the lessons. This attitude towards their English lessons prompted me to investigate how I could increase learner engagement in my class. I decided to use a classroom-based research procedure which drew from action research as a methodological framework for this study. Such a procedure allows for an intervention, the possibility of change in the participants and their educational settings, and enables theorisation anchored in specific settings (Cohen et al. 2000; McNiff and Whitehead 2012).

Similar to other classrooms in the university, my classroom was not well-resourced. Therefore, I could only use the blackboard and some reading material to facilitate learning in the class. In addition, during a power breakdown, which was quite frequent, the classroom became hot and dark. Another challenge was the fact that English classes started as early as 8:30am, but most often, access to the classroom was not possible since the keys were kept by the university warden who was sometimes late. This tended to make students feel that they could be late for the class as well, and as a result, they usually arrived late for the class. Hence, among other things, it was important for me to find ways to make students realize that it was important to come to the lessons on time.

In all, the intervention was carried out over eight lessons in a period of three weeks. Three lessons were held in the first week, four in the second week and one in the third week. Apart from the sixth lesson which was 100 minutes long—in response to a request by the department to teach for two class hours on that day—each lesson lasted 50 minutes. The data for the study was collected through a research journal as well as different forms of students' feedback on their learning and engagement in each lesson. In addition, at the end of the study, students' feedback on their overall learning and engagement in the lessons was also sought by asking them to fill in a self-reflective form adopted from Andrew Seaton's website (www.andrewseaton.com.au/self.doc). The first part of the form elicited students' feedback on the affective

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aspect of their learning, that is, what students most and least liked about the English class, how they felt towards the teacher and how they thought their teacher saw them as a class. The second part of the form elicited students' views on the cognitive aspect of their learning. It investigated the difficulties students faced in carrying out the reading activities and the new discoveries, if any, they had made about the reading strategies they could use to understand a text.

Strategies Used to Engage Students

Through the different research cycles, a number of strategies were used to stimulate active learning and learner engagement in my class. Broadly speaking, these included (a) creating a well-managed classroom environment, (b) using a variety of teaching activities and (c) maintaining a positive attitude towards large classes in general, and the specific challenges I faced in my context, in particular. These strategies will be discussed briefly in the following section.

Creating a Well-Managed Classroom Environment

According to Haddad (2006) one of the most critical aspects of a large class is the classroom environment as it affects students' learning. In this class I tried to create a well-managed physical and psycho-social environment to engage students both cognitively and affectively in the lessons. This was achieved through a better organization of the physical environment, and the building of a positive psycho-social environment in class.

Organizing the Physical Environment

The physical environment in class was organized in such a way as to dissipate the physical constraints of limited space for in-class movement that large classes might impose on teachers (Hayes 1997). In this regard, the extra furniture was removed, and the class arrangement changed from rows to a u-shape arrangement. Additionally, students were encouraged to take responsibility for such things as cleaning the board and keeping chalk for me. The furniture was rearranged to reduce the feeling of overcrowding and to facilitate

movement of both the teacher and the students. On the one hand, this helped establish close proximity between the teacher and students; on the other, it encouraged students to ask questions or discuss ideas with me, something they did not often do when I was physically distanced from them.

This reduction of the physical distance between me (the teacher) and the students made the class appear smaller (Cooper and Robinson 2000) and increased opportunities for more individualized teacher-student interaction. Arranging the class in a u-shape also helped all students to be in the 'action zone' (Shamim 1996), where the teacher could see, access and interact with all of them easily (Shamim et al. 2007). As a result, students' work and their on-task behaviour could be easily monitored.

Building the Psycho-social Environment

In addition to organizing the physical environment, I tried to build a positive psycho-social environment in the class to develop a sense of 'learning community' among the students, that is, a place where teacher and students want to be and where they have positive feelings about what they are doing (Marshall 2001). For this purpose, at one level, measures were taken to help students realize that they were not merely a sea of faces (as is normally the case in a large class) but important individuals in the class. In this regard, I tried to remember and use students' names during the lessons, elicited their thoughts and feelings through taking anonymous feedback at the end of each lesson and promoted a sense of well-being and care among students by introducing what I term 'weather attendance', that is, a procedure of recording attendance which involves the teacher calling out the register and students indicating their presence by selecting one of four weather-related phrases to express their current feelings. These included 'bright and sunny' if they were happy, 'rainy' if they were sad or weepy, 'thundery' if they were angry and 'foggy' if they were confused or unclear'.

It has been argued that remembering and using students' names is the first step in creating a comfortable classroom that encourages student participation (Haddad 2006). It also shows the students that their teacher is interested in them as individuals (Hess 2001). Using the weather attendance technique also provided students the opportunity to express their feelings. Guilloteaux and Dornyei (2008) argue that providing students opportunities to express experiences, feelings and opinions could motivate them towards language learning.

Through developing an enabling psycho-social environment, it became easy to create an orderly and structured learning community and to invite

students to brainstorm a set of expectations related to language study and classroom behaviour. Through discussions with the students, it was agreed that they would arrive in class as well as submit their assignments on time. Students were also given positive recognition when they behaved well to encourage positive behaviour and also to generate positive energy in the class as a whole to meet their psychological need for relatedness.

Using Variety of Teaching Activities

I also used a variety of teaching activities to engage students in the lessons. For instance, I administered a questionnaire called 'Survey of Reading Strategies' (SORS) (Mokhtari and Sheorey 2002) at the start of the study since I was to teach reading strategies in the lessons. The SORS questionnaire assesses adolescent and adult ESL students' metacognitive awareness and perceived use of reading strategies while reading academic materials. Findings from the questionnaire with regard to the strategies students use or did not use during reading helped me make an initial selection of the strategies that could be introduced during the study. Later, the reading strategies to be taught were selected in consultation with the students.

The instructional approaches used to teach reading strategies to students were KWL (Know-Want to Know-Learned) and Reciprocal Teaching. 'KWL represents a three-stage instructional process for understanding texts: What students *Know*, what students *Want* to know, and what they have *Learned*' (Grabe 2009: 231). This approach combines activating prior knowledge, planning, goal setting, monitoring for key points, evaluating text information and relating text information to reading goals (Ogle 1986; Ogle and Blachowicz 2002). In the Reciprocal Teaching approach, students learn how to apply the following four strategies to text segments as they read: Predicting, Questioning, Summarizing and Clarifying (Palinscar and Brown 1984). KWL and Reciprocal Teaching were used during the study since there is general agreement among comprehension researchers (e.g. Block and Pressley 2002, 2007; Pressley and Fingeret 2007) that instruction focusing on students' learning repertoire of strategies is more effective than individual strategy instruction.

During the lessons, students were provided opportunities to collaborate and work directly with one another in pairs or small groups and to help each other in performing individual tasks. Student collaboration and peer support was encouraged for two major reasons: First, to cater for their psychological need of belongingness or relatedness and second, to promote student motivation

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(Pressley and Gaskin 2006) and involvement (Shamim et al. 2007: 34). Besides, the purpose of each reading activity was shared with the students to motivate them towards learning (Guilloteaux and Dornyei 2008). Additionally, the students were provided opportunities to make choices during the lessons to increase their motivation (Dornyei 1998:120) and to cater to their psychological need for autonomy. For instance, they were encouraged to select the text they would like to read during the lesson from the available texts.

Teacher's Positive Stance

According to Dornyei (1994: 278) 'student attitudes and orientations towards learning are, to a large extent, modelled after their teachers both in terms of effort expenditure and orientations of interest in the subject'. More important, 'if you [the teacher] show commitment towards the students' learning and progress, there is a very good chance that they will do the same thing' (Dornyei 2001: 34). Essentially, this indicates that teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and their attitude and motivation to make a difference can affect the students' behaviour in a positive way. In the course of the project, I made a special effort to maintain a positive outlook towards the context in which the study was conducted. Overall, some practical constraints in the context required a degree of flexibility, positivity and commitment on the part of the teacher to maintain students' developing interest, motivation and engagement. For example, whenever I found the classrooms locked, I used the situation as an opportunity to teach in the open space and to learn how to facilitate a lesson effectively in such a space. This significantly increased students' motivation to arrive for the class earlier than they had been doing before. Coming early to class also provided me an opportunity to address two challenges—the difficulty in building rapport with students and that of giving them individual attention—as I was able to talk to the students before the lessons.

Change in Students' Engagement in the Lessons

As mentioned earlier, most of the students did not display engagement and interest in the English lessons at the start of the study. However, students' engagement in the lessons and interest in reading increased considerably as the study progressed. This was evident through a number of visible behaviour changes in students discussed below.

Increased Class Attendance

Students' heightened engagement in the lessons was noticeable from the fact that almost all students attended all lessons during the duration of the study and beyond. In addition to arriving early for classes, students also began to engage in useful discussions with me before the start of the lesson as illustrated from the following extract from my journal:

> Many of the students who reached the class early discussed various reading strategies with me and wanted to know ways to improve their reading skills and vocabulary further.

What perhaps increased students' attendance was not only the establishment of classroom rules but also the creation of a warm and inviting classroom environment through the use of techniques such as weather attendance which provided opportunity to understand students' states of mind and engage in dialogue with them which showed that they were valued participants in the teaching-learning process. An increased sense of well-being in students was evident from their comments. For instance, one of the students thought that taking attendance through weather attendance technique showed that 'you care' about us. This made him 'want to attend the class'. Along similar lines another student commented that 'it's nice you want to know how we are so that you can help us. I really want to attend your classes'. Besides that, students also reported at the end of the fifth lesson that their mood had been positively affected and that they felt happier attending English classes. The following comments exemplify the feedback I received from the students:

> I was unhappy and tired when I was coming for university. But today's class became me fresh[1]. The way of teaching is really good and class was very informative.
>
> Today's class made my mood happy. When I woke up today, I was feeling foggy and thundering.

The above extracts reveal that the lessons had a positive effect on students, which may also have encouraged them to attend the lessons.

Positive Behavioural Changes

Positive behavioural changes in the students were evident in their increased level of participation and collaboration in the lessons. For example, the

students started taking a more active part in pair and group activities and actually found this collaborative work useful, as illustrated by the following comment by a student:

> I faced a difficulty in class when we were doing our activity individually. I overcame this problem when teacher made groups and we did our activity in a group. That was so helpful for me and I found reading more interesting and joyful.

This indicates that the students found working in groups useful. It may therefore be assumed that peer collaboration positively impacted on students' engagement level since they began to find reading more 'interesting' and 'joyful'.

Students' change of behaviour in the English class was also noticeable from the fact that whenever they were absent, they sent their assignment through another student to keep to the deadline. Besides, students increased motivation was evident in that they started bringing to class the given reading material in the later lessons which they would normally forget to bring with them in earlier lessons. Moreover, students always cleaned the board and kept chalk for me in the classroom without my reminding them to do so. This increased sense of responsibility, undertaken on voluntary basis, was also indicative of their growing interest in the English lessons.

Increased Students' Interest in Learning

My observation also showed that the various activities carried out during the study helped keep students attentive in the classroom and captivated their interest in reading, as illustrated in the following journal entry:

> In today's lesson students took more interest in the reading strategies than I had initially envisaged. They asked me how they could use the various strategies mentioned in the SORS questionnaire. I brought to their notice that this will be the focus of the upcoming lessons. At the end of the lesson a few students asked for a blank copy of the SORS questionnaire so that they could make their siblings and friends fill it in too. I gave extra copies to them immediately as I wanted to support their growing interest in reading. I also felt encouraged as this particular incident suggested that they considered the time and effort spent in filling in the questionnaire worthwhile.

Students' feedback on the lessons provides further evidence that the English class had stimulated and fostered their interest in reading, although at the start of the study they did not display an interest in reading as mentioned

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before. This can be illustrated from the following comment made by one of the students at the end of the study: 'I always want to get rid of reading but after such classes, it developed some interest in me to read anything'. Along similar lines, another student reported that: 'Now I take interest in reading because before I don't like reading'. One particular student saw the act of reading in a new light: 'I think now that without reading a man is like a city without walls'.

To sum up, the research study showed that students began to like being in class. They also started to take interest in improving their reading skills by participating in the lessons, although at the start of the study they arrived just to be marked present for the class.

Lessons Learnt

Based on the intervention outlined above, it can be argued that although increasing students' engagement in a large class in difficult circumstances can be challenging, it is still possible against all odds through teacher motivation and agency. The study suggests that engaging students in a large class is possible if the teacher is highly motivated and has a positive attitude overall towards teaching-learning in a large class, in general, and towards learners, in particular. Efforts to build rapport with the students such as learning their names, showing genuine care and respect for students and sharing classroom responsibilities with the students are some ways to address the challenges faced in large classes. Moreover, the study illustrates that new possibilities for engaging learners in a large class could open up when the teacher accepts the teaching-learning context, adopts a problem-solving approach and has a positive outlook to turn the challenges into opportunities. For example, a careful selection and use of a variety of teaching strategies and classroom management techniques helped me create a positive classroom atmosphere while also facilitating the development of reading skills. This supports the findings of earlier class-size studies, that is, student learning and engagement in the language class is not a function of class size per se (for a recent discussion of this, see Shamim & Coleman in press). On the practical level, the findings of this study may act as a reminder for practitioners working in ESL and other contexts to pay more attention to the whole learner during teaching by keeping in view both the cognitive and affective aspects of learning to foster student engagement in language learning. What seems to have helped student engagement in my class was what *happened* in the class. In other words, class size and its related challenges became less of an issue when teacher and students became

involved in activities that were both affectively and cognitively engaging. Finally, the study reinforces the appropriateness of Renaud et al.'s (2007) suggestion that engaging learners in a large class requires realization of the fact that though one cannot direct the wind but one can always adjust the sails.

Engagement Priorities

1. This chapter describes some strategies for promoting learner engagement in a large ESL class in difficult circumstances. Which of these strategies could you use in your class and why? What other strategies might help increase learner engagement in a large class?
2. The strategies shared in this chapter for promoting learner engagement in a large ESL class were used at the tertiary level. Could these strategies be applied in a large primary and secondary class in your context? What, if any, variations or adaptations would you make to reflect the level of your learners?
3. The classroom-based research study reported in the chapter indicates that increasing learner engagement is possible in a large class in difficult circumstances. Consider planning a study with your colleagues to investigate the validity of these findings through practitioner research in your context? Who could be your potential research participants? What might be the practical and ethical issues you need to consider for designing and carrying out this study?

Suggested Further Reading

Shamim, F., Negash, N., Chuku, C., & Demewoz, N. (2007). *Maximising learning in large classes: Issues and options*. Addis Abbaba: The British Council

This freely accessible book (online) discusses issues involved in teaching English in large classes and provides useful classroom activities that teachers could utilize when teaching language skills in large classes.

Shamim, F. (2012). Teaching large classes. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to pedagogy and practice in second language teaching* (pp. 95–102).Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the issues and approaches to teaching large classes.

Shamim, F., & Kuchah, K. (2016). Teaching large classes in difficult circumstances. In Graham Hall (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 527–541).

This chapter discusses the problems of teaching large classes in difficult circumstances and looks at ways of developing good practice for teaching English in difficult contexts.

Notes

1. Students' comments have not been edited for language.

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‘We Learn from Simple Way but Big Big Thing’: Promoting Learner Autonomy in Large Under-Resourced Classes

Ganga Ram Gautam and Zakia Sarwar

Introduction

In today’s globalized world, English has been widely accepted as the language of ‘upward social mobility’ (Dearden 2014) as well as the language of communication between countries of different regions. English language is taught at school and college level in many countries around the world. However, teaching of English poses a great challenge to ESL/EFL teachers in countries such as Pakistan and Nepal because of the difficult circumstances within which they work. These include limited or no resources, lack of training for classroom practitioners and large class size resulting in insufficient learner involvement, difficulty in managing and assessing learning including providing feedback (Shamim and Kuchah 2016; Shamim et al. 2007). Similarly, the teachers’ inability to pay individual attention to the learners and to provide support on a one-to-one basis might weaken learners’ motivation (Baker and Westrup 2000). In these contexts, empowering learners to be self-motivated by developing their confidence to take charge of their own learning through hands-on experiential learning is akin to providing them with a key with which to open the coveted golden gates of English (Sarwar 2000).

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In order to address the issue of large class size and low motivation of learners to learn English, a teacher in Pakistan (the second author) developed a programme that integrated a series of autonomy-oriented language learning activities which she later conceptualized as project-based learning (henceforth PBL) (Sarwar 2000, 2001). Thus, the term PBL was used in the broadest sense as a functional perspective that views language as a resource within a particular sociocultural perspective (Halliday 1994). It was an alternative view that sees project-based instruction to be creating contexts for learning through language (Beckett and Miller 2006: 6). Sarwar's model was then subsequently used in many other classes by her colleagues in different institutions in Pakistan (ibid 2001). Besides learning English, effort was made to make learners self-reliant and confident of themselves as users of English.

Sarwar's intervention was successful in Pakistan because in EFL settings, positive ways of learning and confidence-building measures both play a crucial role in keeping learners motivated and hopeful for successful outcomes. Snyder (2002) endorses the importance of positive learning psychology and identifies hope as a positive motivational factor and a key point in learning through which the seemingly unreachable goals may become reachable. He believes that goals provide the targets of mental action sequences to learners. Goals are closely associated with 'pathways' to work out the manner in which the targets could be achieved and the 'agency' to use the worked out steps for successful outcomes. It appears that when pathways and agency support each other, they foster self-efficacy and self-esteem in learners, resulting in their success (Ibid: 250–51). The Pakistan model of PBL provided learners the pathways or strategies to achieve goals, which hitherto, might have appeared to be beyond their reach. During the project, the learners also gained a degree of confidence in themselves, thereby increasing the level of their motivation and personal agency. Thus the course aimed at giving the learners hope to achieve their goals in resource-poor contexts, where mastery in English language is coveted but at best is a challenging achievement by majority of learners. Another important point is that besides including positive ways to improve language proficiency, the course also focused on developing learners' confidence and self-esteem by using context-appropriate, simple and doable activities, which might help them discover their learning potential.

This chapter describes how a teacher in Nepal (the first author) successfully networked with the other teacher (second author) to extend the Pakistan model to his local context and motivated his learners to take charge of their learning. The extension included a 50-hour face-to-face course combined with several out-of-class activities that integrated different language skills. The

course was conducted over a period of ten weeks with 47 learners with limited resources (Gautam and Sarwar 2014). The aim was to explore what materials and activities would help learners develop confidence and move gradually towards becoming autonomous and find ways to continue learning on their own.

The chapter briefly describes only three activities which were originally used by Sarwar, keeping in mind the needs of Nepalese learners who were very keen to improve their spoken English. So besides reading and writing, additional activities were devised which fostered learner autonomy by helping learners to interact with each other in a nonthreatening atmosphere and use their critical thinking skills to review their own progress. Learners' voices are included to demonstrate how the course helped them find their own potential and self-assurance in using English. Learners articulated that they were able to produce texts in English and interact with each other in the language for meaningful interactions. The chapter finally lists the implications and recommendations for relating learning to learners' sociocultural contexts in similar resource-poor environments. The author's reflections on the work and the resultant modifications made in implementing the model in different contexts illustrate the importance of localizing methods to fit the local realities. It also reiterates the point that teachers from different countries can network with each other to do classroom research and work towards their continuous professional development.

This chapter is the outcome of the professional network and collaborative initiative between the two teachers in Pakistan and Nepal. The authors, who faced similar challenges in their classrooms, not only worked together to address the mutual issues but also demonstrated how the pedagogical approach developed in Pakistan could be adapted to fit the local context in Nepal.

The Context

In Nepal, English is used as a foreign language. The majority of children have very little access to English around them. Learners do want to speak and write in English but due to the lack of practice in class, they are unable to express themselves in the language. Those who try to speak limited English are often ridiculed for their errors and therefore hesitate to express themselves in English. Students have little opportunity to practice English in class. Teachers' excuses for not being able to teach English effectively has to do with large numbers of students, lack of resources and their own proficiency level in English. The first author during his travels to different parts of Nepal to run

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workshops and training for teachers observed that English lessons are often conducted through translation and as isolated structures in dreary grammar exercises.

Nevertheless, students' success in the future workforce and in their social surrounding depends on their capacity to use English effectively. Those who can speak English in a country like Nepal are often considered to be elite or part of the upper class. Eagle (1999: 273) explains that 'for over 100 years in Nepal, a Western education meant an education in English, albeit reserved primarily for the elite (and)… English is regarded as essential to the modernisation, development, and internationalisation of Nepal, and continues to play an important role in higher education'. Those who can speak and write in English have a higher chance of getting educational and professional opportunities. In such contexts, lacking proficiency in English often results in a lack of hope and low self-esteem among the learners (see also Coleman 2011).

Additionally, in Nepal there is no consistent language policy defining the status, rationale, aims and procedures for teaching English (see Phyak, Chap. 3 in this volume). However, teachers who work in such situations 'take the bull by its horns' (Smith 2008) and look for ways to maximize teaching and learning as best as they can. As changing the language policies or the curriculum and the prescribed textbooks may not be in their hands, teachers need to look for effective solutions to meet the needs of their learners. One such effort was made in Nepal by the first author of this paper (Gautam), through using the PBL work of the second author (Sarwar) in Pakistan with some additional activities to promote learner autonomy by helping students take charge of their learning English in difficult circumstances.

Sarwar's Work in Pakistan

At the foundation of the work conducted initially in Pakistan is the idea that in spite of enormous challenges to the teaching of English in resource-challenged contexts, learners may still be taught English by the deployment of activities that foster meaningful, autonomous English language learning. The activities used by Sarwar's (2001, 2010) in the original initiative were geared to provide meaningful opportunities to use English. Thus, the goals included not just language learning but also a focus on giving learners strategies to develop their confidence to learn on their own rather than depend on the teacher, or rote learning. The learners, by engaging themselves in a series of activities, as shall be shown later in this chapter, discovered pathways to their autonomy and found learning of English fun.

The English Language Programme in Nepal

Gautam, who was struggling with the very problem of teaching English to oversized classes' limited English language practice opportunity, found that Sarwar addressed some of the issues he was faced with and was inspired to try them out in his own setting. With Sarwar's support through online discussion and mentoring, Gautam implemented Sarwar's materials with some extension in Nepal in 2013/2014 in a higher secondary college with a group of 47 learners. The sections below describe the process and the main activities implemented in Nepal.

Preparatory Activities

Gautam chose a higher secondary school to implement the activities. This is a community school which offers English as a compulsory subject in grades 11 and 12. A high majority of the students (84%) studying in grades 11 and 12 in this school graduated from Nepali medium schools. Approximately 90% of these learners have scored less than 55% in English in their high school exam. All the learners were from low socio-economic background. An informal pre- and post-test and needs analysis survey were administered to the learners to gauge learners' proficiency level and their needs.

At the beginning of the Nepal programme, the learners said that English was a very difficult subject and they found it impossible to communicate in English. Most of them wanted to improve their speaking skills so that they could communicate in the English language both in and outside the class and be proud of themselves among their peers from English medium school background. However, they were afraid of speaking English mainly because they felt that they did not have enough vocabulary or knowledge of grammar to express themselves in English. Moreover, they shared that they did not try to speak English in class due to the fear of humiliation from peers and teachers if they made any errors. Comparing themselves with the graduates of English medium private schools, they felt inferior for not being able to speak English. They felt frustrated and considered themselves worthless in their future career mainly due to their lack of English proficiency.

Preparing Learners to Learn

At the beginning, to help build learners' confidence and encourage them to learn and use English, Gautam looked for ways to encourage them to develop a positive attitude for language learning. He shared his own experience of learning English

with them and told them how he himself had found learning English hard and how he had to struggle to learn English. This sharing of his personal experiences relaxed as well as motivated the learners and gave them a ray of hope.

Additionally, Gautam shared the text 'How Language is Learned' (Sarwar and Gautam 2015) which told them that language learning is a 'skill', making them aware of the concept of learning by doing. It included tips about how they could prepare themselves for the journey of learning English. The concluding sentence of the text says:

> Remember, YOU are the key figure in your journey to learning English. Just as no one can see for you or hear for you, no one can learn for you. This programme will help you to find ways and strategies to learn English by providing you occasions to use English meaningfully. Your teacher will help you and guide you. But you will need to take initiatives and be responsible for your learning. (Sarwar and Gautam 2015: 2)

So at the onset of the course, the learners were made aware of their own role and were given tips to be proactive in their learning process. This reflects how Ho and Crookall's (1995) look at how learner autonomy is nurtured:

> Autonomy cannot be conferred by a teacher, at least not directly. Taking responsibility can only be encouraged... Indeed, learning to take responsibility is very like learning to do things. Only the learner can learn – not the teacher. Moreover, the learner can only learn by doing. In other words, only by taking steps towards autonomy and exercising that autonomy will the learner be and become autonomous. (ibid: 242)

Secondly, helping the learners develop a 'can-do' attitude was very important at the outset. The activities at the beginning of the course were simple and easy to do. Helping learners to find out what they are capable of doing seemed to be an important aspect for the Nepalese learners. The Nepal experiment focused specially on oral proficiency to build up learners' confidence in using English in real-life situations, moving towards learning autonomy by using self-learning activities.

Additionally, the Nepal work includes a series of classroom and outside class activities in which the learners themselves were encouraged to be responsible for their learning. The project started with simple self-learning activities which were doable even for learners with beginner level proficiency, but which have scope for more proficient learners too. For learners shackled in rote learning, these tasks serve to boost their self-esteem and motivation to learn

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English and to realize that they have the capability to do things on their own and become autonomous learners and do not always need teachers to teach or correct their mistakes. As the learners gradually began to take charge of their learning, the teacher acted only as a facilitator to guide and support them. In this context, the course implemented in Nepal made use of indigenous and inexpensive teaching materials prepared with the aim of helping learners boost their self-esteem and learn to work more independently.

Having the Learners on Board

In a context of teacher-fronted classrooms where the teacher provides the information and learners receive it, making learners responsible for their learning was a big challenge. Thus, it was important for them to clearly understand that if they wanted success, they would have to engage themselves very actively and meaningfully in the language learning activities during the class rather than expecting a magic wand from the teacher. This was not an easy job at all as 'training learners for responsibility involves changing their attitudes' (Scharle and Szabo 2010: 2), and a change in attitude is possible only when they take the work seriously and are intrinsically motivated. Scharle and Szabo (2010: 3) provide three key characteristics of responsible learners. They:

a) Accept the idea that their own efforts are crucial to progress in learning, and behave accordingly
b) Are willing to cooperate with the teacher and others in the learning group for everyone's benefit
c) Consciously monitor their own progress and make an effort to use available opportunities to their benefit, including classroom activities and homework

In order to encourage them to be active partners in learning, it was important to invest some time in confidence-building activities and develop a 'can-do' attitude in the learners not only at the beginning but also at subsequent stages in the programme through activities such as five-minute 'free writing' (explained later) at the beginning of each class throughout the project.

It was heartening to see that by listening to Gautam's experience and reading the tips in the text, learners seemed inspired and were ready to try out the self-learning activities.

Materials and Activities Used in Nepal

As mentioned in the earlier sections, the course consisted of a series of in-class and outside class activities in order to empower learners to use the English language. In the Nepal's case, the course was a combination of face-to-face and self-learning modes. Learners attended three, two-hour face-to-face sessions per week, followed by individual self-learning activities. Sample activities used in the course to empower learners are as follows:

- **Individual tasks and activities:** Self-created cloze, radio/TV news, profile cards, cinquain, free writing
- **Group tasks:** Writing a story/book/newspaper, language club, songs and role plays for the final day for 'display' of work; organizing the final performance in teams

Individual Tasks and Activities

Learners were engaged in a series of individual activities right from the beginning of the course to the end. Some of the individual activities that were used in the course in Nepal were:

Self-Created Cloze This activity is an adaptation of the classic 'cloze' in which the learners with the guidance of the teacher created their own cloze by copying a paragraph from their English textbook leaving out the ninth word, filled the gaps after a lapse of time and monitored their progress by checking from the textbook how many words they had inserted correctly (Sarwar 2001: 132). They worked at their own pace, in their own time, and were their own evaluators of achievement, so they could see improvement in themselves without the help of the teacher.

Radio/TV News This self-learning activity required learners to listen to the news at least once a day, record the headlines, fill in a content grid in four columns 'doer', 'event', 'when' and 'where' and replay the recording to check for accurate listening and note taking (see Sarwar and Gautam 2015). This activity was useful for them to get more exposure to listening to local (English news in the FM radio stations) and global (CNN, BBC) English, as the majority of learners in Nepal have few opportunities to listen to any real-world English in their daily routines. This activity helped learners to overcome their fright about how to cope with a foreign accent particularly, in a supportive environment.

The Profile Card This activity allowed the learners an opportunity to express themselves freely as their four-page book-like profile cards provided them with an opportunity to introduce themselves to their peers and the teacher, which helped the large class to 'gel' together (see Sarwar and Gautam 2015). It also created the much-needed rapport in class, which brought a humane element to the class. This activity was also instrumental in making them feel that they could produce something in the English language on their own. It acted as a great warm-up for the course.

Cinquain Adding to the above three activities from Sarwar's programme, Ganga introduced the five-line poem known as cinquain (see Sarwar and Gautam 2015). This became a very popular activity to bring further motivation in their learning. Learners were asked to write a five-line poem in a format using the allocated grammar items in each line such as noun, adjective, gerund and using these in a phrase. When Ganga introduced the cinquain activity in Nepal, the immediate response of learners with limited proficiency was very negative. They said that writing poetry requires a special ability and a literary mind. However, after the cinquain was introduced in class with an example, in no time this activity became very popular among all the learners. Many of them started to bring cinquain to class every day. Reciting them in class to their peers helped them overcome the fright of speaking English. At the beginning, they followed the strict guidelines to create a cinquain, but at the later stages, they improvised the format and created their own version of the given template for a cinquain. The purpose of the activity in any case was to foster learner-generated language. The learners also felt more confident in reciting what they themselves had written, thus meeting their need to improve their speaking skills.

Free Writing Students in Nepal do not have opportunities to write freely in their English class. Often teachers give the essay topic(s) to the students and students struggle in writing these compositions. 'Free writing', in this context, gradually opened new horizons for the learners, and they started developing confidence in writing in English. Learners were asked to choose a topic, and they write whatever they wanted to write about it, in the first five minutes of the class (see Sarwar and Gautam 2015). They could write how they were feeling that day, or a quarrel they had with someone, or something they saw as they were coming to class. The important point was that it was not to be submitted to or corrected by the teacher. Thus learners wrote for a real audience because the writing was then utilized as a 'pair and share' activity for

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oral interaction. Two and a half minutes each were allotted to tell each other about what they wrote, but without reading from their written script. It provided them a supportive way of practising speaking in a genuine 'information gap' context, in an uninhibited and meaningful way. Having written something, it became easier for the learners to talk about it and share it with a partner. Since their writing would not be judged by anyone, they felt more comfortable in expressing themselves. So, 'free writing' provided the learners with five minutes of daily practice in spoken interaction, irrespective of the size of their class, and helped in building up their self-confidence and self-esteem as users of English. This activity was very popular among the learners, giving their pens a powerful 'voice', without resorting to rote learning. It minimized their fear of writing, since teacher correction was not involved. Another advantage was that it brought a kind of order to the large class, giving learners responsibility to begin writing on their own, as soon as they entered the class. So the class was quietly busy while the teacher (Gautam) utilized the time to call the register.

In short, engaging in these in-class activities, the learners used language meaningfully to express themselves. All they needed was the inspiration from the teacher and the confidence that they can do it. There was a lot of discussion among the learners about the Cinquaines they wrote and these poems provided authentic contexts to use the language in class. Similarly the free writing activity leading to pair and share is similar to Kuchah's use of acrostics in a large class in Cameroon (Kuchah and Smith 2011). These were genuine information gap activities when the learners talked and shared with each other, taking in each other's work.

Group Projects

In addition to the individual activities, there were a couple of group projects that the students were motivated to do during the course. Once the learners were familiar with one another and they developed a good bond, Gautam asked them to talk about some group activities that they could carry out during the course. Based on the experience of Pakistan and the local context in Nepal, Nepali learners were asked to carry out two group projects:

Writing a Book, a Newspaper or a Story Students formed groups of five or six, brainstormed the options of the outcome they wanted to produce, discussed the types of material they needed to complete the group project and

agreed on the roles for each member. They would then meet usually after three or four days and shared their progress. Through these projects, they practiced the language of instruction, description and/or narration. Learners produced small booklets on key local issues such as brick factory and its impact on the community, air pollution and its causes and environmental awareness. Some groups also prepared the brochures of their schools and colleges.

Language Club: Catering for Learners' Needs About Their Desire to Learn to Speak In addition to the writing activities mentioned above, the students agreed to form language clubs to meet for about half an hour every alternate day either in school or in a community space to talk in English. They were to make groups of four choosing their own group members and meet as and when convenient. This was a huge step for learners to make their own groups and make an effort to speak in English to each other without the presence of a teacher. In the meeting, in the first stage, each member of the group was expected to share what s/he did in the last two days, and other members would respond either by asking questions or sharing their observations. At the next stage, each of them selected a news item from a magazine or a newspaper and shared the main points from it with each other without reading what they had written. Finally, they gathered topics for discussion on slips of paper. Each member was to pick up one slip and say a few sentences about the topic. This was the best test of their abilities to be able to speak extempore on a topic. In this out-of-the-class activity, the teacher was a facilitator in the true sense of the word, except for guiding them to move from one stage to another to practice their spoken English. They seemed excited to become less inhibited and more fluent than they had been before the course began becoming aware of the power of self-learning and peer support.

The group tasks engaged the students in a series of discussion and interaction activities on the topics they chose. While working in groups, a lot of collective decision-making was required in harnessing their social as well as study skills which would be valuable for them in the future. Group negotiation also gave them better interpersonal skills. These activities were done by the learners in different settings. So in order to help them with the procedures in carrying out these activities, a guidebook was prepared and distributed to the learners during the orientation at the beginning of the course. The guidebook provided them with step-by-step procedures for each of the activities in the course (Sarwar and Gautam 2015).

Additional In-class Activities in Nepal

The whole purpose of the course was to make learners autonomous, nurturing hope in them to continue learning English even without a teacher and discover their pathways to continuous development. During the implementation of the activities used in Pakistan, Gautam realized that learners needed to use the face-to-face meetings in order to provide them opportunities to share their experience and boost their confidence by endorsing their accomplishment, besides teaching them reading and writing skills. Though they were making good progress in the given activities, they wanted some form of guidance during the course particularly in the areas of accuracy and confidence building. Perhaps this is due to the Nepali culture where the learners are 'conditioned by values of collectivism, conformity and respect for authority inculcated through early experiences at school and in the family' (Benson et al. 2003). Thus, in addition to the self-learning activities described above, the programme in Nepal, unlike the programme in Pakistan, also focused on helping learners to reflect and evaluate their progress and aim towards accuracy.

Reflective Session

In each face-to-face tutorial, Gautam allocated time for a reflective session in which learners were encouraged to share their learning experiences and their observations of learning English through the various activities mentioned above. This sharing was useful to learn about their progress and provide necessary support in the areas in which they were facing challenges. During this session, they could ask questions if they had issues with the assigned tasks, and there was a lot of peer learning while sharing their experiences. Gautam also checked their individual activities to make sure that they were on the right track.

Reading Activities

Upon the request of the learners, Gautam also engaged them in simple reading activities with a focus on micro-reading skills, that is, skimming, scanning and vocabulary exercises. Many of them said that reading is very difficult for them and they did not have a reading habit at all. In their regular English class, the teacher would explain the text in Nepali language and students would just listen as passive audience. So they asked Gautam to give them some simple reading exercises from texts outside their textbook. Gautam

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selected some reading texts from simplified readers and designed some reading activities with a focus on different micro-reading skills. The reading session would often begin by a skimming activity in which the learners were asked either to create a title of the reading text or share what the text was about. As most of them could easily do this, their confidence would increase and they were motivated to do further exercises. So, Gautam presented the series of reading activities starting from very simple to a little more challenging ones, which required identifying text types, inferencing, prediction and guessing meanings in context. Initially, they were not sure if they could read and understand texts, which was not 'taught' by the teacher, but gradually they found the reading activities interesting and seemed to realize that reading could be fun. As they found reading an interesting exercise, the learners were later given stories to practice and role play in class. Thus learners were slowly weaned off from teacher having to explain texts as is traditionally done. They moved towards the realization that using different strategies, they would be able to understand different kinds of text types on their own, to become autonomous learners.

Due to constraints of space, only the most salient activities from the programme have been described in this chapter. There were many other class activities which made the course an exciting journey for learners who wanted to become proficient users of English. Just to name a few, these are jazz chants to teach them contractions and rhythm, songs for enjoyment and listening practice, role play for confidence building, creativity and fun and two-minute extempore speech by different groups to support their language club activity.

Celebration of Learning

At the end of the course, there was a celebration of their learning on the final day, which really brought out their collaborative learning style, their pride and confidence in what they had learnt in 50 hours. It was an opportunity for learners to 'show off' their English and became a part of their living and thinking as they were involved in planning the final day 'show'. During the end-of-course event, they drafted invitation cards for the principal, teaching faculty and different sections of learners to include 'a wider audience'. The event was organized by dividing responsibilities between different groups, starting from setting the date, venue and time to sending out invitations. They displayed their profile cards and the books they had made in groups, as well as the 'log' of their everyday self-created cloze, radio TV news and free writing folders. Stories and songs were performed. They nominated a 'spokesperson' to talk

about their learning. The final day preparation further enhanced language skills and boosted their confidence. All enrolled learners were jubilant to get a certificate of participation to the English learning programme. This feeling of having 'achieved' something further built the learners' self-confidence and self-esteem contributing to learner autonomy in true sense.

The impact of the course was assessed using information from multiple sources. The students' English language proficiency was assessed through their pre-/post-test scores; learners' responses were also collected in writing in the middle and end of the course. This revealed, as will be discussed in the next section, that for these learners, English seemed to have stepped out of their textbooks and become a meaningful tool of communication.

Key Learnings from the Intervention in Nepal

Improved English Language Proficiency

In order to compare the English language proficiency before and after the course, a test was developed by the authors. The test was a combination of simple grammar exercises, oral interview and a writing activity. Combining all these elements into a total score of 50, overall bands were developed to classify learners' levels into six arbitrary categories, namely, elementary (1–9 marks), post-elementary (10–20 marks), lower intermediate (21–30 marks), intermediate (31–38 marks), upper intermediate (39–44 marks) and advanced (44–50 marks).

In the pre-test, 97% of learners fell within the elementary and post-elementary levels, but this number dropped to 20% in the post-test. On the other hand, the percentage of students at lower intermediate level rose from 3% in the pre-test to 45% in the post-test. There were also significant improvements at the upper levels of the scale with 20% of students ranging between intermediate and advanced levels in the post-test where there were no students in this level in the pre-test.

Motivation Is a Key Factor Towards Learner Autonomy

During the course, learners were motivated to continue their efforts to learn English by having opportunities to choose both the contents and process. This contributed towards developing their motivation and helped them assume responsibility for their learning. The free writing activity, for example,

motivated even the shy learners to write something in English. For example, a student said, 'I enjoy free writing activity the most because in this, we can write whatever we want to write and it is easy to write what we want'. This shows that learners are motivated to write if they can choose what to write about. Even the learners who could not write even a few sentences at the beginning of the course were able to produce long paragraphs in five or six minutes towards the end of the course. Later most learners realized that free writing could also help them in their examination as evident in this comment by another learner: 'In this course I learned many things about writing. I learned how to write and what to pick-up to write and it was useful for my exam writing. So I enjoyed it a lot and I will do it in the future as well'.

When learners see even a small improvement in their efforts, they feel encouraged. Building on their successes and providing guidance for the next step is, therefore, necessary in the kind of learning situation where learners generally find learning of English very difficult. Profile card was another simple activity with minimal writing, but it was instrumental in boosting the motivation of the learners, particularly the weaker ones. 'I enjoyed making profile card most because it projected our self-image and self-introduction', said a Nepalese learner. The profile card provided them an authentic context to work with the language at their own level. When they presented the profile cards to the teacher and received a lot of appreciation both from their teachers and peers, there was a sense of accomplishment. They felt that they could produce something in English and were motivated to write for other tasks.

Confidence Building Is Essential to Autonomy Development

Giving learners the feeling of ease and presenting English in a manageable manner through a series of 'doable' tasks and activities helped learners learn better by building their confidence. Oxford (2017) suggests that teachers should cultivate hope, optimism and resilience among learners because these play a real and active role in the lives of language learners. The course did just that by demystifying English language learning for the learners. To quote another Nepalese learner, 'The class is so interesting class, we learn from simple way but big big thing. We can talk with other people in simple way. I learned that English is not difficult'.

Language learning in 'authentic' settings such as those provided the course gives the learners a reason to communicate, thereby increasing their readiness to engage in 'outside the class' language learning activities.

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This is illustrated in a learner's description of her experience as follows:

> I am very happy to be a PBL student because I gained a lot of experience and confidence in this class. In the beginning, I couldn't write and speak anything in English but now I can speak confidently and write a little bit in English. PBL should be introduced in our regular class. This will help my other friends who cannot speak and write in English.

Teacher's Support Facilitates the Development of Learner Autonomy

When learners see improvement in their efforts, they feel encouraged. Building on their success and guiding for the next step is, therefore, necessary in this kind of learning situation. Regular guidance, ongoing follow-up along with face-to-face tutorials provided support to the learners to learn and helped them to gradually become independent and take charge of their learning. Selection of the news headlines, decisions about the topic for free writing, choosing the final project and extempore speech on the topic of their choice were the activities that contributed towards making them independent learners as they realized the importance of their own proactive role in learning. A learner shared, 'All activities in the course were useful because we improved our English day-by-day without feeling it too difficult. We realized that in the PBL class we should be more active to improve our English. We will be active in the future too'.

Additional activities, as used in Nepal, was an initiative that involved both 'in-class' and 'out-of-class activities' which, although not entirely based on the prescribed curriculum, catered for learners' expressed needs to learn English which they wanted to use in their everyday life. It provided a successful learning experience in terms of developing learners' proficiency in English and building their self-confidence for further learning. Both the Nepal and Pakistan experiences indicate that learners have immense potential and they can learn if a little support is given to them by creating a positive learning environment. Thus, such an integrated language learning experience could be an effective way of empowering English language learners in contexts with large classes taught in under-resourced classrooms.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Nepal's successful 50-hour course with 47 learners shows that learners can learn English even in difficult circumstances and under-resourced settings, if they are empowered with self-learning strategies. They can discover pathways

to become autonomous and can hope to continue learning on their own to go beyond a language learning programme. Empowerment evolves organically as the teacher trusts the learners and engages them in a series of simple interactive activities which relate to their learning environment and keep their language level and learning needs in view.

Based on the observations of the language programme in Nepal, the following recommendations are made for teachers who wish to use similar course in varied settings characterized by difficult circumstances, particularly limited resources for learning English:

1. Trust that the learners can learn English on their own, given that there is proper guidance from the teacher in terms of finding appropriate material and engaging learners in meaningful tasks.
2. Make learners aware of their important role, because it is they who need to learn the language and the teacher is just there to support them in the learning process. This awareness, if generated, will help make the learners responsible for their own learning.
3. Be prepared to hand over the responsibility for learning to the learners. This requires a change in the attitude of the teachers. Teachers often think that if they give more power to the learners, the class might go out of control and they might lose their respect. In fact, the opposite is true. The more power a teacher gives to the learners, the more respect they gain!
4. Make sure to provide a positive learning environment, giving them ways to see that there is hope of gaining their goal to become proficient users of English, through self-learning strategies.
5. Make an effort to stimulate the intrinsic motivation of the learners through using simple, doable and fun tasks and activities. Once the learners are motivated, they will find different ways of learning and teachers can just guide them as and when required.
6. Teachers looking for exciting and effective ways of teaching could look into possibilities of networking with colleagues from their own settings or collaboration with countries faced with similar teaching issues, which can be a great source of continuous professional development and learning. There is a need to share local pedagogic practices systematically among teachers of similar contexts as a way of generating and disseminating contextually appropriate ELT practices.

No doubt teaching in difficult circumstances is extremely challenging, but it can become rewarding if teachers begin to look for out-of-the-box solutions, taking their learners along with them to explore new ways of learning

and be fellow travellers in their language learning journey. Collaboration and sharing of pedagogy with colleagues from similar settings also opens new horizons for teachers of resource-poor environments.

Engagement Priorities

This chapter suggests that teachers who are working under resource constraints and teaching large classes can also play a pivotal role in effective learning of English if they encourage and train students to take charge and become responsible for their own learning. We have demonstrated how an English language programme with its set of 'doable' activities can help build students' language proficiency in English, as well as make their learning of English a positive experience.

- Think of some of the challenges which you face in your day-to-day teaching in your (under-resourced and/or large) classes, and then consider the activities introduced in this chapter. Can you think of some other activities that might be used in your context to address the problems of large classes and limited resources in your context?
- The authors suggest that nurturing EFL learners' self-confidence and self-esteem is very important particularly when they are learning English in difficult circumstances. Do you agree with this position? Why/why not?
- In many low-resourced contexts, the language teacher tends to be the only source of input for learners. This might lead to teacher-centred approaches and/or teacher dependence on the part of students. The chapter suggests some ways to handover 'power' to the students to enable them to take more responsibility for their own learning. Do you think it would be possible for you to use these or similar activities to develop learner autonomy? What challenges do you foresee, if any? How would you begin to address them?

Recommended Texts

1) Hall, D. R., & Hewings, A. (2000). *Innovation in English language teaching*. London: Macquarie University and The Open University. This book has a number of chapters which deal with innovative practices in different aspects of curriculum and syllabus design and evaluation around the world.
2) Scharle, A., & Szabo, A. (2010). *Learner autonomy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. This book presents some practical ideas for teachers to create learner-centred tasks and activities that promote learner autonomy.

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3) Fragoulis, I., & Tsiplakides, I. (2009). Project-based learning in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Greek primary schools: From theory to practice. *English Language Teaching, 2*(3), 113–119. This article deals with implementing project work in the teaching of English as a foreign language with younger learners and explores both the theoretical foundations for project-based learning and their application, challenges and benefits in the young learner classroom.

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6

Using Mobile to Create Low-Cost, High-Quality Language Learning Opportunities: Lessons from India and Bangladesh

Alexandra Tyers and Amy Lightfoot

Introduction

The use of mobile devices as facilitators for learning has grown significantly in recent years, particularly in English language classrooms in private language schools and as a medium for self-access learning in the developed world. The level of interest is not surprising given the wide range of functions that mobile phones perform which can be exploited for language learning purposes: cameras, photo albums, calendars, note-taking functions and voice recorders, not to mention the thousands of apps that students and teachers can download.

This growth in interest has been supported by a surge in articles, books and other resources to help teachers integrate the technology into their classrooms (e.g. Hockly and Dudeney 2014; Kukulska-Hulme et al. 2015). In developed world contexts, mobile content is largely used as an additional resource, as learners also generally have access to quality face-to-face language teaching, in school or in private language institutions. The situation in most developing countries, including India and Bangladesh, is markedly different. The majority of young people in these two countries have relatively little access to quality and affordable face-to-face English language education.

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Studies including the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) in India indicate overall levels of learning well below expected grade level standards (2015), with researchers pointing to a variety of responsible factors including low teacher attendance (Kingdon 2007), lack of access to quality teacher training (Kidwai et al. 2013) and assessment systems that encourage rote learning and a lack of focus on productive skills (Drèze and Sen 2002).The use of technology in everyday lessons is minimal in the state sector, despite considerable government investment in infrastructure in both India and Bangladesh. This lack of integration of ICT can be attributed again to several factors, including a lack of maintenance of equipment, low levels of teachers' own digital literacy, confidence and training and a lack of quality, contextualised resources using appropriate digital platforms (British Council 2015).

Situated within this context, there is increasing recognition of the importance of the English language as a skill for employability. Recent studies have shown that proficiency in English can increase individual income by more than 30% (Aslam et al. 2010; Azam et al. 2013). According to the 2015 ASER report, demand for English is reported to be driving parents to move their children from state schools to the low-cost private sector, although the quality of educational provision within these schools is debatable (Lewin 2011; Tooley et al. 2007).

Use of mobile phones as a highly prevalent, low-cost vehicle for allowing people to directly access information and training has been employed across several sectors including health, agriculture and education. It has been shown to successfully create opportunities for learning and knowledge transfer where previously none or only limited options existed (Keegan 2005; Ally 2014). The use of mobile as a channel for improving English language skills in particular is a new but growing field, especially in South Asia, with an increasingly wide range of products available for aspiring learners. However, these are of varying quality, and there is a lack of concrete evidence to demonstrate the level of learning that can be achieved via content delivered through this medium.

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the issues and considerations involved in designing, implementing and measuring mobile English language learning, using a project undertaken by the British Council in South Asia as an illustrative case study. The chapter begins with a brief summary of the context and other English language m-learning projects in South Asia, which the authors drew from in the design of their own intervention. It then describes the two-phase process that the British Council team undertook to develop appropriate m-learning content to enable young people in India and Bangladesh to develop their English proficiency, with a specific focus on the

language needed for improving employability prospects. Finally, we attempt to analyse the experience in order to examine the challenges and make recommendations for future initiatives. It is hoped that the lessons learned from the British Council experience will be of use to individuals working to implement similar programmes in comparable developing world contexts.

Background

Context for Mobile Learning in South Asia

The ubiquity of mobile phones around the world is well documented: the number of mobile phone subscriptions worldwide is over 7 billion (International Telecommunications Union 2015). While growth in subscription numbers is decreasing, suggesting that the saturation point has nearly been reached, mobile-broadband subscriptions and the use of mobile devices to access the internet continue to rise. This pattern of penetration and use is mirrored in developing countries, including India and Bangladesh.

Recent figures released by Groupe Speciale Mobile Association (GSMA) indicate that there are 468 million and 67 million unique subscribers in India and Bangladesh, respectively, representing a significant proportion of the total adult population for each country. Mobile penetration is 71% in India and 40% in Bangladesh, with huge growth projected in Bangladesh in particular over the next few years (GSMA Intelligence 2015a, b). Importantly, the use of mobile devices as the primary channel for access to the internet is increasing in both countries, and this trend is set to continue as countries across the region and around the world invest in more widespread 3G networks and the introduction of 4G as a standard offer (International Telecommunications Union 2015).

There has been widespread discussion about the possibilities for education that mobile technologies present in developing countries as repositories of content (e.g. via pre-loaded SD cards) and through the access they can provide to information held either online, for those with internet-enabled phones, or using voice or SMS technology. The number of conferences relating to m-learning continues to grow each year (including UNESCO's annual Mobile Learning Week), and several international peer-reviewed journals have emerged in the last decade, dedicated to the subject (e.g. the International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning). As Traxler and Vosloo (2014: 14) explain:

> Mobile learning helps reach marginalised populations and improve education systems; it provides opportunities to expand educational access in ways not possible before and it supports instruction, administration and professional development. Learners and teachers from Mozambique to Mongolia are using mobile devices to access educational content, converse and share information with other learners, elicit support from peers and instructors and facilitate productive communication.

Several projects across South Asia have explored the use of mobile to assist with language learning, both as a tool for use by the teacher and as a direct learning aid for students. For example, the ongoing English in Action initiative in Bangladesh, described more fully in Chap. 11 of this volume, harnesses mobile technology for teacher training.

Other projects utilising mobile devices to further language education in South Asia include the MILLEE (Mobile and Immersive Learning for Literacy in Emerging Economies) project implemented in India, led by a team based at Carnegie Mellon University in the USA. This project explored the potential for raising rural learners' English language literacy levels through self-access mobile-based games (Kam et al. 2009). In Gujarat, India, the Mobigam project was a joint initiative between researchers at HM Patel University and the University of Leeds, UK. This project aimed to examine patterns of use in mobile language learning and assess its effectiveness as a tool for promoting digital inclusion (Simpson et al. 2013).

Running parallel to funded development projects, a significant number of private providers of mobile-based language learning content have emerged in India and Bangladesh, pushing out content of varying quality through app stores and as value-added services (VAS) in partnership with mobile operators. The demand for mobile-based English language learning products in South Asia is reported to be extremely high. Ambient Insight (2014: 10) reports that 'mobile language learning products in the form of education apps and Mobile Learning VAS subscriptions are now the top selling types of digital English language learning products in Asia, followed by live online tutoring and self-paced courseware.'

Evidence for the Efficacy of Mobile Learning

There is a small, but growing body of, evidence to show that learning by mobile devices can have positive results, although there is still a clear need for further research in this area (Lightfoot 2012). The efficacy of self-access con-

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tent delivered by mobile is particularly difficult to evaluate, given the variety of factors that surround its usage. For example, environments where users access content can vary and technical problems can affect what could otherwise be more impactful learning. Controlling for these factors while measuring learning, arguably, creates an artificial learning environment.

However, Oberg and Daniels (2013) have shown encouraging findings when comparing students who self-pace their study through content on mobile devices compared to matched groups using more traditional means (i.e. face-to-face lessons). Similarly, Cotter and Rahman (2014) reported that users of mobile content in the BBC Janala project in Bangladesh demonstrated increased knowledge of language content and that they valued the self-access nature of the medium. Further evidence (Aker et al. 2012; Valk et al. 2010; Burston 2015) indicates that mobile-based learning has potential for users to achieve meaningful learning outcomes. However, as a relatively nascent medium of delivery, there is clearly a need for further experimentation to explore how best to harness the ubiquity of mobile devices as a tool to provide quality language education where it might otherwise not be available, ultimately leading to greater employment and life opportunities.

The Jobseekers Project

In 2011, British Council India began exploring the potential of digital platforms, including mobile, to improve access to English language learning across the country and with the intention of sharing content with other countries in the South Asia region, including Bangladesh. At the same time, British Council Bangladesh was also exploring digital ELT opportunities, based on clear opportunities that the BBC Janala project had shown, as well as a shift in government policy that focused more heavily on ICT for education.

These explorations resulted in the development of several products, using mobile, online and offline digital platforms (e.g. content loaded onto DVD and SD cards). The first of these, Jobseekers, presents a particularly interesting case study in terms of our learning around developing and rolling out content for the use on mobile phones. We will describe two important phases of the project which were implemented initially in response to our research (Phase 1) and later as a result of the knowledge and insights gained from our experience in and evaluation of the first phase (Phase 2).

Jobseekers: Phase 1—Initial Development

Establishing Key Guiding Principles

Based on our initial desk research within the Indian and Bangladeshi mobile markets and learning identified from other similar projects (including BBC Janala), we identified some key guiding principles for reaching Bangladeshi and Indian learners in challenging circumstances that underpinned the design of the mobile learning service:

1. **English and education levels were low, and barriers to access were high:** a typical user from our identified target group was young (aged 18 to 35) and wanted to learn English to either get a job or to get a better job. They tended to have low levels of English (higher A1 or low A2 level on the CEFR scale) but also had a strong desire or aspiration to learn, and willingness to spend both money and time on additional education if it was perceived as affordable, accessible and useful. They were unlikely to have access to quality face-to-face learning opportunities, either because of geographical or financial barriers—meaning that they were more likely to come from more rural areas outside the major cities, where access to quality English learning opportunities are typically much lower. They were likely to have attended up to secondary school or beyond, and have learned some minimal English in school, and were literate in both their mother tongue and English, although they would have low levels of confidence in their English ability. Therefore, any course that we developed would need to be of an A1 or A2 level, linked to English for employment. The user journey needed to be as simple as possible to allow for lower levels of learner confidence, as well as potentially negative experiences of learning in their formal experiences of education.
2. **Desire to learn English was high**: there was a clear demand to learn English amongst this target group, particularly as it was linked with higher-status (and higher-income) employment opportunities. In both India and Bangladesh, English is widely viewed as a key functional language within the country, rather than as a foreign language (Graddol 2010; English in Action 2009). In India, it is an associate official language. People view English as serving a key role within the country, not just as a link language to the outside world. Perceptions of economic gain are widespread and supported by research-based evidence (Aslam et al. 2010; Azam et al. 2013; Erling 2014).

3. **Pedagogy needed to be traditional and familiar, yet engaging and bite-sized**: learner preferences were quite traditional—because of previous experiences of formal education, perceptions of what learning English entails meant that there was a need for a structured approach with emphasis on grammar and vocabulary. At the same time, because of the age of the learners, the fact that any course would be self-directed and that users needed to be engaged, there was also a strong preference for enjoyable learning. Any resource we would develop needed to be both educational and entertaining, where users would learn, but also be engaged and interested in what was happening and motivated to continue. We had observed from feedback on BBC Janala's early courses that a large number of users may sign up initially, but then a large proportion of those users would dropout after a few lessons and not complete the full course unless they were not only engaged but also felt that they are learning and could see clear progress (Cotter and Ashraf 2012). Each individual lesson also needed to be relatively short—five minutes at the most, as any shorter and users felt that they would not be getting enough input, but any longer and users found it difficult to concentrate. Coupled with the fact that the experience from BBC Janala indicated a strong preference for local themes and topics, it was clear that content needed to be contextualised and relevant. Any course developed needed to be set in the South Asian context, with relatable characters and storylines.

Identifying Technology Partners

The expertise of the British Council team primarily lays in content development, and it was clear that in order to successfully engage with mobile delivery, we would need the assistance of technology partners. We partnered with a company in India who had been creating short animated videos for English language learning made available on subscribers' phones using Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS), a rich content version of a text message.

Content Development

The Jobseekers resource was developed as a storyline with the target language presented through short dialogues. Four young characters have just finished their studies and are looking for jobs. An older guide (or teacher) offers them, and the users, advice. The story follows the characters as they search for, apply

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Table 6.1 Jobseekers syllabus overview

Unit	Content focus
1	Thinking about the job you want and considering skills and qualifications
2	Thinking about your achievements, outside interests and selling yourself
3	Writing a CV and choosing referees
4	Looking for job ads, filling in application forms and asking for more information
5	Alternative approaches to finding employment: cold calling and walk ins
6	Writing a letter of application
7	Building confidence
8	Answering difficult interview questions
9	Beginning the interview, questions for the interviewers and presenting yourself appropriately
10	Practising interview questions with the Jobseekers
11	Accepting/rejecting offers and dealing with rejection
12	Negotiating terms (e.g. start date, compensation, etc.)
13	Preparing to begin work

for, and eventually get their dream jobs. These characters were designed to be recognisable to the target audience, discussing their needs and learning in familiar situations and contexts.

Jobseekers aimed to help young adults with limited opportunities to develop their English language proficiency (focusing on vocabulary, listening and pronunciation) along with the skills and knowledge needed in their pursuit of employment. An overview of the focus of the units is described in Table 6.1.

Associated language input was mapped out for each of the soft skill areas. This largely matches the process undertaken in the development of a topic-based syllabus for print (or online) material. However, a distinct difference with content developed for mobile lies in the brevity of the 'chunks' of input that a user requires (Pegrum 2014). Using a storyline with short dialogues, building in the language allowed us to present the language concisely, but contextualised to aid comprehension. We also needed to consider the self-access nature of the resource and the restrictions around interactivity of the accompanying exercises. Alongside the principles that we had identified for this particular project, we were also mindful of the key principles for m-learning that have been defined by specialists within the field (for details, see Kukulska-Hulme and Traxler 2013).

A total of 91 short animated videos were created, with built-in assessment at the end of each unit using on-screen quiz questions. The resource was very well received during user testing with representatives of the target audience, probably because it was fun and engaging, and followed a pedagogically sound syllabus.

Challenges

Roll-out using the Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) to deliver the videos to users proved to be problematic for a variety of reasons, including securing necessary partnerships with mobile operators and in terms of the technology involved. The decision was therefore made that the developed content would work more easily as an app, bypassing the need to work with mobile operators. Although a departure from our original plan, this has proved successful from an engagement point of view, with more than 20,000 users of the product via the Google Play Store, 93 reviews and an average rating of 4 stars (November 2015).[1] However, despite these promising figures, it became clear that we would need to expand the content to offer it on more accessible mobile platforms in addition to the app, in order to reach more people.

Jobseekers: Phase 2—Expanding the Platform

The majority of users in Phase 1 were from our target age group; however it became clear that we could do more to reach rural, disadvantaged youth, offering them unique and high-quality English language learning opportunities through mobile. The content needed to be delivered on additional mobile platforms that were more immediately accessible to the target group which did not possess internet-enabled phones, despite the predictions of growth (see above).

It was clear that in order to reach rural and disadvantaged youth, the most suitable focus for our effort would be to repurpose the content onto an interactive voice response (IVR) platform. This uses the same system that is used by companies with automated telephone answering services. With IVR, users listen to short audio messages and are prompted to respond based on their needs or provide answers to questions using either their mobile phone keypad or by voice control. In an education context, using an IVR platform involves phone-based courseware which allows users to dial in and listen to a series of short lessons, following a prescribed pathway through the content. Users would be able to access IVR through a basic mobile phone, smartphone or landline.

In addition to the IVR platform, user feedback showed that learners preferred the inclusion of SMS to accompany the voice lesson, so that they could see how words were spelled and also have a written record of what they had heard. The SMS platform would interlink with the IVR product and could include summary lessons, learner tips and quizzes delivered to the user after they have listened to the IVR lesson. By combining IVR and SMS platforms

in this way, the course could appeal to a wide range of learners through both audio and written content through low-tech, accessible platforms.

Designing the IVR User Experience

As mentioned before, the user journey needed to be very simple. Users needed to be able to navigate their way through with relative ease—they would dial in through a short code, enter the course immediately, listen to the lesson, receive an SMS summary and then move to the next lesson, completing short quizzes on what they had learned at the end of each unit. When they hung up, the system would remember where they were for their next call.

We retained the same syllabus structure from the original app-based content for the IVR version of Jobseekers. In each unit, there were six lessons and an end-of-unit interactive quiz. As with the animated videos, each individual IVR lesson had two elements: a short dialogue and then a brief summary of the lessons' target language, which focused on vocabulary, key phrases or job advice. Figure 6.1 outlines the user experience of the IVR product, showing how they navigate through the different lessons and quiz elements and the interaction between the voice and SMS components.

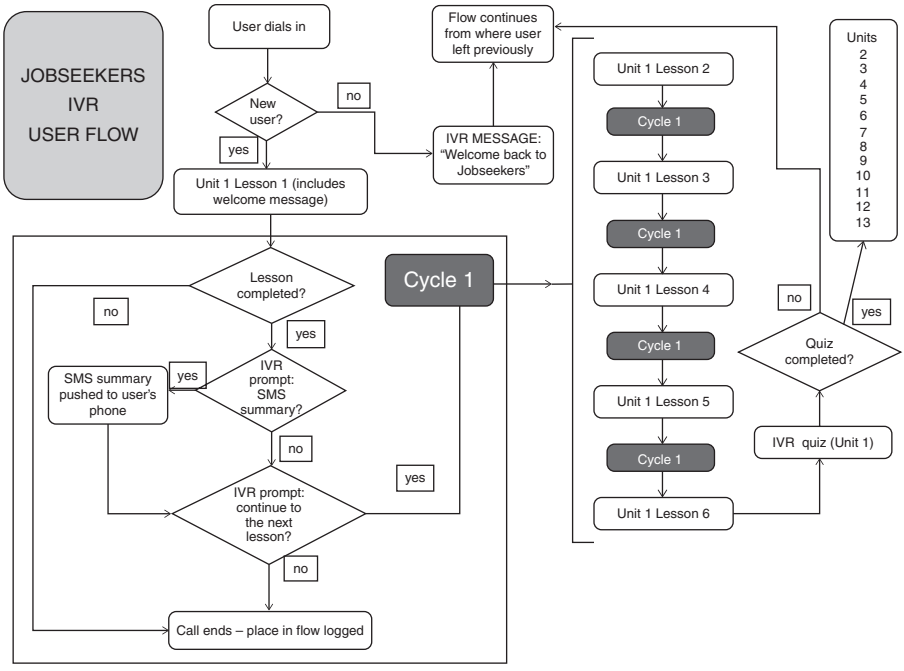

Fig. 6.1 Jobseekers IVR user flow

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Key Elements of the IVR Course

In our development of the Jobseekers IVR course, we needed to make some small adaptations to the content from Phase 1 of the project to better fit the platform and, more importantly, the needs of the users.

Use of L1 to Scaffold Learning

Converting the content from a resource that offered video as well as audio input to one which did not provide visual support offering clues to meaning was a significant but not an insurmountable challenge. To facilitate the learners, who had relatively low levels of English, as well as the short duration of the lessons and the unfamiliar method of learning, it was decided to include L1 instructions as well as translation of key words and phrases to aid comprehension. However, the L1 sections were kept separate from the English sections, so that it was very clear which language was being spoken and there was no mixing of the two within a sentence.

Presenter and Teacher Figures

One of the big issues that we needed to tackle in mobile learning in this form was the user perception of learning and what learning is. Learners in India and Bangladesh do not equate learning through fun as real, traditional learning—because of their experience of what education is, and their perception that learning only happens in a classroom, with a teacher (Tyers 2012). In order to address these perceptions, but also to help guide the learners across this unfamiliar platform, in the IVR version, we introduced a teacher figure that spoke only in L1. We wanted to introduce a figure that users could relate to and offer support and guidance in the form of an older brother or sisterly type role. This teacher figure took the role of a series presenter—guiding the learners through what they would learn in that lesson, explaining key points and offering praise and encouragement.

Local Accents and Voices

Because the target audience had not been exposed to much spoken English, and much less spoken English from native speakers, we used local voice artists from India and Bangladesh, who had local accents. This would make the

language more recognisable to learners, who often have under-developed listening skills in English and lower levels of self-confidence. Additionally, we had to be mindful of the audio nature of the content. For example, in a lesson with two female or two male voices speaking together, learners may not be able to distinguish easily between the two.

Repetition and Interactivity

One key feature that was built-in was the use of repetition. As outlined earlier, target users in India and Bangladesh did not have much experience of listening to English and much less experience of listening to English through a mobile device. We therefore added in a simple IVR prompt after each chunk of English conversation or words, where users could opt to hear again. The IVR prompt remained the same throughout the course—once users had heard it once, and were comfortable with the feature, they knew what to expect and began to anticipate it.

Certification

A distinct feature of the target audience was the equation of education with a certification. Users felt that they would not have completed the course or learned anything unless they had received a certificate of completion—and so a certificate was introduced at the end of the IVR resource. This also acted as a motivating factor for them to continue.

User Testing

In order to assess course appropriateness and user feedback, we built user testing of the products into the project plan before full roll-out, in order to identify any pain points and course correct.

The syllabus and initial content was tested in both India and Bangladesh with a small representative group of the target audience. Character names and characteristics were explored for relevance and several changes made as a result of feedback. The users responded extremely well to the storyline and were keen to know the ending of the story as only a sample of the units were tested. This was good evidence that a focus on engagement and not just language items was key.

While we did not test the users for developments in proficiency after using the resource during the user testing, we did examine whether or not they were able to recall the language items presented shortly after the interaction. This had positive results and suggested importantly that the target language was not being overshadowed by the interest in the story. It was noted, however, that this medium of language learning was very unfamiliar and only after listening to one or two of the lessons did the users seem confident to receive the information they needed in order to continue. This has implications for the roll-out of similar mobile learning products, in that we cannot necessarily expect the target audience to recognise the value of the product as they might do with a more traditional means such as a published book.

A Note on the Team and Timelines

It is important to note here that although the British Council is a large organisation, the teams and people involved in this project were relatively small. The two authors were the project leads and oversaw the whole process. We played the role of both writers and editors (editing and quality assuring each other's work), building on our ELT expertise and our experience working on BBC Janala, and worked with a Bangla and a Hindi translator, a Bangla and a Hindi copy editor, a production studio in each country for recording the audio and a technology partner in both India and Bangladesh for delivering the mobile content. We managed the user testing ourselves, developing interview scripts and working with freelance moderators to conduct the user tests. The overall timeline for Phase 2 was around six months, but this was working on it part time; it could theoretically be shortened if other people were to work on it full time.

The Role of Research: Monitoring and Evaluation

Independent Evaluation: Learning Outcomes in Bangladesh

We already knew that potential users had negative perceptions towards learning through a mobile platform and low levels of confidence in their English levels (British Council India 2011; British Council Bangladesh 2012). As described above, the evidence base on the impact of mobile learning in resource-poor contexts is still very small—there is not a lot of research on learning outcomes from mobile learning generally and particularly not in South Asia.

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Therefore, in order to measure the effectiveness of the Jobseekers IVR and SMS mobile service, and to try to add to the available evidence base, we commissioned an independent study in Bangladesh, looking at the effect of using the Jobseekers IVR and SMS mobile service on users' English proficiency and their learning outcomes as well as their motivation and confidence in their English ability. We were aware that a mobile product like Jobseekers alone was not going to make someone an expert user of the language—what we were interested in looking at was how the users perceived their own learning outcomes.

The study, conducted by a research agency based in Dhaka, used a cohort panel of male and female users of the service in two locations: rural and urban (British Council Bangladesh 2014). We created two 'matched panels'—the cohort and control panels—matched on the demographics of the respondents, as well as their English language levels using a pre-test designed by the British Council Bangladesh team.

At the beginning, all of the respondents were also asked about their confidence in their English ability and perceptions of learning English through a mobile platform using a five-point Likert scale, where five represented a very high level of confidence and a very positive perception, and one represented a very low level of confidence and a very negative perception.

The cohort panel were then given free access to the Jobseekers mobile course and asked to complete it over a number of weeks. The control panel were neither given free access nor asked to complete the course.

The research agency returned after the specified number of weeks and gave respondents a similar, English assessment, utilising a pre-/post-test methodology, as well as an end-line survey using the Likert scale, in order to measure any changes from the initial testing.

The overall, indicative results showed that the Jobseekers mobile service had potential for a positive impact on users' English proficiency. The post-testing results, in particular, showed that users from the cohort panel who accessed the Jobseekers course demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in their English proficiency, which was not seen amongst the control group. Interestingly, this increase was much more pronounced amongst the rural learners compared to the urban learners.

The study also found that there was a marked increase in confidence in English ability amongst the cohort panel that was not observed in the control panel. For example, 48% of urban learners marked themselves as four or five on the Likert scale in terms of confidence after using the lessons, compared to 25% before using—but the biggest increase was amongst rural learners, where 76% marked themselves as four or five on the Likert scale after using the lessons, compared to only 36% before.

These findings supported our long-held belief that people can learn through mobile platforms—and also underscored the potential to reach learners who have less access to learning English (in this case, rural learners) and break down barriers to learning, further justifying our expansion of the platform from an app-based resource to an IVR product. However, we also saw that users in the cohort panel tended to dropout and not listen to all of the lessons—meaning that there are still challenges around motivation and incentives to continue using the resource. There may also be an implication here for product design, in that more variety of interaction and presentation needs to be included.

The study also found that some users in both the cohort and control panels doubted the effectiveness of using the Jobseekers mobile lessons. Although users found the course engaging, likeable and accessible, they were unsure about their own learning: they didn't feel that they were learning *enough* English through the Jobseekers service without any other additional learning methods. Therefore a significant barrier is negative user perceptions of the effectiveness of using a mobile service for improving English proficiency—if users didn't feel they were learning enough English by using the service (despite evidence through independent tests that some learning is taking place), there needs to be more focus in ensuring marketing is transparent and clear about what can and cannot be achieved through a product like Jobseekers. The study unfortunately did not have a qualitative element, but it would be interesting to explore these perceptions and expectations in more detail—this could perhaps be done in a follow-up study.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The use of mobile devices for English language learning is a relatively new field. Encouraged by the demand reported by market research agencies such as Ambient Insight (2014), content creators, developers and mobile operators have scrambled to explore the multiple options for learning what the platform presents. Similarly, teachers of English around the world have begun exploring how they can integrate these resources and also the built-in functionality of mobile devices to enrich teaching and learning in their classrooms.

In terms of increasing access to quality English language content for people who otherwise have limited options, mobile learning arguably offers an unprecedented opportunity. Considerable progress has been made in exploring its potential in South Asia and similar contexts, and we hope that this record of our experience is a useful contribution to a growing evidence base for what can work and what probably does not.

However, there remain a number of areas where our experience showed that further research and experimentation is needed. Firstly, we found that a lack of interactivity within an IVR/SMS platform can be discouraging for users, and as described above, this was a key reason for a reduction in usage by subscribers over time. Feedback showed that users wanted a chance to speak English, and hear themselves speaking English—as this is something that is rarely taught in schools in South Asia but is of utmost importance to learners. In newer IVR resources, we have experimented with building in interactive components into some of the lessons, where users record their own voice as part of a dialogue introduced in a conversation in an earlier lesson in the unit. They then hear their own version in comparison to the model. Roll-out and evaluation of this resource is still ongoing; while there have been some challenges with the technical programming for this interactive element, feedback from the user testing and initial reporting from projects using the resource have been extremely positive. Additional experimentation with more communicative or interactive learning via low-cost mobile devices is needed to satisfy a clear demand in South Asia and most likely in similar contexts further afield.

A second area requiring further development relates to evaluation. Because of the nature of mobile learning, evaluation of the Jobseekers IVR resource has been limited to the use of a cohort group who were specifically instructed to engage with the course. This has provided useful information and proves the concept and content works if the users engage with it in the way it is intended. Nevertheless, the conditions are somewhat artificial, and we are cautious to make claims that all the users who have subscribed to the service are achieving the intended language learning outcomes. We are continuing to explore additional ways that we can track and evaluate learning and engagement by regular users.

Thirdly, working in the mobile and any digital space requires partnerships and collaboration with technology providers and, usually in the case of IVR and SMS-based content, mobile operators. Our experience has shown that while mobile operators in India and Bangladesh see the business case in mobile learning products such as these, a lot of time and effort needs to be put into negotiating these partnerships, as well as negotiating pricing models and marketing and promotion plans—particularly those which are appropriate for reaching individuals who have limited access to quality education opportunities. Our ongoing experience has shown that collaborations with on-the-ground NGOs with similar target audiences can be highly beneficial in terms of promoting the resource to intended users and in attracting additional funding partners.

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The fourth key learning from our initial work is the importance of providing content across platforms to enable a choice of access routes for the target audience. Jobseekers is now available as an IVR resource, accessible from any phone, as an app available on smartphones, as downloadable videos available on internet-enabled phones (not necessarily equated with smartphones) and as a desktop version for users within institutions or who have access to computers within their homes. In practical terms, this highlights the need to focus initially on content and syllabus rather than allowing resource development to be led by the technology. There is perhaps a need for a more well-defined and widely used pedagogy specifically for mobile learning which is likely to be distinctive from that used for other media; however it also appears to be true that a resource with a strong underlying syllabus can be re-versioned to suit different platforms depending on the needs of the audience. A flexible, audience-led approach is key.

We have learned that it is important to be realistic about what mobile-based content can achieve. It would be unwise to suggest promoting engagement with a mobile-based resource alone will lead to English language proficiency, not least because of the issues around learner engagement and retention discussed above. Just as a learner would struggle to develop his or her proficiency just by using a course book with an audio CD, mobile resources are more likely to work best when they are used in conjunction with other content and face-to-face practice (formal or informal). For this reason, we recommend that materials developers working on content for mobile carefully consider not only *what* the users are going to experience, do and learn but *how* they will do this. How will the users *actually engage* with the resource within the wider context of their learning? How can the resource be embedded into a bigger learning journey for the individual? What guidance can be included to help the learner appreciate the options available to them? While this is perhaps more clear-cut for those learners in privileged contexts who have access to quality face-to-face language lessons and other resources, students in resource-poor environments can also be encouraged to use the mobile content as a stepping stone to further learning. This can be done by improving their confidence levels and with the inclusion of practical tips and advice which is relevant to and appropriate for their real-world experience.

Despite these words of caution, the field of mobile learning is undoubtedly an exciting one—it is constantly evolving, with ongoing innovation, product development and research related to English language learning and education more generally. South Asia and other emerging markets such as in sub-Saharan Africa offer huge potential for English learning on mobile platforms as a result of the desire to learn English coupled with the relative lack of face-to-face opportunities and the rapidly expanding number of mobile subscriptions.

We hope that the findings presented in this chapter will be of use to others working in this field in developing their own resources and to better understand the potential for this medium. However, we also hope that it will be recognised that mobile-based resources should be positioned as part of a wider toolkit of content which can be accessed by learners, alongside quality English language instruction—much as is being seen in practice in the developed world. We have shown that mobile-based content can have positive benefits for language learning and improved confidence levels in resource-poor environments, but it is not overly cautious to suggest that alone it is inadequate to help people realise their aspirations of increased proficiency in English (or indeed, any other language).

Finally, as content providers continue to innovate with making mobile learning resources as engaging and interactive as possible, this must go hand in hand with a continued focus on the development of other channels of language learning which will benefit those learning in difficult circumstances.

Engagement Priorities

Mobile learning is an exciting field to explore whether you are interested in content development or the potential for technology in general to bridge developed-developing world divides. As discussed above, there are still a number of challenges and issues with mobile learning that have yet to be overcome.

- Planning for resource development is of particular importance when technology is involved. What are the factors that need to be considered when developing new resources within a digital platform? How does this differ from the development of resources where no technology is involved?
- Technology moves fast, and there is a danger of spending considerable time, effort and money in the development of content or resources that may quickly become obsolete. Considering the ideas discussed in this chapter, how might developers best 'future proof' the content and ensure its longevity?
- Monitoring and evaluation of mobile learning resources and usage is particularly problematic. What are the reasons for this? Can you suggest any ways that information might be easily recorded from users of mobile learning resources? What might the issues be?
- Critics argue that mobile learning is a current trend that may not have a long-term future. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Does your answer change for different learning contexts?

- The chapter suggests that resources for mobile learning should ideally sit within a wider educational context which provides quality opportunities for language learning. Consider ways in which mobile learning can be used to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning in resource-poor contexts (see Chap. 11 to see another way of using mobile technology).

Recommended Texts

So, H. (2012). *Turning on mobile learning in Asia: Illustrative initiatives and policy implications*. Paris: UNESCO. Available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002162/216283E.pdf. Accessed 2 Apr 2015.

This report is one of a series of working papers commissioned and produced by UNESCO on the theme of mobile learning. This paper outlines several key m-learning projects in Asia as case studies, not all of which focus on English language learning. The author shows how these projects demonstrate and can contribute to policy guidelines in this emerging field.

Pegrum, M. (2014). *Mobile learning: Languages, literacies and cultures*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book explores how mobile can be used for both teaching and learning languages and looks at both the developed and the developing world. It contains a large number of case studies of mobile language learning across Asia, Africa and Latin America, including the Jobseekers project.

Prospects—UNESCO's quarterly review of comparative education, 44(1). Available at: http://rd.springer.com/journal/volumesAndIssues/11125. Accessed 30 Jan 2016.

This issue of the *Prospects* journal includes nine papers on the theme of mobile learning. It is an excellent starting point to better understand the breadth of potential that m-learning offers for expanding educational opportunity in developing countries. It includes a focus on m-learning for both learners and for teachers.

Vosloo, S. E. (2012). *Mobile learning and policies: Key issues to consider*. Paris: UNESCO. Available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002176/217638E.pdf. Accessed 31 Mar 2015.

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This is a practical guide for the design and implementation of m-learning projects. It is written with a wide audience in mind, from policymakers to content developers.

Notes

1. The app also received the prestigious South Asian mBillionth Award in the m-education and learning category in 2014.

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Section III

Difficult Circumstances in Non-mainstream ELT: Contexts of Confinement, Conflict and Special Needs

7

‘I Want to Make the Invisible Visible’: Teacher Motivation in Argentinian Prison Education

Darío Luis Banegas

Why a Chapter on Prison Education?

Prison education is underrepresented in education forums. Prisons are envisaged as settings with difficult circumstances for both teachers and learners. Bhatti (2010) argues that both teachers and learners feel peripheral to the dynamics of social participation. Studies originated in different settings stress inmates’ exclusion from society and formal education before incarceration (Brine 2001; García et al. 2007; Hughes 2012; Wilson and Reuss 2000). In some cases, adult and young prisoners’ trajectories are summarised through the school-to-prison pipeline concept (Raible and Irizarry 2010; Winn and Behizadeh 2011).

According to Harbour and Ebie (2011), marginalisation is one form of oppression. In Freiran terms, pedagogy needs to challenge oppression and promote social justice. Freire (1969, 1970, 1992) conceived education as a way to integrate people in the construction of a participatory and democratic nation. Integration, in Freire’s view, entails reflection, action, and the development of a critical stance. Education becomes a resource not only to help the oppressed to learn and write but to encourage them to find their own voice, their liberation. This is achieved through praxis, that is, through seeking and enacting liberation (Freire 1970). In such a scenario, Freire (1992) argued that one of the educator’s tasks is to discover with their learners the possibilities for hope.

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As a teacher of English as a foreign language in Argentina, I decided to explore English language teaching (ELT) through a focus on teacher motivation in 'difficult circumstances' with the aim of representing those colleagues working in less mainstream contexts. I approach the intersection between teacher motivation and prison education from a person-in-context, relational view of motivation (Ushioda 2009). This relational view of teacher motivation entails that we understand the benefits of prison education as these will impact on teachers' motivation.

Education in Contexts of Confinement

Prison education is not an easy enterprise. Schools in contexts of confinement in different countries operate within a larger institution, the prison, with dissimilar aims. While schools aim at empowerment, prisons aim at control.

Diseth et al. (2008) assert that prison education aims at preparing inmates for life after prison and therefore attempts to reduce recidivism. Within this perspective, Wilson and Reuss (2000) illustrate how education can change offending behaviour through the deployment of empowering pedagogies. Reports indicate that education through formal schooling and language skills development and training has the power to influence academic achievement, employment opportunities, and social involvement (Brazier et al. 2010; Faltis 2014; Hartnett et al. 2013). Behind these aims, teachers mediate between the prison and the outside world.

In contrast, García et al. (2007) describe prisons as social containers, and some prisons, as reported from Argentina (Manchado 2012), obstruct the educational process. For example, they do not offer adequate classrooms, spaces which are independent from the prison building, or teaching and learning materials (but see Batchelder and Rachal 2000). In addition, prison life interferes with delivery of lessons or learners' attendance.

Such conflicting aims and constraints raise tension. Blazich (2007) states that prisons are based on control and homogenisation and conditions of security in contrast with school aims. According to Spaulding (2011), prison educators in the USA live the tension between prison administrators' controlling aims and educators' desire to teach. The author adds that teachers sustain their motivation because they feel they matter and make a difference in the lives of their learners. Conversely, international studies on inmates' educational motives reveal that they choose education for its instrumental and development value upon release but also as an escapist solution to avoid prison work and routines (Diseth et al. 2008; Hughes 2012; Manger et al. 2010). Upon

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this last perception, Mazzini (2011) observes a paradox: while mainstream education is sometimes seen as oppressive, prison education is felt as liberating.

In Argentina, the context of this study, the current national law of education (Ley 26,206 2006) includes education in context of confinement. In addition, another law (Ley 26,695 2011) states that all inmates have the right to education and that the government must provide the necessary conditions for learners and teachers. According to Article 140 of this law, all inmates who complete secondary education will enjoy benefits such as early temporary release. The law also states that the prison institution will guarantee the appropriate infrastructure for the school and that inmates may opt for face-to-face or distance instruction. However, inmates are not allowed to have internet access as they cannot have contact with the 'outside' world through mobile phones or digital means of communication.

Teacher Motivation

Teacher motivation plays a substantial role in teaching and learning practices. I approach the field of (language) teacher motivation following Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), who see motivation as influenced by four factors:

- Intrinsic motivation or autonomous motivation emerging from the educational process itself, the subject matter, vocational goals and the common good, autonomy, relatedness, teaching efficacy (see also Lauermann and Karabenick 2013; Nitsche et al. 2014), and personal efficacy
- Social-contextual influences over which teachers have varied levels of control and management
- The temporal dimension, that is, teaching as a lifelong process (this includes career structures and promotion possibilities)
- Negative influences (e.g. stress, content repetitiveness, or little intellectual challenge) which make teacher motivation fragile.

In a similar vein, Woolfolk Hoy (2008) views teacher motivation as a complex construct influenced by teachers' context, learners' perceptions and learner motivation, teacher efficacy, and teacher citizenship realised through, for example, offering extra help and support. Nevertheless, Alexander (2008) is cautious about truisms (e.g. personal fulfilment, contribution to society at large) in the teaching profession and their influence on sustaining motivation. In her view, high altruism can prove detrimental when teachers' dreams are

not achieved. She suggests that high goals need to contain a dose of pragmatism to make teaching sustainable over time.

The ELT literature offers qualitative studies on teacher motivation among novice teachers (e.g. Kumazawa 2013) and experienced teachers with their learners (Banegas 2013) and mix-method studies with experienced teachers (Kubanyiova 2009). However, these reports are usually situated in mainstream settings, and therefore language teachers who teach in difficult circumstances such as contexts of confinement are underrepresented in the literature.

The perspectives presented above indicate that teacher motivation is a dynamic concept and that it should be approached from a view which considers the teacher as a person-in-context. Ushioda (2009: 215) calls for 'a person-in-context relational view of language motivation'. She explains that this approach entails examining motivation as 'emergent from relations between real persons, with particular social identities, and the unfolding cultural context of activity'. Although she refers to language learners, the same view could be applied to teachers if we see teaching and learning processes as interrelated and teaching as a learning career. Ushioda's call is a necessary element in the study and development of teacher education. By studying teachers as people, we also move away from teacher training (teachers as technicians) and encourage teacher education where teachers become in-context professionals.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the motivation of two ELT teachers and their practices in the context of prison education and their perceptions of their own practices. I seek to value the work of those colleagues who work under difficult circumstances in prison education and help other colleagues working in similar contexts reflect on their own motivation and teaching practices. Sometimes, the reading of other professionals' stories becomes an invitation to 'write' our stories too.

In what follows I first share the stories of Clara and Marta (pseudonyms) which I gathered through their journals and interviews. Then, I examine their motivations in terms of similarities and differences and in terms of two periods: initial motivation and sustaining motivation over time. Last, I discuss their perceptions of their teaching practices in prison education.

Clara and Marta

Over one school year, I interviewed Clara via Skype and Marta face-to-face. Both requested to receive my initial questions beforehand by email. They were close to retirement age (53) when I approached them in 2013. I contacted them via email, and later I explained my aims and what was required from

them. I was acquainted with them through our national teacher association and professional contexts.

Interviews were carried out in Spanish and audiotaped. In the interviews we talked about their personal and professional backgrounds, their trajectories in prison education, and their teaching practices as regards lesson planning, materials, and classroom management.

Additionally, I suggested keeping a teaching journal for the time they wished to record their lessons (content, activities, materials) and their own as well as their learners' feelings. Only Clara produced a teaching journal with entries written in English. She was happy to share it with me and was open for a follow-up interview based on her entries. Due to time constraints and summer holidays (December–February) by the time she sent me her notebook, I decided not to pressure her with further interviews.

Out of both participants' willingness, they shared with me samples of their learners' activities (Clara) and teacher-made materials (Marta). I valued flexibility and respect for their time and engagement over strictness in relation to the nature of the data. However, such samples were not included in my data because the learners were not aware of my project.

Below I present both Clara's and Marta's stories based on the data I gathered. I first offer a view of Clara through her teaching journal and interviews. Second, I focus on Marta's experience.

Clara's Story

Clara's Background

Clara graduated as a teacher of English in her city of birth and residence in northern Argentina. She wanted to become a veterinarian, but such a course involved moving to a different city and her family could not afford it. Therefore, she enrolled in the English language teaching course in her city. At the time of her participation she was 51 and with a teaching experience of 31 years. She had worked in private and state education at all levels, from kindergarten to teacher education. Some of the schools where she worked are located in marginalised areas. She was actively involved in her local teacher association and church and did voluntary work particularly with teenagers 'at risk'.

Clara learnt about the English teaching post in prison education when the school principal approached her by telephone. She started as a substitute teacher and then became a permanent member of staff. She has worked in this setting for six years and teaches males and females separately. It is a mixed

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prison and the school is within the prison building. At this school, learners study English for three years. The school has ten classrooms, a room with computers, and other facilities. No internet use is allowed to the learners. Learners are around 20–50 years of age. On average, Clara has between two and ten learners per lesson. She teaches English two hours per week and is in charge of two different classes, thus making a total of four hours of teaching workload.

Clara kept her teaching journal between September and October 2013. She wrote her entries in English. On some days she made the distinction between 'Ladies' and 'Boys' or 'Gentlemen' to signal the different groups of learners. Her entries kept the pattern: lesson description of contents and activities, her perception of learners' attitudes, and her own feelings.

In her narrative, Clara usually related her experience to her teaching practices and how she felt related to her students beyond the limits of a syllabus or the classroom. When Clara talked about her teaching practice, she described what she taught (e.g. grammar, vocabulary, language functions such as describing, etc.) and the activities and strategies employed. One aspect I noticed is her use of games and tasks such as creating a Facebook profile (on paper), writing an 'escort' ad (carried out with her male learners), writing a 'gossip corner' for a local magazine (with her female learners), and roleplaying where learners pretend to be a celebrity (e.g. Lionel Messi) and a famous local interviewer. She allowed them to imagine and pretend and did not censor their productions. In one entry about learners pretending to interview a celebrity, she wrote:

> This time they could ask whatever they wanted, e.g. Where do you have sex?!!! Finally they wrote paragraphs with their own 'ideal routines' and the celebs' 'dark routines'.

Clara's goal was to be a good citizen and work towards the common good. Clara envisioned prison education as an opportunity for learners to integrate into mainstream society. Along these lines, she conceptualised prison (education) through a journey metaphor:

> These lads come from very difficult contexts where the State never saw them, and sees them when along their journey they arrived at the context of confinement.

The following quotes from Clara's interviews attest to the role of prison education represented through her job as a teacher. When asked about what the school aimed at, Clara said:

> We're trying to make them become part of a society they were never part of. We're aiming at them getting to know a different world, a better world. That education can give us that world. Why do I need to go back to my cart to collect food for the pigs?

With this role in mind, education becomes liberating, a space of freedom which is achieved by teachers supporting learners and relating to them:

> To them, we're a window to the sky. We're educating, and that involves being with them.

In relation to prison education features, Clara insisted that it was similar to any school 'extramuros' (Spanish for outside the prison walls). However, similarities seemed to be in terms of organisation, the curriculum, and facilities only. At different times, she highlighted that learners in the context of confinement had a history of marginalisation and that the context of incarceration demanded inclusive and context-responsive pedagogies which responded to the learners' biographies.

Furthermore, she valued the respectful and collaborative working atmosphere between the prison staff and the school staff, the school staff among themselves, and between the school staff and the learners. On several occasions she mentioned how protected she felt in the school contrary to people's prejudices. In answer to a question about what a day is like at the school, she compared prison education to mainstream education:

> We've got a wonderful computer room. I feel protected by them (the learners). They'll be the first to defend me. They're looking forward to seeing you. There are no issues of misconduct. The teaching and learning situation is ideal.

Clara also envisioned prison education as an opportunity for professional development inside the classroom and through regular seminars and meetings. She shared with me some of the reading materials she had collected from different seminars delivered by psychologists, lawyers, and pedagogues (she was generous enough to post them to my home in southern Argentina). She also valued attending ELT conferences and reflected on the need to benefit from all types of speakers:

> I always hear complaints, people saying what's the use of this for me, I can't implement it. And I think I work in a more difficult context and nevertheless I always get something useful… that I have to adapt, of course.

Throughout the interviews, Clara maintained an optimistic and positive attitude. She only raised some concerns in relation to whether learners were aware of the role and impact of education in the context of confinement and whether education could reduce recidivism. When I asked her about what day-to-day issues worried her, she said she was concerned with learner mobility and fluctuation:

> I worry because the lessons are not so regular because some come, some go all the time, or the presence of babies in class because the ladies come with their babies.

Clara's work towards the common good permeated her teaching practices in such difficult circumstances. In response to a question about what profile teachers should have to work in prison education, she believed that passion, creativity, motivation, and commitment had to be a vital part of a teacher's attitude. However, I felt that she implied that we had to move beyond teaching and being a teacher and live our explorations as people, as citizens who had to engage with fellow citizens at critical levels of social justice. The following extracts from her interviews illustrate these aspects:

> Let's bring passion to the classrooms. If I weren't convinced that every day is a new dawn, I should stay at home.
>
> You need imagination, from the person inside you, motivation, and the willingness to do things.
>
> Working in prison education is a great challenge, but not a challenge for the teacher as such. It's a great challenge for the heart. I believe that when we learn to see life from the heart we'll have a different outlook. We're very quick to judge and see others' mistakes.

Clara later explained that she sought to explore relatedness beyond ELT by listening to her learners' stories, bringing poems they could share with their relatives, cakes to share, and keeping them in her prayers at mass. She felt that she developed motherly feelings for them. However, she sometimes felt that high levels of relatedness could become an issue:

> A small gift for a mom can bring her trouble with other girls who don't come to school, 'why did she bring something for you only'? I also listen to their sorrows and they affect me obviously because I am free, they aren't.

According to Clara's accounts, her teaching practices were characterised by autonomy to develop the syllabus, lesson plans, and materials. She indicated

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that her syllabus and lesson planning had to respond to the fluctuating learner population, their interests, 'la calle' (the street, i.e. life outside), and engaging activities. When I asked her to talk to me through her journal, she described the activities she had recorded and added that:

> I work a lot with magazines, photocopies, with what we have. We don't have a coursebook, we don't need the latest. I think that after 31 years of teaching I don't need a book, I need my brain more.

She emphasised learner motivation and felt that their motivation depended on her motivation and professionalism to develop engaging lessons:

> Everything's got to be different, attractive, that they feel that they're doing things to have a good time too. They loved the gossip corner, or playing that they're interviewing with an imaginary mic. I've got to do things that engage them. We make paper cellphones and we write messages, we then exchange. I love it when I see them with me, engaged in my lessons.

In relation to learners' motivation and her practices, I found that in one of her entries on a lesson with the 'boys', she wrote:

> We usually make use of guessing games and memory games. They are excellent at playing dominoes as they are very good observers.

However, in another entry regarding the 'ladies', she wrote:

> Ladies do not enjoy games at all because they don't want to be 'losers'. Sometimes they argue so I don't use games very often.

How she felt connected to her learners was clear from her diary. She wished to respond to their likes and needs:

> José enjoyed the class very much especially because I had brought some pastries with caramel jelly. They love this!!!
>
> We didn't work a lot because they (the ladies) wanted to talk about Mother's Day and they asked me to bring something for the celebration.

Her trying to meet their demands acted as a source of motivation. All her comments on her emotions and learners' attitudes were positive. For example, she wrote:

I felt extremely happy as they were enthusiastic with the activities. They were very interested in their performance.

It is a great pleasure to work with them. I feel satisfied with their success.

They were very happy when they 'imagined' they were interviewing Messi.

When I asked her how they treated her, she mentioned that she felt respected and loved. She insisted that the learners were tidy, proactive in class, and always made her feel welcome. Based on these perceptions, she worded her motivation to be there and to be part of my research:

You know that I promote religion (Catholicism). We don't go there for the pay check. We go because we want other things in life, we've got other challenges. It's what I want in my life. I'm very happy because in this way *I want to make the invisible visible*.

Clara seemed to be concerned with learner motivation and engagement and therefore her lessons aimed at making them enjoy the activities. At a surface level, I felt that her positive comments and her 'happiness' were derived from her learners' motivation. I will discuss the deeper level in another section below.

Marta's Story

Marta graduated as a translator of English from University of La Plata. She had aimed at studying Psychology but at the time the military government closed the School of Psychology among others. As a teenager and young adult, she taught English at a private language school. With her husband and children, they moved to a small town in southern Argentina where she taught English at the local secondary school for a number of years.

Her lived experiences in that context played a significant role in her later decision to join prison education and in achieving her aims related to social issues and to engage with people through and beyond English language teaching:

Teaching in that town was an incredible experience. You had children of all ages, the mayor's son and the gaucho's son together. You know what I found fascinating? I was embarrassed to teach English there, because you saw the country lads and thought what's the use, it was ridiculous even. But I then realised that English was the perfect excuse to bring us together, to do things, and to learn that they did need English to read the instruction manuals of engines and electronics. It was a defining experience.

Later, they moved to a different city also in southern Argentina. As an adult she studied Social Psychology. At the time of her participation, she was 53 and had worked as a translator at a research centre for 23 years.

Marta resumed teaching in 2010 when she saw a prison education post advertised in a local e-newspaper. Similarly to Clara, she started as a substitute teacher before becoming a permanent member of staff. Marta had only male learners aged 25–50. She taught two hours a week, and on average she had between five and ten learners per lesson. At her school, secondary education could be completed in three four-month modules and it was not entirely face-to-face. Learners took face-to-face lessons and then engaged in self-directed learning. The school did not have classrooms but what she called 'boxes', a room with thin partitions which could accommodate around ten people.

As a teacher in prison education, three factors played a paramount role in sustaining Marta's motivation: the school coordinator's encouraging and hands-on managing style, her colleagues, and instances of professional development. She remarked that:

> Something wonderful that happens to us is when we, people who work in contexts of confinement, get together. Last year I attended a convention and shared my experience of teaching English through drama. There's so much you learn from others, sharing, finding more about prisons, what they do and go through.

Throughout our interviews, Marta displayed different attitudes and perceptions of her job in prison education usually connected to her interest in social justice and social issues.

In relation to prison education, Marta was aware of the institution-within-institution dynamics which operate at her job and employed a journey metaphor to indicate that a prison was 'the last stop' in her learners' lives after all other state-run and church-run institutions had failed. Despite this grim definition, her attitudes and perceptions were positive and hopeful:

> Although we're a bit tight for space, there are posters, poems on the walls, good vibes. It is a school and it feels like a school. Besides, the school is a space of freedom within the context of confinement. And contrary to what many people think that it's unsafe, you feel a lot safer working here than in a school outside.

Marta also commented on her personal transformation working in this context and how her attitudes changed. For example, she adopted a new attitude towards personal freedom:

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> On the first day I felt like I'd always been there. But on the second or third day, when I left, I felt something like oxygenation and something very deep thinking- I leave, they stay. I valued freedom on a much larger scale.

In our last interview, she remarked how she had erased those features and practices that constituted a prison because her focus was on the human element:

> At the beginning they made me jump when they ran the nightstick along the bars. Then you stop seeing the bars because you care about the people. I remember that there are bars when we take a picture and we then see them at the back.

Marta was critical about her fellow citizens. She believed people were not aware of the fact that there are people living inside the local prison, located in an urbanised area.

> Does anyone think that we've got neighbours living there? We just go past and say how terrible! A prison in the middle of the town.

Throughout the interviews, Marta emphasised that she saw her learners as learners and not as inmates or criminals, words which she resented. She developed a protective and motherly attitude towards them and began to notice how they could be transformed through prison education and dialogue.

> Like mothers we worry about them, that they don't do drugs. We spend a lot of time talking. In the beginning they're distrustful, defensive, but then their look becomes softer. First they shake hands, then they kiss, and then they hug you.

However, she also admitted dual feelings when learners left the prison:

> On the one hand you're happy that they're released but you get that sensation of not being able to help them anymore. Will they get a job? Will they reoffend? Will they be happy?

Marta also commented on her learners' motivation to learn English and how this perceived motivation was another factor to sustain her own motivation:

> When I was explaining something they'd say 'right, because if we travel', and that's a positive projection that makes my soul happy. They think that perhaps they can travel. Once a learner told me that he'd never imagined he'd be speaking in English. Others say that they want to make the most of studying here because when they leave they won't study.

Last, Marta's teaching practices appeared to be shaped by her teacher autonomy to plan and deliver lessons which responded to her concerns related to high learner mobility, different prison education programmes, and limited time. She deployed a wide range of strategies which included use of drama (Marta was an amateur actress) and roleplay, translation, language awareness techniques, emphasis on oral work, and use of authentic sources such as maps. When I asked her about her self-perceived strengths, she was confident to say that her acting skills helped her at pedagogical and relational levels with her learners.

With reference to learning materials, she developed her own worksheets which she collected in a home-made Spanish-English exercise book. When I noticed her conversational tone in writing instructions and explanations in Spanish, she elaborated on this feature:

> It's like I talk to them when they complete the worksheets autonomously. They love it. And year after year I change it, I improve it.

Overall, Marta seemed to base her decision to join prison education on her interest in helping disadvantaged groups of people and experience as a teacher in a small town in southern Argentina.

Understanding Clara's and Marta's Motivations

Both Clara and Marta had a Freiran (Freire 1969, 1970, 1992) view of education, that is, education could make a difference and integrate people into society. Furthermore, they believed that education could bring hope and empowerment and develop emancipatory learners' trajectories to fight their stories of marginalisation and social injustice as discussed in Bhatti (2010). In line with Diseth et al. (2008), they saw prison education as one way of influencing their learners' lives. However, they had concerns about the extent to which this was attained and sustained after life in prison and were aware of dissonant opinions among their fellow citizens.

Both teachers referred to prisons through journey metaphors which underlined learners' biographies of neglect and oppression. However, they envisioned prison education and their own teaching roles as liberating, with their classroom as a space of freedom within the limits of confinement, and highly dialogue-based. These conceptualisations confirm Mazzini's (2011) observed paradox between oppressive mainstream education and liberating prison education.

In relation to their working contexts, Clara and Marta were aware of their schools operating within the prison as a larger institution. They actively engaged themselves in creating conducive conditions for learning and relating. In this respect, their experiences offer a more promising picture of working conditions in contrast to Manchado (2012) and did not reveal any tensions between educators' and prison administrators' aims as argued in Spaulding (2011). On the contrary, the prison education environment was perceived as more supportive and safer than 'normal' schools. In addition, they did not see the prison as an interfering factor in the school environment. Marta, for example, offered accounts of transformation and to a certain extent of normalisation and adjustment to given and socially accepted prison features. In this sense, their view of prison education was balanced because they were aware of strengths and weaknesses in the system.

Initial Motivations

In terms of initial motivation to work in prison education, Clara and Marta seemed to share motivational factors even though these, in turn, may rest on different drives. From a relational perspective of motivation, they were drawn into prison education by vocational goals, the common good, and social justice. Such drives are aligned with influential factors such as teacher citizenship and truism as reported in Woolfolk Hoy (2008) and Alexander (2008). However, while Clara's drive was Catholicism-influenced and based on experiences of working with less affluent groups, Marta's motivations were driven by her interest in (social) psychology and earlier teaching experiences in difficult circumstances in mainstream education. In this latter case, Marta's desire to be a psychologist was achieved in her working as a teacher for children 'at risk' (and now in prison education) even when she had studied English-Spanish translation instead of English language teaching.

Following Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2011) factors of teacher motivation listed earlier in the chapter, Clara's and Marta's initial motivation was intrinsic, but it was not affected by the educational process itself or teaching efficacy. On the contrary, teaching English was relegated to a second plane. In this regard, they did not see themselves as teachers of English or teachers but as people wishing to help the oppressed and 'invisibilised' people studying in difficult circumstances. Along these lines, I shall add that social-contextual factors and personal efficacy also influenced their decision as they believed that they could make a difference and help reshape the context in which their learners and they themselves are inscribed.

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Based on Clara's and Marta's compelling stories, teachers may feel motivated to work under difficult circumstances when their drive to work for the common good, sense of citizenship, collaboration, and social responsibility are so high that challenges are perceived as new opportunities for professional and, above all, personal development. In addition, teachers' awareness of personal efficacy and unfulfilled dreams may make them assess prison education or any other less mainstream teaching contexts as means to achieve their personal aims and test their capabilities.

Sustaining Motivation

According to Ushioda (2009), motivation is a dynamic process over which different contextual factors exert varying degrees of influence. Therefore, my second question sought to examine those factors which affected Clara's and Marta's motivation to maintain their teaching posts in a context of confinement.

Clara and Marta's professional and personal trajectories with prison education were influenced, as in initial motivation, by intrinsic factors such as vocational goals, hope, personal efficacy, and teacher efficacy. However, relatedness became a powerful source for sustaining motivation. Relatedness was observable through the influence of learner motivation and feedback on teacher motivation. The impact of learner motivation and engagement on teacher motivation emerged more explicitly in Clara's story. Relatedness was also experienced through motherly feelings and good rapport with the learners and a positive and learning professional atmosphere.

Therefore, the journey Clara and Marta started first as substitute teachers and later as permanent teachers was signalled by their personal motivations and drives beyond teaching English or formal education. Their initial motivation was intrinsic and personal. However, other factors such as relatedness, teacher efficacy, teacher autonomy, and sense of achievement shaped their motivation and practices throughout their experience as teachers of English in prison education.

In line with Spaulding's (2011) discussions, motivation was sustained through the realisation that their action made a difference, and they mattered to their learners. Clara and Marta treated their learners as fellow citizens rather than inmates or criminals. Furthermore, what may have started as personal truisms became socially shared truisms. In other words, Clara and Marta accepted their teaching posts because they personally felt that they wanted to help people in contexts of confinement. Following Alexander's (2008) discussion on truisms in

teaching, there appears to be no issue with high truisms in Clara's and Marta's stories. On the contrary, their concerns revealed their awareness and pragmatism in their posts.

In their journey and background, the two teachers moved from personal or individual motivation to social motivation, that is, motivation resulting from social interaction and engagement through different situations and behaviours. Based on the experiences reported in this chapter, social motivation and collaborative actions may help teachers involved in prison education, and other less favoured settings perceive themselves as active contributors to the dynamics of social participation. Through their own voices, their learners may also become 'visibilised' and counteract feelings of peripheral participation as outlined in Bhatti (2010). Through their concerted and orchestrated actions, they may influence the lives of those in contexts of confinement and also the lives of those who inhabit more comfortable environments. Involvement in prison education settings should seek empowerment, awareness, and proactive actions of social actors inside and outside prison walls.

Teacher Autonomy and Teacher Efficacy

Clara's and Marta's perceptions of their own teaching practices may be associated to their ways of sustaining their motivation through two main factors: teacher autonomy and teacher efficacy.

Their practices were characterised by teacher autonomy at the level of syllabus design and materials development and context-responsive strategies such as the use of roleplay and games to promote oral work based on their observations of learners' interests and classroom attitudes. This institutional-assigned autonomy was exploited possibly given the fact that both were experienced teachers and had the support of their school heads and colleagues. Their practices illustrate Brazier et al.'s (2010) suggestions that teachers should develop their own materials with the resources available and in line with their own contexts and learners. In so doing, teachers will strengthen the links between formal education and the world, needs, and interests around them.

According to Clara's journal and Marta's interviews, they seemed to enjoy the respect and appreciation of their learners. Both teachers were aware of their strengths, challenges, and concerns, but their determination to stay in prison education may be indicative of their perception of their own personal and teacher efficacy. Simply put, they know it is a challenge, but they want a challenge because they know they can accomplish the task.

In sum, teacher autonomy and teacher efficacy play a significant role in maintaining motivation, particularly in marginalised settings. This shows that while teacher efficacy may not be crucial for initial motivation, it becomes so for sustaining motivation. Teachers who take the role of course and materials developers may find in this activity another source of motivation and means to explore relatedness. Their voice and above all, their settings, will shape the lessons and learning processes. Autonomous teachers will strengthen a dialogic and liberatory pedagogy by talking to their learners not only face-to-face but also through their learning materials. However, autonomy in this regard needs to be conferred and supported by colleagues and school administrators and be based on informed and shared decisions.

Concluding Remarks

Although these two stories are based on local experiences in two different Argentinian cities, the experiences narrated and discussed here may resonate with prison educators' trajectories elsewhere, mainstream ELT, and with teachers of subjects other than English as a foreign language. The teaching profession, whatever the context and circumstances, is inherently dialogical, dynamical, and relational, and accordingly, teacher motivation reflects the processes and biographies inscribed in the experience whether this takes place in contexts of confinement or other difficult circumstances.

The two stories explored confirm that teacher motivation needs to be examined from a relational, in-context view of motivation (Ushioda 2009) which captures initial personal factors as well as socially constructed drives. Such an approach will help us see teachers not only as professionals but as human beings with aims and drives which transcend the opportunities and limitations of formal education. Although teachers may seek to materialise their personal intrinsic motivation in a classroom inside a prison or elsewhere, we also come to learn that they can and have also worked for the common good and social justice outside the classroom and beyond the teaching profession.

Teachers interested in working in difficult circumstances such as prison education settings may observe that such difficulties may come from our own prejudices or fears of the unknown. Making contact with teachers already working in prison education or doing an internet search for projects, school-based publication, or teacher conferences may help them gain confidence and understand what qualities are needed to work in such a context.

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With the aim of broadening the scope of teacher education, teacher education programmes need to include in their knowledge-based aspects and practices situated in less mainstream contexts such as prisons. For example, there should be practicum opportunities to teach some lessons in the local prison and/or work on projects which involve the wider community in different ways. In addition, trainees should be provided with tools and guidance to develop materials and context-responsive lessons for teaching in prisons. Because the teaching profession is not only targeted at mainstream and comfortable environments, teacher educators should promote discussions around personal motivations to join the teaching profession and analyse the different setting where teachers can make a difference. There should be room to reflect on how our motivation fluctuates as it is impinged by our own biographies as persons in context.

Overall, teacher motivation cannot be disassociated from the personal motivations beyond the profession or the context, the 'difficult circumstances', where practices occur. The lived experiences shared by Clara and Marta show us that teacher motivation needs to be approached from a holistic and humanistic framework which includes the personal. Such implications do not only apply to teachers working in prisons but to all teachers in mainstream ELT since we cannot detach our identity from our teacher identity. Every teacher is a unity and we transport our identities and motivations through our personal and professional settings. After all, we are all humans. Being human is essential; being a teacher is optional.

Suggested Further Reading

Artiles, A. J., Kozleski, E. B., & Waitoller, F. R. (Eds.). (2011). *Inclusive education: Examining equity on five continents.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

This edited collection contains reports from nine different countries. Authors discuss the complex relationship between inclusion and equity in education and the concerns behind education for all and for every context.

Pane, D. M., & Rocco, T. S. (2013). *Transforming the school-to-prison pipeline*. Rotterdam: Sense Publications.

In this thought-provoking book, the authors condense stories of both students and teachers in US prisons. The book offers a bottom-up approach to prison education and ways in which teachers, teacher educators, and administrators can generate alternative and context-responsive pedagogies.

Zoukis, C. (2014). *College for convicts: The case for higher education in American prisons*. Jefferson: McFarland.

Zoukis makes the case that education, whether it is face-to-face or distance, decreases crime and recidivism rates particularly if inmates move from secondary to higher education. Although it is set in the USA, the author's conclusions are internationally applicable.

Engagement Priorities

- The chapter focuses on two teachers working in relatively minimum security prisons. Teachers may feel that they are working for the common good and that education in prisons is a form of liberation. Do you think their leaners would share these views? Why do they study? What are their motivations depending on the sentences they have to serve?
- Working and relational conditions in minimum security prisons may differ from medium and maximum security prisons. How might teachers' motivations in such context compare and contrast with the teachers' stories reflected in this chapter?
- As explored in this chapter, teachers' decisions to join prison education may be influenced by their professional background and years of experience. Do you think that novice teachers may be equally amenable to working in prison education?
- Clara and Marta secured their posts through interviews with the school authorities. What teacher profile do administrators seek in different teaching-learning contexts? Does this profile match professional development opportunities? Do affective/personal factors outweigh professional factors in some marginalised contexts such as prisons?

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8

ELT in a War-Affected Context: One Teacher's Coping Strategies and Practical Responses in a Syrian Camp School

Abdulqader Alyasin

Introduction

English language teaching in 'difficult circumstances' has recently attracted attention in the field (Kuchah and Smith 2011; Shamim and Kuchah 2016). This chapter, however, endeavours to extend the concept of difficult circumstances, beyond typical contextual difficulties, to conflict-affected and war-related situations. With the tragic circumstances resulting from the escalating armed conflicts in Syria, millions of people (at least 7.6 million/35 per cent of Syria's population) have either become internally displaced (IDMC 2015) or fled the war to live as refugees in camps or cities in neighbouring countries. Figures published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2015) stand at 3.9 million registered Syrian refugees now living in camps outside Syria. These circumstances have hugely impacted education, with thousands of schools destroyed, damaged or occupied for military purposes and with three million children out of school (Save the Children 2015).

Conflict was acknowledged by the World Education Forum held at Dakar in 2000 as a challenge to the achievement of Education for All (UNESCO 2000). Since the Dakar Framework for Action, governments and agencies agreed to enable education in such crisis situations. However, this has not been the case, particularly in the context of Syria.

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Education in Emergencies

Despite the fact that schools and teachers are targets of attack, the main concern of donor agencies in humanitarian crises and situations of conflict is normally towards shelter, food and health, and education has often been secondary (Kagawa 2005; Sinclair 2002; Sommers 2002; Winthrop and Mendenhall 2006) or 'a low priority' (Smith 2014: 113). As the average length of refugee displacement is currently approaching 20 years (Long 2011), 'not providing education [in crisis and conflict situations] denies an entire generation schooling' (Winthrop and Mendenhall 2006: 2–3).

In his retrospective investigation of the effect of war on 43 countries in Africa from 1950 to 2010, Poirier (2012) concludes that a salient factor in the deterioration of education and the rate of school enrolment (influenced by displacement) is armed conflict. Similarly, Standing et al. (2012) explore the impact of the ten-year (1996–2006) conflict in Nepal on children, schools and education. They report how the conflict brought the educational system to a halt sporadically for 'an estimated 300 teaching days… [which] equates to nearly two years of schooling' (Standing et al. 2012: 378).

The literature points to several rationales for education in emergencies, specifically armed conflict. First, children's access to education during conflict is an inalienable and fundamental right (Kagawa 2005; Machel 2001 cited in Standing et al. 2012) enshrined by international human rights such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1949) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF 1989). Second, education is perceived to provide both a vital physical, psychosocial and cognitive protection (Davies and Talbot 2008; Kagawa 2005; Sinclair 2007; Sommers 2002) and a preparation for 'economic and social reintegration of refugee and internally displaced populations' (Davies and Talbot 2008: 509). It can be an enabling factor to provide a sense of security and normality (Kagawa 2005; Sinclair 2007; Standing et al. 2012; Winthrop and Mendenhall 2006). As a protective or 'safe' place, education and schools can support students' 'psychological healing from traumatic experiences through structured social activities' (Sinclair 2007: 52–53), enable them to cope with war atrocities and restore their sense of hope and purpose for the future (Winthrop and Mendenhall 2006).

ELT in Emergencies

The majority of the research conducted in the area of 'education in emergencies' is either report-based such as those drawing on international organisations and agencies (Sinclair 2002, 2007; Winthrop and Mendenhall 2006), retro-

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spective (Poirier 2012; Standing et al. 2012) or focussed on the transformative role of education in post-conflict recovery (Barakat et al. 2013). In direct relation to ELT, it has been often the case with studies exploring post-resettlement language education of immigrants (Brown et al. 2006 in Australia; Tshabangu-Soko and Caron 2011 in the USA) that we know little, if anything, about refugees' current educational lives and experiences in camps and displacement.

In this chapter, I will throw light on the challenges and coping strategies of an English teacher in a Syrian camp school in Southern Turkey. I begin the chapter with a brief description of the learners in the Syrian camp school followed by Salma's (the Syrian teacher) challenges in teaching-learning of English in this educational setting. Next, I discuss how she navigates her challenges and adopts a pedagogy based on her own previous experiences, her understanding of her learners and the specific contextual constrains in which they operate. The discussion is developed through presenting selected key extracts, from a grammar and a reading lesson that Salma audio-recorded and sent to me, with reference to the teacher's own reflections, comments and interpretations elicited through stimulated recall interviews. The chapter also shows that in providing her with an opportunity to co-construct meaning from her lessons and stimulated recall, she is able to engage in reflexivity which is essential for her own professional development.

When I expressed interest in exploring how English was being taught at the camp school with all the accompanying difficult circumstances that students and their families experienced, Salma's response was very positive. Subsequently, she became a participant in my teacher development research study conducted as part of my doctoral studies.

It is hoped that the chapter will contribute to the literature of ELT in difficult circumstances by providing practical insights into the challenges of, and 'local solutions' to, English education in conflict-affected circumstances. This is important as one of the pressing challenges to ELT at times of unprecedented displacement is 'to strengthen teachers' capacities to serve the needs of English language learners who either are in conflict situations or have lived through them and who often have few material resources but abundant legacies of trauma——*refugees of mind*' (Nelson and Appleby 2014: 19 emphasis in original).

Key Challenges in the Camp School

In many Syrian cities, thousands of schools have been damaged or destroyed since armed conflict began in 2012. With the volatile situation and the displacement of Syrians, the main concern was to ensure that children attended

the school established in the camp even without all the resources needed, similar to the camp school focused in this chapter. The Syrian camp school used the English curriculum of Syria—'education for repatriation' (Kagawa 2005; Sinclair 2002) based on the belief that these refugees will go back home. The textbook series *English for Starters* was designed as part of educational change in Syria in 2004 drawing on communicative principles. The camp school also follows the Syrian educational structure of two academic terms, each term ending with exams administered locally at school. In spite of all these similarities, the exam results and certification in the camp schools are recognised only in Turkey. Exams, therefore, essentially prepare students to study in Turkish universities.

As would be imagined, a school set up in a camp, to fill an educational void caused by an ongoing conflict, would be fraught with several problems. This section describes key challenges faced in teaching-learning of English in the camp school and the teacher's lack of preparation and training to deal with the learners, particularly in a crisis situation.

Psycho-Affective Challenges

Encouraging students' learning is a major challenge for many teachers. This is further exacerbated in this context due to the unique features of their circumstances. Salma highlighted a number of difficulties which she and her students faced and which affected teaching and learning in the school as a whole. For example, living in small caravans and tents constrains the students' learning opportunities:

> [Also], their caravans are very small. Each caravan accommodates at least six people and it's very noisy for the students to have an environment to study or even time.

Salma's students were in Year 8 (13–14-year-olds) and she described them as coming from various social backgrounds and suddenly forced to live together in one camp. In the next excerpt, we can see that teaching/learning is further undermined as the students in these lessons have not had classes for a long time. Some of the difficulties Salma highlights include students' weakness due to interrupted schooling, different schooling backgrounds and lack of focus:

> Most students have been away from schools for a while, so they are somewhat weak. Therefore, I exert much effort to make them understand the lesson. We don't have audio or visual teaching materials that accompany the books. On top

of that, students come from different backgrounds and therefore this creates some tensions and problems among students.

According to Salma, the biggest challenge is to motivate the students and engage them in the lesson. At first, the teacher considered this to be a result of the learners' varied proficiency levels in English, but then when reflecting on the issue further, she realised that many war-related problems interfere in students' educational progress and motivation. For example, a student whose father was in prison would perform poorly in the classroom due to lack of attention:

> Although they attend their classes regularly, I feel they simply show up to waste time only. I spend much time trying to attract their attention to the lesson and get them focused, which is the biggest challenge I have in class.
>
> I don't have a clue [about why the students are not focused in class], some of them are weak students. One girl was ok in class, but then she became unable to follow me in the lesson. When I knew that her father has been put in jail, I felt guilty that I blame my students but they have many problems and issues at home.

An important feature of the refugee context also lies in the students' feeling of temporariness. Salma points to her students' perceptions of their stay in the camp as a prime factor influencing their learning and her teaching. The fact that they believe it is a temporary accommodation and then they would go back to their houses and schools in Syria seems to build a sense of detachment from education:

> They don't see the point of studying because they believe that living in the camp is temporary so they won't stay here for long and that they will go back to their normal lives soon. They come to school just for a change or simply because their families ask them to do so… Therefore, they think everything is in chaos and that living in the camp is a temporary period that will go by. They may have thoughts like everything will be rebuilt as they imagine.

A significant factor impacting the students' school life closely relates to the situation of their home. In response to the destruction of the country, there is an element of hopelessness emerging in their feelings towards their education, and Salma suggests that students may feel there is no point in studying when there is no hope that their country would ever become a peaceful place where their education would enable them to find work and improve their lives.

Due to the above issues, Salma emphasises that, like most of her colleagues at the camp school, she finds it very difficult to encourage the students to learn:

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> I find it very challenging to get the students' attention to the lesson. The students are always looking for ways to avoid following the lesson, chatting, making noise, etc. I don't know how to grab their attention to the lesson!

In addition to the students' psycho-affective challenges above, other aspects of difficulty involve the teacher's own background and lack of training to teach English.

Lack of Training and Preparation for the Role of Teaching

Like millions of Syrians, Salma fled the war to live in a camp in Southern Turkey. Being a final year student of English Language and Literature, she volunteered as an English teacher in the camp school once it was established. Thus, Salma, similar to the majority of the teachers at this school, actually started her teaching experience in the camp in response to unprecedented circumstances without a teaching qualification or training for the job. This lack of qualifications and experience is worrying for Salma:

> Most of us are young teachers who have started teaching here and we are really getting our teaching experience in the camp…I'm really worried about the future of this generation because of teachers' lack of qualifications and experience.

In fact, Salma's challenges transcend her lack of professional training and involve other factors as she has herself been affected emotionally and psychologically by the war circumstances. Similarly to her students, Salma has had to flee the war and cope with new realities such as living in caravans and tents. With her own family being displaced inside Syria and in Turkey, Salma has her own difficulties that she has to overcome in order to be able to teach.

Salma's Coping Strategies and Context Responsive Pedagogy

With the learners' psycho-affective challenges highlighted above and with no prior training and a dearth of teacher development opportunities in a war-impacted context, Salma's teaching approach and pedagogical practices draw on two primary sources: her prior language learning experience (Borg 2006; Ellis 1996) and her previous teachers' approaches to language teaching.

Salma's own language learning experience appears to be a powerful resource underpinning her beliefs about language teaching, particularly as lack of training poses a challenge for her in using learner-centred methodology.

Salma's responsive teaching tends to be triggered by her motivation to bring back the students' interest in education and learning, to bring back normality and save their schooling, hence their future. She says:

> I feel I'm busy doing something at least by teaching in this camp- this helps me feel that these children should have schooling. Therefore, I do my best to give them the needed information to teach them properly as many people lost interest in education during this critical period. The most important thing now is education, I feel guilty if I don't teach properly.

In the following extracts, and for the purpose of this paper, I present a few representative examples from Salma's teaching of grammar and reading.

Teaching Grammar

In teaching grammar and error correction strategies, Salma explicitly indicates that her reflections on her language learning have guided her approach. Extract 1 demonstrates the first part of a grammar lesson in which the focus is centred on the form of the present simple tense, the affirmative.

Extract 1 (Grammar Lesson: Present Simple Form/Affirmative)

T: Our lesson today is about simple present, what do we mean by
simple present, who can tell me, simple present?
Ss: **alzaman alhadher** <the present simple>
T: **alzaman alhadher** <the present simple>, excellent (writing on the board and repeating) **alzaman alhadher albaseet** <the present simple tense> or simple present
tense. Ok let us start our lesson. First of all we have affirmative sentence. **sho yanee**
affirmative sentence?<what does affirmative sentence mean?> **jumleh mothbateh**
<an affirmative sentence> It consists of, subject
S: **alfael** <subject>
T: subject **zaed** <plus> verb of the sentence plus (writing on the board)
Ss: **tatimmet aljumleh** <the rest of the sentence>
T: **zaed tatimmet aljumleh** <plus the rest of the sentence> example, who can give me
an example?
S: **methal** <example>
T: **ateenee methal** <give me an example>
S: I go to school

20 T: I go to school, excellent. (writing on the board) I go to school.
21 S: He run about school
22 T: He?
23 S: He run about school
24 T: He run about the school. Run **bidha shee?** <Do we need to add anything to run?>
25 S1: running -eng
26 S2: -ing
27 S: s
28 T: runs, excellent

Salma's approach to teaching grammar follows a deductive perspective in which she introduces and writes the form and the terminology of the present simple tense on the board, translates it and then elicits a sentence from the students. Meaning of language (use of present simple tense) is taught later at the end of the lesson. In addition, when doing practice exercises, she does not refer the students to the original story/text (context) in which the grammar structures were introduced in the book.

In lines (16–18), the teacher elicits an example of present simple in the affirmative. Eliciting an example following her introduction of the grammar structure/rule represents her view of ensuring that understanding has occurred:

> I wanted to ensure that they have understood the grammar rule. In all my lessons, I give the rule and an example, and then elicit another example from students to confirm their understanding of the rule.

The students appear to have relative freedom to construct their turns (lines 19–21) with minimal interference from Salma, which reveals her pedagogical goal of encouraging and preparing the students to produce full sentences. Thus, the students' contributions in the classroom discourse do not seem to be constantly interrupted, modified or corrected.

Salma uses questioning as an indirect error correction technique (lines 18–21). In her comment on this, Salma identifies two key goals—initiating self- or peer correction and ensuring learning (not only correction) of the correct form:

> I was hoping that the student may realise the mistake himself and know that he should add 's' to the verb when the subject is 'he/she/it'. My goal was not simply to correct it for him and then he forgets it altogether… Another goal in my technique is to draw other students' attention to the mistake so that either the student or his peers may find the mistake and correct it.

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Salma's indirect correction technique is guided by her own cognitions and experience as a student, 'when my teacher highlighted that there was a mistake in my language and other students corrected it, I used to learn it much better than he would have simply corrected it immediately'. The primary focus of teaching grammar is teaching tenses, which also draws on Salma's experience as a student:

Salma: In grammar… for me, the main focus in teaching grammar is teaching tenses.
Interviewer: Why do you focus on tenses?
Salma: I don't know why really, when I learned English this is what I was taught. We started with tenses, and then we studied other grammar points. I mean it is important to know how to make a sentence with a correct structure. I believe that students benefit a great deal from learning the tenses because they can say a sentence in the right tense.

Salma's focus on grammar was also a practical response to the teaching-learning context in the camp school. As the previous English teacher for this class had left school earlier in the term, Salma explains that students' English language learning progress was interrupted. She opted for preparing them for the exam through focusing on what she believed to be the core elements; 'some grammar, tenses':

Interviewer: I have noticed that they are still in unit 3.
Salma: yes they are lagging behind in English because they did not have English classes for a long time in the first term because their teacher left school and the administration did not manage to find another teacher. Then, I started teaching them at the end of the term. I was only able to teach them some grammar, tenses, because when I started teaching them, they only had studied one tense. Thus, I wanted to make sure that they know something about grammar in order to be ready for the exam. I also gave them another reading lesson. This term, they only had this reading lesson until now because I also focus on grammar.

The teacher points out that although the grammar lesson is required in the book *English for Starters 8*, she has 'taught it from [her] own knowledge and understanding of the present simple rather than from the book itself'.

One of the reasons for relying on her own knowledge is the way the present simple is introduced in the textbooks as opposed to teacher's understanding based on her own prior experience of teaching-learning grammar.

Teaching Reading

Unlike the grammar lesson which comes from the teacher's knowledge (Extract 1 above), the reading lesson comes from *English For Starters 8* textbook. The teacher's book illustrates the following key points in relation to the reading lesson: the *language focus* is university subjects and comparatives; the *outcomes* expected are that students can read and talk about a story and can compare people and things; and the *materials* are students' book pages 20 and 21, activity book page 16 and cassette 1 (Kilbey 2010: 26).

This lesson is largely focused on rereading the text and doing the exercises. Salma clarifies that a reading lesson takes two class hours to finish due to classroom management and discipline issues as well as her approach of dividing the lesson into two parts—reading the text and doing exercises:

> They had the text last lesson. I cannot give reading lessons in one period, it takes me two classes to finish a reading lesson as half the lesson is spent on discipline like 'sit down', 'keep silence' and so on. Therefore, I give the text, I read it; they read after me, and then I give them the vocabulary of the text to memorise. Next lesson, we do exercises.

Salma skips one of the activities in the book. When asked about her reasons for not teaching it, it appears that her beliefs about her students' English proficiency, which is below the required level due to interrupted schooling, influence that decision. To her, open questions which do not have answers in the text are difficult for the students to handle:

> These types of exercises do not have their answers in the text, so students will not be able to answer the questions. Therefore, I said to myself I do not need to teach it as I usually do not do these types of exercises. I don't know, I think they will not be able to find the answers.

Salam explained that her main focus in teaching reading is to enable the students:

> to know and memorise new words because they are weak in vocabulary, even sometimes I observe that they don't know simple and basic words. Therefore, I try to give them more words to memorise.

In the reading lesson, the teacher's focus on vocabulary stems from her own experience as a learner and the need to prepare her students to do well in the exam:

> I focus a lot on vocabulary, I don't know why, perhaps because when I started learning English and felt I was doing well is the time when I started memorising words to become more proficient. Thus, if they memorised the vocabulary of the text, the vocabulary in the exam wouldn't be new to them and they would know the translation of a sentence as long as they know the vocabulary. They will also be able to do the matching question or the blanks in the exam. So this way, if they knew the words and the translation of the text, they would not find it difficult to answer the questions.

Translation also features as a significant aspect in teaching-learning in her classroom. The students' translation of vocabulary seems to be an educational culture which has originated in Syrian schools even in pre-war conditions. Although Salma's prior experience as a student may have influenced her teaching approach, her students are used to translation with other teachers and have developed this habit with this new teacher, too:

> I think so because sometimes I forget to translate a sentence after writing it as an example for an explanation about a particular point, but when I move to the following sentence, the students start saying to me: translate it; translate it. Even when I teach them grammar, I give them some vocabulary in English, they start saying: translate the words for us. For example, in the tenses, I say subject, verb, rest of the sentence, once I wrote it on the board without translating, the students started saying: translate them. Thus, I have become used to translating everything I say before they ask me to translate.

Thus, Salma stresses that she uses translation in response to the students' preferences.

As vocabulary represents a priority in the teacher's view on language learning and development, she writes the vocabulary on the board for all the students to copy. When asked how she selects material for writing on the board, Salma explained as follows:

> I read the lesson, and then I write the words on the board so that all the students have these vocabulary items. Sometimes I see the focus of the lesson, for instance present simple or past simple, I explain it and write exercises from my own knowledge so that those who don't have books can understand and follow. After that, we go back to the books if we have homework or other exercises.

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Exercise 3 in the textbook involves specific information questions that the students need to answer from the text. The students are supposed to listen to the story in order to find the answers. In the following extract, the teacher asks the questions orally from the whole class after they have listened to her read the story.

Extract 2 (Reading Lesson)

87	T: … **assoal altani anna asileh an aldars bidna**
88	**nhellah tamam?** <the second exercise has questions about the text that we need
89	to answer, ok?>
90	Ss: (noise)
91	T: **awwal suaal** Which stone piece is larger? **Ay kitaet hajar hia alakbar?** Which
92	stone piece is larger? Mulham?
93	Mulham: ah the first piece is the larger
94	T: the first is larger **tamam** <good> excellent **tayyeb assual althani** Was the
95	professor a good student at school?
96	S:
97	T: **hal kan al doctor taleb jayyed fi almadraseh?** Was the professor a good student
98	at school? **Birafeaa aleed** <raise your hands to answer>
99	Ss: yes yes
100	S: yes he was
101	T: Muhammad
102	Muhammad: yes he was
103	T: **naam hua kana taleb jayyed** <yes he was a good student> What language is on
104	the first piece? **Ay lugha kana aala alhajar alawwal?** < What language is on the
105	first piece?>
106	S: **finikiyeh** <Phoenician>
107	T: Phoenician, **tamam** <good> **tayyeb** <ok> the fourth question Who wrote the
108	carvings? **man katab alnakesh, man katab alnakesh al hajar?** <Who wrote the
109	carvings?> Usamah
110	Usamah: a boy was name Amer
111	T: a boy whose
112	Usamah: whose
113	T: [name is Amer]
114	Usamah: [name is Amer]

In this part of the reading lesson, the task is designed in the book to be a listening exercise in which the students listen to the text and find answers to the list of questions. However, due to the lack of the listening materials and the audio equipment required for the listening exercise, the practical solution,

according to Salma, is reading aloud the listening text for the students so that they would listen to her instead and answer the questions:

> We don't have the recording available at school. For that reason, I read the text because I feel that we can read the text and answer the questions as they can recall the text if they have listened to my reading.

Thus, Salma's cognitions, learning experiences and understanding of her learners' language levels and abilities guide her choice of pedagogy which appears to be mainly exam-based with a strong focus on grammar, vocabulary, translation and reading.

Reflective Practice for Teacher Development

The teacher's awareness of the challenges faced in this context was co-constructed through selected classroom extracts and stimulated recall interviews. It was an opportunity in which the teacher reflected on classroom practices and (verbalised) immediate concerns and realities. As illustrated in her comment below, the teacher's discussions were centred on her difficulties, but I was interested in knowing (and also making the teacher aware of) the driving forces for these challenges:

Interviewer: Have you discussed why that happens?
Salma: We discuss the many problems we have in class with the students, but we haven't thought of the reasons behind the students' behaviour.
Interviewer: In your view, what can be the reason for this?
Salma: I don't know…They may be thinking what's the point of studying while the whole country is being destroyed? The students don't seem to take education seriously as a result. To me, they appear to have dropped schooling off their lives.

At the end of the interviews, Salma shows a deep reflective perspective to her experience of verbalising the thoughts on her teaching practices. Not only is the teacher considering possible techniques to engage her students but also extending these ideas to other classes she is teaching:

> Seriously, I felt that I am a bit of a failure teacher and that I should have thought about these issues you asked me about. I felt that I should try to think about

> doing these things that you are asking me about in my teaching. And now I have kept them in mind. For example, I started thinking of putting the students in groups and let them speak themselves in English rather than have everything ready for them and done on my part. Now, I am even thinking of doing that with Year 9 students.

Thus, Salma seems to be willing to compromise some of her 'responsibility' to teach, grammar, for instance, explicitly in favour of nurturing learning discovery in the students. As she illustrates, this will be a change in the teaching-learning culture in which the students will find that the teacher no longer has 'everything ready for them and done on [her] part'.

The following reflections come from Salma's view on her overall experience in participating in this research:

> I have learnt a great deal from this research. It has encouraged me to think of all the steps I need to do to make my lessons more successful. I never thought of why I teach this or that part of the lesson. I have realised that I need to set aims for my classroom practice. Before these interviews, I used to consider the overall aim of the lesson only, but now I have realised that I need to set my aims for each stage in the lesson.

Salma asserts that the extracts and the interview questions and reflections have motivated her to consider new classroom practices in subsequent lessons that she never thought about before this experience. This study has partly served as a small professional development opportunity to empower the teacher both to teach with more pedagogical insights and to critically consider what works best in her immediate context. This opportunity has assisted Salma's understanding of what she teaches, how she teaches and under which circumstances.

Discussion

Salma's case in this chapter provides an exemplary model for challenging difficult circumstances with the capacities available rather than surrendering to the chaotic realities of war. War circumstances have led to atrocities; nonetheless, we can see positive aspects in this school which operated despite all the above challenges. As mentioned earlier, education provides a sense of security and normalcy to all children affected by conflict. This is evidenced by Salma's attempt to do all she can to save students' schooling and give them hope for a better future. The data above show that these students live in crammed caravans; they have been away from school and the routines of schooling and

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they live each day in fear over the plight of their parents and siblings. More important, they do not foresee themselves living and working in a peaceful country soon. Because of the persistent war, schooling seems to have become less of a priority for them. As a result, it becomes difficult for the teacher to sufficiently motivate them to learn.

Salma's main priority is to respond to local exigencies in order to ensure her learners' progress. For instance, her focus is on grammar, which she rates as essential to compensate the students' lack of English classes for a while. Her views about teaching English in her classroom context are exam-driven. In her choice of the essential language elements to prepare the students to do well in the exam, Salma does not consider it important to teach them speaking, listening or writing. As she tailors her teaching to the exams, she is aware that grammar is the most important skill to develop in order to pass. As a result, the circumstances in the refugee school, in which the teacher and the students are, appear to impose pedagogies that are immediately functional in the sense of assisting students to pass their exams.

Several studies point to the importance and effectiveness of providing participatory and learner-centred teaching to conflict-affected children (Sinclair 2002; Nicholai and Triplehorn 2003 cited in Kagawa 2005). However, 'particularly during or after conflict, teachers may be untrained or poorly trained' (Davies and Talbot 2008: 514) as is the case with Salma in the war camp school. Neither teachers nor students are willing or trained to change classroom practices since there are far more serious priorities for them, in conflict situations, than progressive pedagogies such as participatory and learner-centred approaches. In these circumstances, these pedagogies can be time-consuming and even counterproductive to their immediate goal of passing exams (Davies and Talbot 2008: 514).

However, Salma's motivation to teach an increasingly lost generation made her take the opportunity of participating in my study to develop her teaching. While acknowledging that this is a rare opportunity for a teacher in such circumstances, it is noteworthy that participating in this study enabled her to develop professionally through engaging in reflection on her teaching practices with the help of the researcher.

Pulling the Strings Together

In teaching, research and training in the field of education in conflict-affected situations, it seems to be very rewarding to capitalise on teachers' local experiences in order to fully address their realities and co-construct practical

solutions. With no teaching experience, Salma's practices and comments reveal that the teacher's developing approach and instructional practices are primarily guided by her reflections on her own learning experience as well as her awareness of the students' immediate needs and challenges. Thus, her pedagogy locally develops within the constraints of the refugee camp.

Throughout our interactions, Salma has pointed to several issues that distract her students from education altogether (traumatic experiences such as imprisonment and/or killing of parents, witnessing bombing and shelling and loss of hope). Despite her awareness of her own and her students' traumatic experiences, she is only able to employ her own pragmatic responses to what she perceives as the challenges and goals of learning English in this context. This is because there does not seem to be a training programme for teachers to address their psychological needs and overcome these difficulties in such contexts of conflict (Sommers 2002). These very difficult circumstances involve traumatic experiences to which teachers and students alike have seemed to have little experience, if any, to overcome. With the ongoing conflict, teachers' roles as healers come to the front; this places additional demands on teachers to embrace roles that lie beyond their training or teaching expertise as 'educators'. It has become important to make sure that teachers, who themselves have witnessed the unspeakable horrors of the Syrian conflict as well as conflicts in other countries, are prepared to take on their role as healers and role models (Guler 2013). As teachers have also been victims of the war, it is equally crucial to keep them motivated. This necessitates teacher training workshops to equip those teachers involved with the tools to address such catastrophes. Training in this case goes beyond teaching methods or ELT pedagogy to involve war-affected pedagogy.

Conclusion

The chapter has centred on possibly uncharted waters in emergency education: ELT in a refugee camp school by a teacher who herself is a refugee. The ELT literature has recently witnessed a shift towards developing ecological pedagogies (Tudor 2001, 2003; Hu 2005; Kramsch 2008) and appreciating English language teaching in 'normally' difficult circumstances (Kuchah and Smith 2011). In this study, however, a new dimension is to consider ways to extend the ELT literature to difficult circumstances in 'crisis' situations and recognise conflict-affected ELT as a research area in which locally produced pedagogies are encouraged and supported within the constraints of displacement and refugee camp schools. On an international level, support is crucial to conflict-affected education because, as highlighted by Sinclair (2007: 52), 'there is no

way to be sure whether the wait will be for weeks, months, years or decades' if no action takes place until the displaced and refugees return home.

This paper has shed light on the impact of the Syrian war on ELT (and education) and one teacher's coping strategies to address the challenges faced in teaching English in a refugee camp school. This underlines the need for initiatives and directions for a conflict-sensitive ELT pedagogy in which teacher development is both urgent and beyond traditional. An important aspect of this pedagogy, it appears, would also need to involve interdisciplinary empirical research in order to identify teachers' and students' key concerns and realities and develop feasible thoughts with and for teachers as well as students to be empowered to deal with their immediate situations and needs.

Recommended Texts

Nelson, C., & Appleby, R. (2014). Conflict, militarization, and their after-effects: Key challenges for TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, *49*(2), 309–332.

This is one of the key papers discussing TESOL in conflicts. The authors examine the challenges of teaching English in conflict situations or for students who have escaped such circumstances.

Sinclair, M. (2002). *Planning education in and after emergencies.* Paris: UNESCO, International Institute for Educational Planning.

Sinclair's book is an essential recommended text for a wide range of readers, including practitioners, teacher trainers as well as policy-makers.

Tudor, I. (2001). *The dynamics of the language classroom.* Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press.

This book explores the language classroom as a complex environment influenced by a variety of factors. It also emphasises the nonlinear nature of the language classroom due to the interaction between methodology, context and the local cultures.

Engagement Priorities

- Within the challenges of the above conflict-affected context, Salma has endeavoured to create a sense of normality for children at the camp school. Can you think of any feasible strategies that have the potential to motivate students within the constraints of a refugee camp school?

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- With no prior teaching experience and despite being a final year student at a university, the teacher suddenly found herself volunteering to teach English once the camp school was established. The key cognitions that informed her teaching practices drew on her prior learning experiences. How far can such experiences be effective as a coping strategy? And what issues might arise as a consequence?
- Following your reading of the chapter, do you support the view that teaching in emergencies and crisis situations should be incorporated into teacher training programmes, particularly in developing countries suffering from war and instability and those affected by or at risk of natural disasters?

Note on Transcription Conventions

Transcription conventions		
Symbol	Function	Example
T	Teacher	T:
S	Student	S:
Ss	Students	Ss:
?	Questioning intonation	Who was that?
!	Exclamatory utterance	Look!
–	Emphasis	Put it away.
(XXX)	Unable to transcribe	We'll just (XXXXX) tomorrow
(send)	Unsure transcription	And then he (juggled) it
Bold font	Arabic/L1 utterance(s)	**Mithal**
<>	English glosses	**kalimat jdeedeh**<new words>
Hhh	Aspirations	That's hhhhhh I dunno
// //	Description of what is going on	//T writing on the board//
[ ]	Overlap	S: football hhh [tomorrow] T: [tomorrow] ok going to

Adapted from Richards (2003), Martin (2005)

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9

Resourcing the Under-resourced English Language Classroom in State Primary Special Education Schools in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Susan Hillyard

Introduction

This chapter seeks to explain how the department of Special Education in the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, responded to a new law of inclusion through the introduction of English language instruction in 20 remedial schools located in different areas within the city boundaries. It describes the difficult circumstances inherent in this context and shows how these difficulties were overcome by the introduction of a programme, Teaching English through Drama, designed especially for the characteristics of these schools.

Historically, the education law in Argentina distinguishes between two subsystems of education: regular education and special education. While the former includes all school age young learners from 5–18 and adults who have failed to gain their leaving certificate, the latter caters for the teaching of students at three levels of special needs including hospital education (level A), remedial education (level B) and severely disabled learners (level C). These special schools are characterised by small groups in each classroom to facilitate personalised learning. This model of special education promotes a particular perspective of 'needs' which assumes that students with special needs require different environments to be able to learn. Hence, multidisciplinary teams including teachers, psychologists, speech therapists and social workers from different specialities were formed and provided special learning packages according to each type of learning need.

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Background to Inclusive Education and the English in Action Programme in Buenos Aires

The United Nations Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, to which the government of Argentina subscribes, has as a principal purpose 'to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity' (United Nations 2006, article 1). Section 2a of article 24 of the document requires states to guarantee an inclusive education system at all levels by ensuring that

> persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability.

The concept of inclusion can be interpreted to mean that all students, irrespective of their degree of physical and mental abilities, attend and are welcomed by their neighbourhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school. The UN policy guidelines on inclusion in education define inclusive education as

> a process that involves the transformation of schools and other centres of learning to cater for all children – including boys and girls, students from ethnic and linguistic minorities, rural populations, those affected by HIV and AIDS, and those with disabilities and difficulties in learning and to provide learning opportunities for all youth and adults as well. (UNESCO 2009: 8)

Drawing upon this, article 7 of Law No 26.378 2008 of the Ministry of Education in Buenos Aires specifically outlines the state's commitment to 'take all measures necessary to assure that all children with any incapacity fully receive all the fundamental human rights and liberties in equal proportion to the conditions offered to all children'. This also suggests that all students, no matter their learning difficulty, should receive all the human rights and freedom that children in mainstream state schools already receive. A further commitment to equality of opportunity and right to access to the educational system is captured in article 23 of Chapter 3 of the same law which states that:

> The city of Buenos Aires assures equality of opportunity and possibility for permanent access, reintegration and graduation from the education system. It respects the individual right of pupils, parents and caregivers, to the choice of educational system according to their convictions and preferences. It promotes the highest standards of quality in teaching and assures socio political interventions which allow for the effective execution of those rights. [My translation]

In effect, this also implies equal opportunity for access to all the curriculum subjects, including the English language, which, since 1998, had already been offered to students who attend mainstream schools.

Despite these laws being passed, they are not strictly followed since it is still largely the case that there exists segregation of special needs students in special schools still functioning all across the city. Neither policymakers nor parents/caregivers have been able to come to a definite acceptance of full inclusion. This, in practical terms, means there are differing arrangements according to the individual rights of pupils, parents and caregivers to choose the educational system they judge to be appropriate. Thus, it is that some students, whose parents do believe in inclusion, are or have been integrated into mainstream schools based on their right to make a personal decision. However, this has come with its own difficulties as many teachers in these regular schools do not feel confident nor trained to take on the additional challenges of teaching special needs children in their already challengingly large classes. In these circumstances even the schools may not 'welcome' such students and may not have either the resources or the personnel to provide adequately for the needs of these students.

Herein lies the essence of this chapter: the education department of the City of Buenos Aires was, from 2008, under pressure to translate the laws and place them in the global context of 'Inclusion', including the introduction in these segregated special schools of instruction in the English language according to the 'Diseño Curricular' (Education Curriculum for mainstream schools).

Policy Talks and Planning for the Introduction of English in Special Schools

As from 2008 the Special Education Department began the much needed debate regarding the inclusion of English classes in all 20 special schools in levels A and B; level C schools were exempt from the discussions as it was not considered feasible to teach a foreign language to severely disabled students.

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The notion of 'educability', that is, the capability or lack of capability for special needs students to learn or to be taught a foreign language, had been raised and much scepticism voiced on the part of some of the directors and teachers within the schools themselves. The then Director of Special Education, who was convinced that the rights of all students in SEN schools must be met, consulted a number of experts on English language instruction but was unable to find a suitable programme, believing it inappropriate to use a course book to teach the English language through grammar rules and using texts. Also, she had to take into account that none of the special needs schools in Buenos Aires had any texts in English, and there was no budget for resources, so the programme would need to concentrate on listening and speaking only.

The issue at stake was exactly how to implement such a policy change when these special schools were already segregated and populated through the parents exercising their right of choice. In addition, the special schools had no English-speaking teachers already employed therein as they had never considered the introduction of a foreign language. They were operating their own form of inclusion in having many diverse types of learning difficulties in the one classroom with a Spanish language curriculum. Thus, inclusion here was mooted as the development of a policy in which the SEN students' curriculum would now include foreign language instruction.

Thus, policy talks, planning and designing a possible programme began in 2009, after the author offered a 'project' to the Ministry of Education in Buenos Aires City, based on a drama pedagogy developed over 40 years. This is how English in Action (EiA), as the programme was called, became the first programme designed to teach English in special schools, established under the auspices of the Special Education Department of the Ministry of Education. Given the rising importance of English language in Buenos Aires and the demands of some of the parents of SEN students, the inclusion of English language in these schools also gave added value to the educational offer of the remedial schools in the city.

Three Distinct but Interrelated 'Difficult Circumstances' in the English in Action Programme

The English in Action programme involves three distinct but connected areas of difficult circumstances. Firstly, it involves teaching English to students with learning difficulties, of every type. This means that they may have considerable

problems learning in their mother tongue(s) and so it is not just a matter of teaching an additional language. In fact, it is a matter of teaching a new language to absolute beginners in a way which caters to their individual and specific special educational needs. Secondly, the remedial schools do not have resources such as books in English, flash cards, posters, CD players or computer labs which work efficiently. Thus, the main resources are the teachers and the students. Thirdly, since the teachers work in 20–26 different establishments, the team is not provided with any physical communal space where the teachers can develop learning activities for their work. They tend to work on their own with little time or opportunity to meet and share experiences or ideas and materials, a prerequisite in any innovative project with no precedent. Generally speaking, EiA teachers are the only English speakers at their schools, so they do not have any support beyond the goodwill of the Director and the Spanish-speaking teachers. They do not have the opportunity to interact with their colleagues on the EiA team except at the Saturday morning meetings held once a month, on the virtual platform moderated every day and in monthly online virtual teacher development classes.

The Reach and Range of Special Education Needs in the English in Action Programme

The EiA Programme operates at level A, hospital education, and level B, remedial education of the special education subsystem, but not at level C which provides for the severely disabled, the deaf and the blind. The former (level A) includes three hospital schools, one school for wheelchair users, two orphanages and four to eight individual places where the students receive 'home' visits as their condition prevents them from attending school for three or more months at a time. The latter (level B) includes 16 remedial schools located throughout the City of Buenos Aires, comprising some shanty town schools and some schools for street children.

Remedial Schools

The diversity of special needs in these schools covers illness, trauma, diagnosed ADHD, dyslexia, phobia, emotional disorders, physical impairment, general learning difficulties, selective mutism, Asperger's and Down syndromes, autism and immigrant children who speak neither Spanish nor English. Other more general conditions which lead to difficulties in learning

include poverty, dysfunctional families and problems of conduct, behaviour disorders and poor adaptation to formal educational settings. These specific needs are not necessarily segregated out into different classrooms or different schools but are rather mixed together in the same classroom in all the separate schools. In addition, if students do not pass their exams at grade level they may remain in primary school until the age of 16, so the disparate age groups found in any one classroom may present a further difficulty for the teachers in terms of level and content of their lessons.

Hospital Schools

The learning difficulties faced in hospital conditions are very different from those faced in the special schools. Students are ill, often traumatised, fearful, uncertain and, in some cases, medicated or preparing for surgery, particularly in the case of those waiting for a heart or liver transplant. They may not be allowed to move from their beds, as in the case of those undergoing dialysis who are hooked up to their dialysis machines during class. Further, these may be temporary students so there are no ongoing developmental processes which can be measured in the usual manner. Some live away from their extended families, taking up residence in cheap hotels or dormitories near the relevant hospital so their difficulties are compounded in the sense that they are suffering not only from sickness, pain and uncertainty but also from estrangement. At the psychiatric hospital, a team member teaches English to psychotic and schizophrenic adolescents who have intermittent treatments and are often highly medicated, making language acquisition a less than certain achievement. In these hospital schools, teachers must be extremely empathetic and flexible and must learn to accept that often their students will improve and therefore leave the class or worsen and therefore pass away.

Home Visits and Orphanages

In the home visits provision of the programme, the teacher may work in a house or flat or have to work in the foyer of a cheap hotel, in the corner of a greengrocer's shop, in a one-room flat in a *conventillo* (a huge mansion house divided up into cheap rooms, with communal bathrooms and kitchens for immigrant families or the poor who cannot afford any other type of housing), where there may be other members of the family, including an unemployed father, grandparents and smaller siblings, often watching morning or afternoon

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TV in the same space. Teachers also work in orphanages that cater to street children who may have had no formal schooling before, but who are street-wise and in certain ways very mature for their age, having had to fight for their own survival without the support of a family or a caregiver. These students have very special and different needs and often feel alienated from the practices employed in formal schooling, not understanding the culture of school at all.

The School for Mobility Disability

The school for mobility disability has its own idiosyncratic difficulties in that students with cerebral palsy are mixed in the same classroom with students who may have no cognitive problems. Here it is difficult to pitch the level of the lesson and to monitor the content and types of resources to match such diversity. However, the English teacher sees this as an enriching experience where all the students learn to accept each other's condition and work together very often in a joyful manner, happy to receive English classes for the first time in their school lives.

Overcoming Contextual Difficulties Through Drama and Creativity

Given the three areas of difficulties examined above it was necessary to rethink the whole traditional mode of English language instruction currently being employed in the mainstream state schools in the city. Those schools have a curriculum designed for the six years of primary education and use a commercial textbook. Classes tend to be curriculum- or teacher-centred and focus on input through text with little output in terms of communicative spoken language. Thus, it was essential to find a totally new methodology which could offer the students in special education their rights on a humanitarian level and make sure that they enjoyed a measure of success.

The particular choice of drama is based on the fact that it is holistic and affective. It provides learners with multisensory input and offers active student output. Most importantly of all, drama makes use of the two main resources available to all even the most under-resourced schools anywhere in the world, that is, those resources that the students and the teachers bring to the learning situation through their 'Speaking Bodies in the Empty Space' (Brooks 1968). In drama the students and teachers are encouraged to use their

bodies, their voices, their minds, hearts and souls in a space which may be devoid of the resources many education systems take for granted.

Drama as Education

To achieve the objectives of the EiA programme, the pioneering work of Heathcote (Johnson and O'Neill 1984), introducing educational drama to state schools in Britain in the 1960s, became the guiding principle. Heathcote did not espouse drama as a performance art nor as theatre but as an educational developmental process for the growing learner. She defined drama as:

> Anything which involves people in active role-taking situations in which attitudes, not characters, are the chief concern, lived at life-rate (that is discovery at this moment, not memory-based) and obeying the natural laws of the medium: a willing suspension of disbelief, agreement to pretence, employing all past experiences and employing any conjecture of imagination to create a living, moving picture of life which aims at surprise and discovery for the participants rather than for any onlookers. (O' Neill 2014: 3)

Drama soon became accepted as a subject in the curriculum, and she subsequently went on to develop the discipline into a specific methodology using it very successfully in inner city schools, in the townships of Soweto, as well as with minority groups, delinquents/prisoners and special needs students in other parts of the world. In the last 20 years, some English language teachers have begun to realise the benefits of using educational drama to teach English, and advocates continue to call for more research and investigation into its efficacy. It is this transfer of drama techniques to ELT which is the backbone of the English in Action programme.

Drama as an Effective Learning Medium for All

Drama proves to be especially effective in that it represents life itself and is immediately recognisable for all students. The language comes from the real or imagined experiences which already belong to the students and which they have enjoyed in their mother tongue. Thus, giving them opportunities for comprehensible, communicative output (Swain and Lapkin 1995) in their new language is relatively painless and highly motivating. Results from research into drama as an effective medium for language teaching and learning

is positive though still scant and not very well accepted in the ELT community. For example, a meta-analysis of drama and language research (Wagner 1999, cited in Wilkinson 2000: 2) provides convincing evidence that dramatic forms of expression increase the development of language skills. Donaldson (1978) argues that drama is effective as a learning medium partly because it is an extension of childhood play through which the young child naturally learns about the world. Hillyard (2012, 2016) describes drama as the discipline of self-control which moves students into both real and imagined worlds. She further argues that drama has a profound effect on all the growth processes of the young learner: the social, physical, cognitive, creative and emotional. This is supported by O'Neill and Lambert (1982: 13) who state that 'The most significant kind of learning which is attributable to experiences in drama is a growth in the pupils' understanding about human behaviour, themselves and the world they live in'. In addition, Gardner's (1983) work on multiple intelligences, Maxwell's Accelerative Integrated Method (2004), neuroscientific studies on how the brain works (Wilkinson 2000) and research into learning styles (Rosenberg 2013) all point to the efficacy of drama as a learning medium.

Drama Inspires Learning and Development

Language work with SEN students was seen as not just about teaching the language as a system but rather as a complete education. Through its holistic nature, the use of drama embraces an education for every learner, which is what language teaching should be about, and aims to foster the abilities laid out in the 'Covenant to Help Inspire Learning and Development' (CHILD Covenant 2012) such as interdependence and collective responsibility as members of a learning community; respect and support for each other; solving problems creatively and collaboratively; encouraging resilience, persistence and responsibility in the face of challenge and conflict; and discontinuing practices and policies likely to undermine a child's natural love of learning.

Drama for Special Needs Students

Specialists in Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision (e.g. Sherratt and Peter 2002) acknowledge the cognitive, social and emotional benefits of drama in education for all students, whatever their condition. Recently there has been a growing movement towards performative activity or enquiry

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(Diaz-Rico 2007) and embodiment of the language in ELT, which can be considered another term for teaching English through Drama. Wilkinson (2000: 18) sums up the impact of using drama for language teaching most succinctly:

> Drama involves the whole body and the whole brain in learning in a fictional context […] Enjoyable physical movement embeds the emotional impact of multi-sensory experiences on the cells of the body to form deep neuronal patterns in the brain and thereby enable memory and recall more readily than methods having lesser sensory impact.

This chart summarises both the educational and language development benefits which drama affords the students whatever their age, level, proficiency or culture (Table 9.1).

English in Action Methodology and Classroom Practice

Profile of the EiA Teachers

Having explained the necessity of finding a possible solution to the challenges of EFL teaching with no resources in SEN schools in Buenos Aires City, I will now show how, in actual practice in these contexts, drama serves as an affordable resource. The EiA teachers (Hillyard 2015) had been employed on the basis of their:

a) Having an official English language teaching degree
b) Excellent competence in pronunciation and communicative methodology

Table 9.1 Benefits of drama to learners

Education	Language
For transformation	Pronunciation, diction and voice control
As empowerment	Body language and gesture
For fluency (speaking)	Stance and posture
As culture (play and storytelling)	Blocking/interacting in space with others
For thinking (all types)	Register/speaking in role/improvisation/language games
For literacy (reading and writing)	Lifting the word off the page
For general well-being	Making language active, meaningful and fun

c) Desire to be trained in drama pedagogy
d) Desire to work with SEN students.

Some of them had attended conferences, workshops or courses delivered by the EiA programme coordinator, and a few had NLP (neurolinguistic programming) qualifications and ALL (Alternative Language Learning Method) qualifications or were presently attending sociopsychology or neuroscience courses at Spanish-medium universities in Buenos Aires. None, except the coordinator, had drama training or had worked with SEN students before. In the first year, the objectives were outlined in a very basic syllabus modelled on the first grade syllabus for mainstream schools, even though the actual context was unknown when the programme was designed.

Training the Teachers to Use Drama as Pedagogy

The English in Action training began through daily discussions and materials development on an online platform, weekly online classes and monthly f2f four hourly workshops on Saturday mornings. Bearing in mind the lack of resources and the impossibility of any budget for future resources, the teachers were trained to construct their own 'Action Sacks' (adapted from Griffiths 2005) related to a curriculum based on stories (Ellis and Brewster 2014) and how to design and do drama activities with the necessary props and suitable classroom management strategies to teach the listening and speaking skills. They were also trained to include the SPICE of ELT (**S**ocial, **P**hysical, **I**ntellectual, **C**reative and **E**motional development) in designing each lesson, covering all the necessary developmental processes of the growing learner through the *doing* of drama. In order to achieve these essential principles of drama, the teachers were instructed to remove all the desks and always have the students seated on chairs in the 'magic circle'.

In addition, each member of the team was encouraged to choose different stories and create a different bag which included any of the following materials:

- A copy of the story book/song/chant
- Flashcards or a PPT of the key vocabulary if technology (ICT) is available
- A different medium version of the springboard, for example, video/podcast/ picture/art
- Related non-fiction books/articles/pictures/references
- Realia-like models of characters and objects from the springboard
- Activities or games relating to the springboard

- Materials like paper, crayons, markers, paints, plasticine and so on
- Activity cards
- Microphone, ball, binoculars, pieces of cloth, ball of wool
- Simple costumes
- Teacher's book with all the activities explained.

The Opening of the Programme

Prepared with a basic but growing set of strategies for teaching English through Drama and an Action Sack full of realia, a story book, home-made flashcards and board games, the teachers were ready, and rather nervous, to begin the programme. However, the first classes opened in something of a shroud of mystery. The 20 schools had not been sufficiently well prepared by being informed of the nature of the project, so it was introduced 'cold' into their well-established curricula. Neither had they been introduced to the trained EiA language teachers who were to join their staff. Scepticism added to the mystery and many of the EiA teachers faced a negative welcome and a certain amount of fear or even aggression from the students. Over the course of the first few weeks, the schools accepted the 'intrusion' of inclusion (teaching of English as a foreign language) and started to select the students for this new project. Despite our being told that we would be working in fourth grade (9-year-olds) with small groups of up to 12 students, some school directors decided to put several classes together making some groups of 20, and many decided it was the older students who needed to start English rather than the younger ones. This meant that much of the material the teachers had prepared as compelling comprehensible input (Krashen and Bland 2014) in the form of illustrated story books or short chants, songs and rhymes were totally unsuitable for 13–16-year-olds. So, together with the coordinator, the team redesigned the Action Sacks to include poems, newspaper cuttings, posters, film clips, videos, popular songs and realia with a more mature thrust.

Coping with the Reactions of Schools and Students

Some of the schools could not find a room for the English class so the teachers were faced with working in the corridor, the staffroom, the music room, the computer lab or the art room with the concomitant distractions these contexts bring with them. Some groups of students resented having to move away

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the desks (their refuge) and felt very exposed and somewhat helpless having to rely only on their bodies, voices, brains, hearts and minds. After being in traditional school settings, sitting in rows and copying from the green board for all their school lives, with teachers who only spoke Spanish, change was nigh on impossible for the adolescents who were so weak even in their mother tongue that they could never leave primary school. Some teachers reported back that they had had desks and/or chairs thrown at them, insults hurled along with refusals from older students to move or speak and generally disruptive behaviour, as students could not accept that English was useful to them because they were sure they were never going to use it as adults. Some took advantage of the new freedom to move and hit or kick other students while some ran out of the room and went wandering around the school. The home visits, classes in the school for wheelchair users and hospital work tended not to present these difficulties but had their own challenges as explained above.

These difficulties were gradually resolved as the teachers believed in what they were doing and they felt sure that the programme was right. We knew that we had a hard job ahead, that it would prove a long process. Eventually, towards the middle of the first year, most teachers had honed down their approach and had found ways to deal with such disruptions by setting routines and always being vigilant and well prepared to follow the type of lesson procedure shown below.

The use of both students and teachers as resources demands that students become protagonists and teachers become facilitators of learning situations. Following this premise, the following is the format of a typical EiA lesson:

Teacher: Good morning! Let's arrange the desks, put them out of the way and put the chairs in a circle. Sit down on your chairs. Let's begin! Let's sing the hello song and do the actions!

Teacher: Good. Now stand up and let's stretch and breathe deeply so we can concentrate together… Shake your hands, arms, body, feet, head, tongue and so on. (The teacher then asks one student to take on the role of the teacher to give instructions.)

Teacher: Storytime! (or Videotime!) (teacher reads a story/shows a video)

Teacher: (showing flashcards or illustrations from the story/video in her Action Sack) Remember the vocabulary? OK, I'm going to bounce the ball to each of you and you must tell me one word you remember. Bounce it back to me each time.

Teacher: Juan, show me how… (Jack played on his computer/the ghost walked into the room/Goldilocks fell off the chair and what did each say?)

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This input is compelling because drama allows the teacher to model every instruction 'live', to offer many clues through mime, movement, gesture, modelling and storytelling in the dramatic form, showing pictures, using flashcards and having the students take on the role of the protagonists. As soon as the students start *doing*, they are involved in communicative output. In the lesson plan below, which is just one of hundreds used over the six years EiA has been in operation, you can see how some of the frames of drama are presented in a dynamic and seamless procedure where the teacher leads the students through a series of drama activities which conform to the laws of the discipline as outlined in Table 9.2.

Additional Activities Leading to Acceptance of English in Action

A Festival of Students' Work: A Real Show in Real English

In the second year, one of the team members suggested that EiA should offer a professional play in English to present to all 500 students in a real theatre. Everybody thought it was a risk but agreed that the magic of a real play in a real theatre, an experience unknown to the students, would enhance their developmental processes. Students were thrilled with the experience. Many discovered talents they did not even know they had and that they could understand and enjoy a play wholly in English.

EiA is now in its sixth year and the schools are asking for more lessons, more teachers and more of this methodology in general. Part of this success is due to the festival, which is held annually as a mega event. The festival is designed and directed by the coordinator, and each item is prepared, separately, in each school during English classes, to be presented as a variety show. EiA is granted the use of the Berlusconi Institute Theatre where 200 SEN students present their work in English, on a real stage, to an audience of approximately 500 fellow students, teachers, directors, supervisors and ministry authorities. Every year, several 'Theatre in Education' companies are approached, and a professional company donates a complete musical show. The teachers work on the plots, the characters, the songs and the vocabulary beforehand so the students' motivation is set in motion. The show consists of group action songs, solo songs, role plays, re-enacted stories, sketches, demonstration classes or interviews, any genre which fits into educational drama. The first year was generally considered to be a 'miracle' as this type of event

Table 9.2 An example of a 45-minute lesson plan

Lesson Plan Section 1

This part works on social and physical development and prepares the students to work as a community, caring for all, developing empathy, resolving conflicts and monitoring behaviour problems. It works on compelling comprehensible input as the students show their understanding of the instructions through developed listening skills and by *doing*

Introduction: Warm-up

Breathing, Brain gym, Body and Voice Preparation (BBBV)

1. Explain, possibly in the L1, that all actors in the theatre and in films always start with this kind of warm-up and that we will start every class like this.
2. Stand in a closed circle. Hands on diaphragm. Breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth to the count of 2, then 4, then 8, then 16.
3. Using first the right then the left arm, then the right leg, then the left leg… shake the limb in the air, counting all together up to 8, then teacher (T) shouts *half*, so to the count of 4 then T shouts *half*, so to the count of 2, and then T shouts *half*, so to the count of 1
4. Imagine there's a monster on the roof with 6 little helpers, throwing down strong glue that attaches itself to your fingers… they go *up, up, up* (raising your voice). Then the monster runs down into the basement and your fingers are going *down, down, down* (deepen your voice). Ask individual students, maybe in L1, '*What colour was your monster*?'

Lesson Plan Section 2 Core

This section works on compelling comprehensible input through dramatic storytelling, multisensory actions, putting the language in a meaningful context, showing the pictures or a video clip to supplement the material.

The Springboard: A 'Story'

Today is Monday by Eric Carle

The teacher, a dramatic storyteller, presents her Action Sack and shows the illustrations from an illustrated story and has the students look carefully at the pictures (or flashcards) to gain meaning, to engage the class with the springboard.

The teacher picks out specific vocabulary, expressions and structures she wishes to emphasise and has the class repeat them with the essential actions. She extends the basic drill to say them happily, sadly, angrily, crying, laughing, fast, slow and so on.

Vocabulary: Days of the week, foods

Often the teacher will mime or demonstrate the meaning and sometimes use L1 to explain meaning. She asks the students to join in with her actions.

(*continued*)

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Table 9.2 (continued)

Section 3 Development

This section puts the SPICE together and allows for dramatic comprehensible output giving the students opportunities to use all their channels of learning and expressing understanding. It also fixes the vocabulary by using the learning body. Through the variety of activities, it works on creativity and cognition developing quick thinking and fluency.

Have the students stand up and teach them a different action for each day of the week:

- Monday: hands on head
- Tuesday: hands over ears
- Wednesday: hands on shoulders
- Thursday: hands on waist
- Friday: hands smack bottom
- Saturday: hands on knees
- Sunday: hands in the air

Repeat the actions all together several times, saying the days. Then say the words/do the actions in the wrong order and ask for the corresponding action/words. Have one student play the teacher, while the teacher plays a student.

Lay flashcards of the days of the week/food mentioned in the text on the floor and ask a student to jump to each card and do the corresponding action. Mix the days and repeat.

Teach the song *Today is Monday* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meZpwOoTJ70) line by line without repeating the previous line. Use actions to explain the vocabulary.

Have the students learn the song and perform it. Take photos if you wish and make a video to develop student identity.

Lesson Plan Section 4 Conclusion

This section offers opportunities for comprehensible output and raises self-esteem by giving all the students time and space to show what they have learned.

1. Living spidergrams:

Ask for 'hard' vocabulary from the story and pass a ball/bounce a ball around the circle asking students to contribute a word they can remember:

T: Monday
St 1: Runner beans
St 2: Spaghetti
St 3: Ice cream
St 4: Saturday

2.) Sing a goodbye song with actions. (There are many goodbye songs on the Internet.)

never happens, even in Spanish, in the SEN schools. The team was very nervous but 'Making Visible the Invisible and Giving Voice to the Voiceless' proved not to be a cliché but a joyous reality that gave 500 students a unique opportunity to experience something many of us take for granted.

As an additional fillip, each student attending the festival receives a cloth bag with two English story books inside, all donated by the publishing companies who support the work of the EiA team. One group of 16 wheelchair users with their personal caregivers had to be helped up the ramps, into the lift, along the backstage corridors and onto the stage where they opened the festival singing an action song. This was the highlight of the show and a learning experience for the rest of the students who expressed their shock at the condition of these students with different special needs. For many of these students, it was a moment when they could, for the first time, be in their element.

Conclusion

It was evident that the theory on paper was fine until it was first tested out in practice and much flexibility and skill in creating a bond with these students was required. It also became clear that the team members had to be patient and take reflective time to develop an understanding of all types of SEN students' needs. Even after a number of years of finding resources in resourceless situations using English through Drama, certain students sometimes have their 'off' days, new students fight and some adolescents resent the removal of desks. But we have to remember that that is why they are placed in special schools. So the teachers have to accept that progress is often slow, uncertain and always patchy.

Despite the three areas of difficulties explained above, the teachers, all believing in the efficacy of the programme, continued to develop these innovations, and by the middle of the first school year, they were able to reach out and pull in most students to learn basic listening and speaking skills. The directors and many of the Spanish-speaking teachers dropped their scepticism to replace it with admiration for the EiA dynamism, commenting on how the students were engaged with English, waited for the teachers at the school door, started to rearrange the furniture before class, sang the English songs at break time and in some cases showed their sketches to their Spanish teachers, practising on their own in their own time. What shocked both teachers and students was the fact that the EiA teachers use English all the time to give the

instructions and the students begin to enjoy the lessons and to join in, honing their listening skills and developing their SPICE skills.

There was never an intention to have formal examinations, but without a doubt the positive reception of this methodology has helped these SEN students gain a measure of success which has led to parents and school heads asking for more hours to be devoted to the programme.

Use of drama is just one of many ways to develop an effective teaching of English methodology in difficult circumstances, but it has the potential to offer a space for reflection and consideration to teachers and policymakers to review current practices which may be less effective. Although initially my own past experiences in the use of educational drama and my unswerving belief in its efficacy were major factors in motivating the EiA team members, the success of drama with SEN students, taking small steps at a time but showing progress in learning, kept the spirits high and sustained the teachers' interest even in some very difficult times.

The EiA programme is still small, young and underdeveloped. It demands serious research to test its efficacy in other difficult circumstances and to test if it might prove to be a way forward to ensure effective English language teaching and learning, not only for SEN learners but for mainstream learners in under-resourced settings throughout the world. The vital point is to convince authorities that innovative ideas such as the use of educational drama may produce positive changes and that teachers need to be trained and offered CPD throughout their careers to develop their own potential and better serve their students.

Engagement Priorities

1. What do you consider to be the merits of introducing the teaching of English through drama in inclusive contexts with students who are physically or mentally challenged?
2. The EiA programme was based on the premise that English could be introduced using the two main resources available to all schools all over the world, that is, the resources that the students and the teachers bring to the learning situation through their 'Speaking Bodies in the Empty Space'. How could you exploit both your own and your students' resources in your specific educational context?
3. The chapter offers a typical EiA lesson plan. Can you devise some more lesson plans for your context using this as a model?
4. This methodology might prove to be a way forward to ensure effective English language teaching and learning, not only for SEN learners but for

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all learners in under-resourced environments in mainstream education throughout the world. To what extent do you feel that the activities described in this chapter are applicable in mainstream ELT in your context?

Recommended Texts

Baldwin, P. (2004). *With drama in mind.* Stafford: Network Educational Press.

This comprehensive book covers the theory of drama from seven different angles such as the connection between play and learning and between thinking and talk. It also presents 25 practical drama structures to create the drama experience along with five units of lesson plans complete with resource sheets, adaptable for ELT, that may be photocopied for classroom use.

Boal, A. (2002). *Games for actors and non-actors* (2nd ed.). Oxon: Routledge.

Boal, the founder of 'The Theatre of the Oppressed' movement in Brazil, explains the underpinnings of his work and includes a huge 'arsenal' of practical exercises and games which can be adapted for ELT.

Hillyard, S. (2016). *English through drama: Creative activities for inclusive ELT classrooms.* London: Helbling Languages.

This book presents a clear introduction of the theory underpinning the use of drama for language learning and over 80 activities for teaching English through Drama to all levels and ages. It stresses the importance of language education of the whole learner and ways of helping students to express themselves confidently in their foreign language.

Wilson, K. (2008). *Drama and improvisation.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This is a resource book for teachers and offers more than 50 tried and tested drama activities for ELT, ranging from simple, short interactions for elementary students to longer, more advanced interchanges for upper intermediate students to extracurricular drama club activities and eight original sketches as scripts.

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Section IV

Approaches to Teacher Development in Difficult Circumstances

10

Towards a Project-Based Approach to Teacher Development in Difficult Circumstances: The Case of Two English Language Teachers' Professional Development in Cameroon

Gladys Focho

Introduction

This chapter reports on a project on the design and implementation of a one-year continuing professional development (CPD) plan of two teachers in Cameroon. Initially, the perceptions and concerns of CPD of Cameroonian secondary school English language teachers working under difficult conditions were identified through a questionnaire. The difficulties they face regarding CPD formed the basis for the project whose objective was to experiment on the effectiveness of a bottom-up approach to CPD. Their feedback on this experience was later explored to highlight, from a practical point of view, teachers' experiences on a bottom-up approach to teacher development. The stories of these two teachers in Cameroon will hopefully shed light on how teachers in similar contexts elsewhere could take control of their professional development.

The chapter begins by presenting the background of ELT in Cameroon. It then reviews the concept of CPD and goes on to describe CPD in the Cameroonian context, highlighting challenges. Next, it presents an overview of the process of a community developmental project on which the CPD project with the teachers was anchored. The conduct of the project is described, and conclusions are drawn as to lessons learnt and their relevance to local and other contexts.

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Background

English language in secondary schools in Cameroon is taught both as a second language in English-medium schools and as a foreign language in French-medium schools. This can be explained by the fact that Cameroon has two educational systems due to its linguistic heritage from the English and the French. English language teachers for public schools are trained by the government, while those for private schools are mostly untrained graduates from universities. Teachers in the public sector often complain of a lot of difficulties such as heavy workload. For example, one teacher can have three or four different classes of 100 students each, giving tests every six weeks. Another perennial problem is that of large classes, in some cases, of up to 200 and above (Kuchah and Smith 2011). In many classrooms, four to five students are crammed on a desk in crowded classrooms making classroom management difficult. Teachers find it difficult, for example, to maintain student discipline; to make use of sound pedagogic principles and practices like group work, projects, differentiated learning and authentic assessment; or even to pay attention to individual students.

Teaching is also made difficult due to the inadequacy of teaching materials with the blackboard being the main pedagogic tool in many schools. In addition, teachers find it difficult to teach effectively when many students do not have textbooks, and libraries, where they exist, are often poorly equipped. One more problem is frequent power cuts which reduce access to the internet or basic computer services in the few schools which have computers. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that lack of motivation is rife among teachers. Teaching becomes mechanical and monotonous, leaving teachers frustrated because despite the effort they put in, the outcomes remain below expectations.

The above scenario which characterizes ELT in Cameroon public secondary schools points to the fact that teachers in Cameroon need help to deal with these challenges. In this context, CPD activities can help them try different approaches to classroom management and use other strategies to improve student learning outcomes. This chapter examines existing challenges to CPD in Cameroon and reports on a recent small-scale project designed to encourage two teachers to develop their pedagogic practice based on their own contextual affordances.

Defining CPD

This section presents a brief overview of CPD to situate this chapter in the global perspective of teacher development. Day (1999) views teacher development as a conscious effort to plan activities at the individual, group or

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institutional level with the aim of ensuring quality education. According to Hayes (2014: 4–5), CPD is multi-faceted, ranging from formal to informal, structured to unstructured and individual to collective. It can also be content-specific or generalized. Whatever the case, each CPD activity is often viewed as either top-down (from the administration and imposed on the teachers) or bottom-up (from the teachers and seeking to be recognized by the administration).

No matter the approach, for CPD to be effective, certain parameters need to be taken into consideration. It must be ongoing and should meet teachers' needs, involve teachers in the planning process, focus on subject matter and teaching skills and be collaborative (Borg 2015; Broad and Evans 2006; Craig et al. 1998; Hunzicker 2010; O'Brien 1986). From the view point of Hustler et al. (2003), CPD activities must also help in developing leadership and other professional skills, boosting career and personal growth and improving student outcomes. In fact, Earley and Porritt (2010) and Borg (2015) emphasize that the main goal of CPD should be the meeting of students' needs. This suggests that students' needs must be the starting point of CPD activities. Whichever approach to CDP is taken, the ultimate goal is to improve teaching and learning.

In Cameroon, it is observed that normally teachers are resistant to top-down CPD activities organized by the school authorities: as will be discussed later, the timing might be wrong, or the CPD activity may not be deemed relevant. Teachers may fail to participate in CPD activities for want of money or due to heavy workload; sometimes it may just be plain rebellion against unwarranted instructions or interference from education authorities. In this regard, Underhill (1999) states that CPD initiated by the teacher (bottom-up) is often more effective than that imposed by the administration (top-down). This was found to be true in a school where I taught some time ago; the administration tried to introduce peer observation in the school, but teachers were very hostile to the idea and some blatantly said they neither wanted anyone in their classes nor would they enter anyone else's class. But a few of us who found the idea interesting teamed up, implemented peer observation and feedback, and found this very enriching to our own professional development. This led to the thought that an alternative approach to engaging teachers in professional learning is to raise awareness on the impact of CPD and give teachers the freedom to choose their own development activities. Evidently, there are many CPD activities that the teacher can engage in on a personal basis and at their convenience, with or without support from the hierarchy.

Boas (2014) is of the opinion that even when CPD is from the top, it should be based on the teachers' individual needs. More specifically, Boas believes in visionary professional development which leans on a differentiated

approach to CPD. This is in contrast to the 'one-size-fits-all' approach where all teachers are in the same CPD activity in the same place at the same time following the same agenda. He recommends that different CPD activities should be organized for groups of teachers according to identified needs or levels of experience.

In any case, both the top-down and bottom-up approaches to CPD are not mutually exclusive. Caena (2011) is of the opinion that CPD becomes effective when it is institutionalized and integrates both top-down and bottom-up approaches. Similarly, Underhill (1999) suggests that while CPD should be self-directed, it can be more effective when supported by the teacher's institution. Burns (2005) shares the same view when she says that teachers ought to be supported to initiate and manage their own development. This is particularly pertinent in cases where teachers are unaware of, or do not take advantage of, the many alternative forms of individual, low cost CPD activities available.

What kinds of tools may help teachers in their CPD? Prince and Barrett (2014: 38) present a CPD assessment scale that can help teachers identify their level of competency with regard to a specific CPD activity and take appropriate measures for their development. According to the authors, a number of CPD activities could be listed, followed by a teacher indicating his or her level on a scale of awareness (have heard about it), understanding (knowledge of meaning and importance), engaged (demonstrate competence in it at work), and integrated (high level of competence and consistency in use), and leadership (help others develop in it). Such an assessment scale can serve as needs analysis and thus help in planning need-based CPD programmes.

It is widely recognized that teachers at different stages in their careers have different experiences and needs. According to Davidson et al. (2012), there are many reasons why a teacher would want to engage in CPD activities. They categorize teachers into six groups (starting, newly qualified, developing, proficient, advanced and specialist) and identify the needs of each. Starting teachers may want tips on matching theory with practice, while proficient teachers may simply want to consolidate their competencies, upgrade their skills or have fresh inspiration from new theories, materials or methods. Even some specialist teachers may still have such needs as leadership skills in ELT. Similarly, Woodward (2010) has categorized the teacher's career in five stages, emphasizing on their various characteristics and inherent needs. From both perspectives, teachers find themselves at one career stage or another but may not be conscious of a need. For example, a teacher who is 'proficient' may be content with demonstrating confidence and experience, yet is oblivious of the 'need' to change role or expand

specialization to move forward to the 'advanced' category. Because of this diversity in teacher experiences and needs, there exist many types of teacher CPD activities, both top-down and bottom-up, to address them.

In summary, professional development should be every teacher's business because every teacher at each stage of development has one professional concern or the other. In this chapter therefore, the emphasis is on the individual teachers' conscious effort to plan and execute their development activities on a continuous basis. Thus whether the teacher development activity is mandated from above or initiated from below, teachers have to include it in their agenda, if relevant to their needs. This is because to be effective in their job, teachers ought to assess themselves to find out where they stand in relation to their knowledge of, and involvement in, a specific CPD activity. This will enable them to determine if they need to learn more about that specific activity, engage in it or share the knowledge they already have with others. In essence, CPD to develop personal and professional qualities should not only be planned but also lifelong (Padwad and Dixit 2014).

CPD in the Cameroon Public Secondary School Sector

There are different forms of CPD in Cameroon. As documented by Tanah (2011), professional development for teachers in public schools is the responsibility of pedagogic inspectors found at the national and regional levels. The roles of these inspectors as defined by the Ministry of Secondary Education include the organization of refresher courses, seminars, workshops and conferences as well as pedagogic supervision (Mbappe 1996).

Typically, each region has between eight to ten inspectors for hundreds of schools and thousands of teachers spread over a wide geographical area. This number is grossly insufficient for effective CPD activities to be carried out on a regular basis. For the lack of means of transport and due to bad roads, most of the CPD activities are concentrated in the towns to the detriment of teachers in the rural areas who are in the majority. Having been a pedagogic inspector myself, the experience was that seminars are organized occasionally at regional and divisional levels, and teachers are invited from all the localities within that jurisdiction. Attendance is not strictly enforced so many teachers do not attend. Thus as Tchombe (2010) observes, teachers have inadequate access to seminars and workshops, and more important, there is no follow-up for continued capacity building.

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It should be noted that, according to the Ministry of Secondary Education (1998), instructional supervision is a vital component of CPD in Cameroon. Yet due to the magnitude of the work, it is not done systematically by the inspectors or school principals. Unsurprisingly, a survey of English language teachers by Titanji and Yuouh (2010) indicates that regional inspectors do not carry out assigned functions with regard to instructional supervision. As a result, it is not uncommon to find some teachers who go through their whole careers without being supervised even once.

Another CPD activity instituted by the school administration is the holding of educational talks and discussions during departmental meetings (Ministry of Secondary Education 1998). But most often, these meetings are characterized by the evaluation of such administrative issues as time tabling, schemes of work, content coverage, testing/evaluation and punctuality/regularity. Little time is scheduled for discussion of individual teachers' concerns.

CAMELTA (Cameroonian English Language and Literature Teacher Association) also makes an important contribution to CPD in Cameroon (Ntam 2010). A major goal of CAMELTA is to provide high standards of in-service training through seminars and workshops at the national, regional and local levels. Many teachers make an effort to participate in these activities, but the number is insignificant compared to the total number of English language teachers in the country or a region.

Another source of professional development is from partners (British Council, US and other embassies) in the form of video conferences, trainings and exchange programmes and sponsorship for attending international conferences or for further studies (Ntam 2010). For example, the cascade model for in-service training was experimented with primary school teachers by a foreign partner (the German Development Cooperation); a number of teachers were trained, and each in turn trained other teachers in their institutions (Lange 2013).

In Cameroon, school-based CPD activities such as induction practices, mentoring programmes, peer observation and evaluation of teaching by students are largely absent. More important, CPD is not an integral part of the national teacher education policies, as is the case in Nigeria and South Africa (Obanya 2010). Because of this lack of emphasis on CPD in Cameroon, one objective of this project was to find out teachers' awareness level of CPD and the difficulties they encounter in engaging in CPD activities. Subsequently, two teachers were helped to develop and implement a personal CPD plan based on the approach used by those in the area of development projects (see section on 'CPD as a Development Project').

Challenges to CPD in Cameroon

For beginning teachers in Cameroon, the gap between the realities of training and what obtains in the field can be overwhelming (Kuchah 2008). Because of the many challenges teachers in Cameroon face, experiencing burn out is expected early in their careers. The tendency is for many to focus more on daily survival issues with regard to their jobs. As a result, there is little time, energy or motivation left to engage in any professional development activity to upgrade their knowledge and skills. From my own experience in the field, I believe that the problem begins with a lack of awareness of the concept of, and the importance of, CPD. Continuing professional development is absent in the curricula of teacher training programmes leaving many young teachers ignorant about the various forms of CPD available even at low cost. For example, teachers are not conscious of the fact that being reflective about one's teaching and making small changes is a great step towards improvement. Consequently, for the majority of English teachers, such opportunities for self-improvement slip by, as they continue to grope in the dark for solutions to their professional problems, while waiting for organized seminars, workshops and conferences.

Another impediment to CPD in Cameroon is teachers' inadequate skills and competencies to carry out some of the activities that constitute professional development. For example, many teachers do not possess the required skills for action research known to be a powerful tool in problem-solving (Smith and Kuchah 2016). Similarly, reading for professional growth is hampered by the scarcity of well-equipped libraries and the internet. The majority of schools do not have computers or internet services and neither do the teachers in their homes. And besides, a lot of teachers in Cameroon need to be computer literate to be able to take full advantage of the myriad services offered by the internet (Tchombe 2010). Moreover, some inspectors lack competence in instructional supervision and delivering effective seminars and training programmes (Tenjoh-Okwen 2003).

The nonchalant attitude of teachers towards CPD activities is also a cause for concern. Personal observation reveals that many teachers do not attend departmental meetings or seminars even when organized by the authorities. Others complain of the lack of awareness of programmed CPD activities (Tchombe 2010), poor timing or the clash of these activities with other professional ones. From discussions with colleagues in the field, some believe they have nothing to gain from these activities (especially the experienced teachers). They have become complacent and used to their teaching conditions no matter how difficult the circumstances may be.

There are also complaints of the lack of money and time to travel to conferences and workshops and to buy and use internet time. However, a study by Hustler et al. (2003) indicates that finances and workload are not major constraints to CPD. Also, critically thinking, these activities are not very expensive or time consuming as compared to attending short courses or studying for higher degrees. The problem, therefore, might simply be lack of interest or commitment. Intrinsic motivation for professional development becomes a strong factor under such circumstances. A related issue is also the lack of recognition or palpable gains from CPD. There is no clear mechanism for career growth through promotions or appointments to posts of responsibility so teachers get frustrated when less-educated colleagues with limited experience are made their bosses. Unsurprisingly, when considerations other than merit lead to appointments and promotions, teachers are bound to feel frustrated and unmotivated to pursue professional development.

Institutional support for professional development activities is crucial, and where it is absent, teachers lag behind. Often, when CPD activities are organized, some principals refuse to give permission or transportation allowances to their teachers to attend. In addition, principals do not encourage the teachers to improve their knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis and/or recognize and use the potential of those who constantly reskill their competencies. In view of the above hindrances, it is necessary for teachers to appropriate their own professional development. Based on this premise, the aim of this CPD project was to demonstrate that with self-directed CPD, it might be possible for teachers in difficult circumstances to overcome some of the obstacles to CPD discussed above.

CPD as a Development Project

The concept of a community development project to identify and solve problems in communities guided the CPD activities reported in this chapter. According to Taylor (2011), a development project has a cycle which begins with problem or needs identification and prioritizing before planning and implementation. Monitoring is an essential part of the project process which ends with evaluation. This means that a project is well thought out at the inception stage and before implementation begins as advocated in the stages of project development (see also, Alex 2011; Bowen 2011).

In identifying and prioritizing needs, project managers encourage the use of a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of the main actors. The rationale is for the participants to recognize and take advan-

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tage of their strengths and opportunities while working to overcome their weaknesses and threats. Planning involves the setting of objectives which, in Bruden's (2010) view, must be SMART, that is, **s**pecific, **m**easureable, **a**ttainable/achievable, **r**ealistic/relevant and **t**imely/time bound. After identifying the problem and setting objectives, the next step in a development project is to plan how these objectives will be realized, hence an implementation plan. During implementation, there must be monitoring and finally an evaluation of the whole process. All of these elements are put in a table called a 'logical framework' which indicates objectives, activities, funding, time frame and means of monitoring and evaluation. For longer periods of three years and more, a strategic plan is put in place indicating the yearly activities. There are many models and templates of logical framework ranging from simple to complex, and people generally modify them to suit different purposes and situations. Because the teachers in this project knew very little about development plans, I decided to modify the logical framework to contain these basic elements: objectives, major activities, sources of funding, time frame, expected outcome and monitoring and evaluation (see Tables 10.1 and 10.2 for the modified logical framework used in this project).

A development project is said to be cyclical because the full cycle must be completed, and the process can begin all over again with the same project (correcting mistakes) or with a new one. The sustainability of a development project is also important for it to be lifelong to enable the community to address their emerging needs. For a CPD project to be sustainable, there must be a well-thought-out plan with realistic objectives. In the project described here, the teachers identified CPD activities that were relevant to them and which they could easily engage in throughout the year and which could be adopted or adapted in subsequent years.

There are many similarities between a development project and CPD. Like a project manager, teachers must identify their needs and prioritize them. For example, if they need skills in conference presentation, curriculum development or classroom management, they might want to prioritize the last one. SMART objectives are now set to realize the goal of improved class management skills (e.g. gain skills in class control, differentiated activities, authentic assessment, etc.). Then an appropriate CDP activity is chosen (conference, workshop, online course, etc.), and resources and possible funding sources identified (scholarships, grants, personal savings, etc.). The teachers should also decide when this CPD activity will take place. Monitoring implies checking on the deadlines for programmed actions at the end of which the teachers must reflect on whether objectives have been met and identify lessons learnt. The main questions for reflection are: has this CPD activity addressed my

Table 10.1 Mrs. Ngwa's teacher development logical framework (for an annual plan)

Objectives	Major activities	Sources of funding	Time frame	Expected outcome	Monitoring
To improve on teaching skills	Analyse the pros and cons of each lesson Discuss problems with colleagues Take concerns to departmental meetings Adopt new strategies		Sept. 2013 to June 2104	Gain knowledge on strategies to solve specific problems	Reflect on entries each weekend Note if new strategies are being used Learn from strengths and weaknesses
To be abreast with general trends in the field	Attend all CAMELTA conferences Attend all seminars by inspectors Internet research and use of resource centres	Personal savings	Whenever seminars and conferences are programmed Read at least once a week (books and articles on the internet)	Use new discoveries to improve methods and classroom management	Find out schedules for seminars, workshops and conferences Ensure money is saved Record the use of new lessons learnt

Objectives	Major activities	Sources of funding	Time frame	Expected outcome	Monitoring
To develop presentation skills and present at a regional or national conference	Research more on the subject Practice writing abstracts/papers Get input from regular presenters Attend all conferences Send in abstract for CAMELTA conferences Present at a conference	Personal savings	Sept.–Oct. 2013: research and practice Oct. 2013: send abstract for CAMELTA regional conference Nov. 2013: present at regional conference Jan.–March. 2014: more research and practice Apr. 2014: send abstract for CAMELTA national conference August 2014: present at CAMELTA national conference	Gain skills and confidence in public speaking Upgrade skills in writing abstracts and papers for publication Eventually present at international events	Document deadlines and dates for conferences Save regularly Identify advantages and setbacks of each activity
Do a master's programme	Gain admission Identify source for funding Apply for study leave	My employer Scholarships/ grants Personal savings	Dec. 2013: begin applying for admissions/ scholarships May 2014: gain admission/ scholarship June 2015: gain study leave	Upgrade skills and knowledge Ready for leadership position Motivation for doing a PhD	Consult this plan regularly Ensure respect of deadlines

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Table 10.2 Mr. Mbah's teacher development logical framework (for an annual plan)

Objectives	Major activities	Sources of funding	Time frame	Expected outcome	Monitoring and evaluation
Develop more skills on classroom management	Record all disciplinary problems Analyse causes and strategies used Discuss with colleagues Take concerns to departmental meetings Research on the topic	Personal savings for buying Internet time	Sept. 2013 to June 2104 To do library and internet research once every month	Learn more strategies on curbing disruptive behaviour Be able to better manage the class	Reflect on entries each weekend Note if strategies are being used and how effectively
Experience participating at conferences, seminars and workshops	Attend the CAMELTA regional conference Attend all seminars programmed by regional inspectors	Personal savings for transport/ lodging	Nov. 2013: CAMELTA regional conference Whenever inspectors programme seminars	Gain knowledge on various aspects of teaching from all presentations	Find out schedules for seminars, workshops and conferences Ensure money is saved Record lessons learnt

problem? Do I apply the knowledge gained from this activity? Have I become a better teacher? Are my students learning better? What other professional concerns do I have and which CPD activities can help address these issues? Then the process begins all over again. In this way, continuing professional development is a lifelong developmental project.

Other ideas from development projects can be applied to the area of teacher development. CPD activities, like projects, must be well planned for them to be effective. In addition, similar to community development projects, CPD should be need-based and continuous and move from addressing one need to the other.

CPD of Two Teachers Using the Project Approach

As indicated earlier, a major issue in Cameroon is that due to the difficult circumstances faced by teachers, even those who have some notion of CPD may not be fully exploiting its advantages. The project therefore was an attempt to develop and execute a one-year CPD plan with two teachers, the objective being to raise awareness on the notion of self-directed CPD and to encourage teachers to take charge of their own professional development. The project was carried out in two phases: in the first phase, a questionnaire was administered to 20 volunteer English language teachers at the CAMELTA annual conference to get background knowledge on their understanding of, and engagement in, CPD. Two teachers from the respondents agreed to be part of the second phase of the project which is the focus of this chapter.

Two Teachers' Annual Professional Development Plan: Design and Implementation

This section will report on how the two volunteer teachers were supported to design and implement a one-year professional development plan, based on the community development project approach described earlier. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the main steps in the process are beginning with a SWOT analysis, setting up SMART objectives, planning sources of funding, implementing the plan and monitoring and evaluation of planned activities. Another important feature of this approach is that development is seen as cyclical, the end of one development activity leading back to the former if the goals were not achieved, or moving on to a new goal. This process goes on throughout life.

Two teachers (one experienced and one beginning) volunteered to join the CPD project for developing and implementing a CPD plan, with support from a university-based researcher (the author) for the academic year from September 2013 to June 2014. The research objective was to investigate the effectiveness of a bottom-up approach to CPD in difficult circumstances and whether individual teachers can take charge of their own development by making and implementing a plan for professional growth. The choice of participants, one beginning and one experienced teacher, enabled a comparison of the effectiveness of the approach with 'veteran' and 'new' teachers. Their responses to the questionnaire indicated that they were not fully aware of all the options available to them. More important, there were many factors limiting their engagement in CPD activities.

The first (who will be referred to as Mrs. Ngwa) had taught for 26 years and the second (Mr. Mbah) for two years. Both of them were teaching English in Anglophone public secondary schools. Mrs. Ngwa's responses to the questionnaire indicated that her main CPD activity was attending conferences within her locality. She said she had never thought of presenting at a conference before and lacked the time and money to travel to the national or international conferences or to take a short course or undertake a higher degree programme. She said she had many challenges, and the most she would do was to discuss her teaching issues with her colleagues. Mr. Mbah's responses, on the other hand, showed that he had never taken part in any CPD activity (this being his first) but that he had several professional needs which he resolved by seeking help from other colleagues. He also indicated that he had neither the time nor money for CPD activities.

I began by discussing with the teachers their questionnaire responses and clarifying issues related to CPD (e.g. both were not familiar with the acronym CPD and had a limited idea of what professional development entails). Then together, we analysed and prioritized their needs identified through the questionnaire. In addition, I used the SWOT analysis to help them identify and analyse their problems and think about ways to address them. Each of the two teachers made a list of their strengths and weaknesses as teachers, and as individuals. These weaknesses were translated into needs, and the teachers were asked to prioritize those they thought were most important. Both teachers indicated improvement in classroom management as the most important area for development with emphasis on teaching skills and class control. Similarly, they identified the opportunities that were available to help them fulfil these needs. It was also necessary for them to be aware of whatever might be a threat to achieving their objectives. This helped them in setting up SMART objectives which were realistic enough to be achieved.

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Then following a 'teacher development logical framework' adapted from the community development project model, the teachers were helped to design a CPD plan that suited them in terms of objectives, activities, available resources and time. With regard to classroom management, the teachers agreed to keep a reflective diary (which they had never done before). To keep the diary simple, they were asked to reflect after each lesson and write notes on the following: objectives, positives, negatives and future strategies. For each problem identified (e.g. group work not very successful), the teacher was encouraged to choose strategies from the CPD plan to help improve their sskills (e.g. research more on the topic, discuss with colleagues or think of new strategies). For the implementation of the set objectives in general, the teachers were encouraged to execute the activities outlined in the CPD plan. The importance of this plan was reiterated because without it there would be no clear pathway or systematic approach to their continuing professional development.

For other CPD activities like talks, seminars and conferences, the teachers also agreed to keep teacher portfolios (once again a new idea for them), in which all documented experiences were to be filed, including a critique on the usefulness of these activities to their professional development. The professional development plans of the two teachers, Mrs. Ngwa and Mr. Mbah, can be seen in Tables 10.1 and 10.2, respectively.

Mrs. Ngwa noted in her reflective diary some concerns arising from lesson presentation, student motivation and class control. She also made notes of corrective measures to be taken. She likewise took note of input from colleagues, departmental meetings, seminars and conferences. She made a conscious effort to research on the net every month on various topics and to keep notes (e.g. on paper presentations). She attested that she gained a lot from these activities: "Once I had a very difficult comprehension passage and recalled a recent conference presentation which explained how to teach novels using pictures. I used that approach and it worked like magic". Although her abstract was not accepted for the CAMELTA national conference, she was still elated at having succeeded in presenting at the regional conference for the first time: "it makes me to be bold [sic] and to express myself confidently in society", she said.

However, Mrs. Ngwa identified these setbacks to her CPD: not enough time for competing priorities such as house work, tiredness and forgetfulness which made her skip some programmed activities. She could not follow through with the 'planned' master's programme for lack of finances. In any case, she appreciated the idea of a development plan and said it helped her to be more serious about improving herself and referring to it frequently really kept her on track "I felt guilty when I had skipped an activity and I tried to

catch up. I felt like a student failing to do homework and it felt embarrassing behaving like an irresponsible student and I will quickly make up".

The second participant, Mr. Mbah, also followed through with his action plan presented in the logical framework (see Table 10.2).

Mr. Mbah had taught for two years and appears to be cautious about engaging in too many CPD activities due to, according to him, his heavy workload. His reflective diary contained records mainly on problems with classroom control. However, he also reflected on the causes of students' disruptive behaviour and added reminders to read more on the subject. He acknowledged that from his readings, he could distinguish between classroom control and classroom management and how the latter could affect the former. This led him to better organize his lesson presentation, use of materials, student activities and motivation to curb indiscipline.

During the academic year, Mr. Mbah attended a conference and two seminars for the first time and found these experiences very enriching. He explained that he had a particularly truant student who did not respond to any kind of punishment*:*

> Then I remembered a presentation on the use of individual counselling, focusing on the student's strong points. I told the student he was handsome and intelligent but lacked manners and that was going to be his downfall. He was subdued and promised to sit up, which he did.

One setback for him was that many presentations he attended at the conference focused more on the theories that he had already learnt in his training school. "I would have preferred practical applications of these theoretical concepts in model lessons", he said. Talking about seminars delivered by pedagogic inspectors, he admitted that he had not taken these seminars seriously for the two years he had been working, believing his earlier training was enough for effective teaching.

The two teachers followed the procedure outlined in their development plans throughout the academic year from September 2013 to June 2014 after which there was a feedback (evaluation) session with the mentor (researcher) on their experiences. During the year, however, there was regular monitoring and periodic evaluation by the mentor.

The two teachers in this project chose the CPD activities based on their needs in line with Boas' (2014) idea of visionary and need-based CPD. I had to encourage and support the two teachers in the project all through their academic year. As mentioned earlier, first of all, we discussed their questionnaire responses to clarify concepts which were not well understood. For exam-

ple, both teachers were helped to understand that CPD must be ongoing and not a one stop or an occasional activity.

Another supportive action was to convince these teachers of the gains of CPD (not necessarily financial or a promotion). They bought the idea of finding joy and satisfaction in improving student outcomes, gaining leadership skills and being a professional and a role model.

The idea of a CPD plan was new to these teachers and creating one was a challenge. But after some discussion they embraced this idea willingly.

As explained earlier in this chapter, the importance of keeping a reflective diary was emphasized, and a simple approach was shared (reflecting on the goals of each lessons, the positives and negatives of the lesson and proposed strategies to address difficulties) to make it doable for them.

As a mentor, another role I assumed was that of monitoring the progress of these two teachers. I read their diaries (at the middle and end of each term) and encouraged them to follow-up their proposed plans of action. We also discussed other concerns related not only to the project but to ELT in general. At the end of the project, I had a feedback session with the teachers to get their reactions and give my own evaluation of the process.

Feedback from the two teachers and an end-of-project evaluation of their experiences by the mentor indicates that when teachers plan their own CPD activities, it becomes meaningful and successful (Menon 2012). Also, mentoring played a big role in this CPD project from making the teachers aware of the importance of CPD, to sharing tools and resources and ongoing monitoring and support to enable them to implement their planned CPD activities.

It is observed that effective CPD needs to be a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches, a joint responsibility between teachers and the state (Padwad and Dixit 2014; Underhill 1999). This project indicated that although the bottom-up approach to CPD is most effective, there is need for some support from the authorities. This is particularly important in contexts where teachers have not yet appropriated CPD. For instance, the opportunity to participate in a conference was provided by the authorities; permission was given to the teachers to attend, but the actual decision to attend was that of the teachers who, through this project, planned to attend all conferences within the year.

Conclusion and Lessons Learnt

The CPD project reported in this chapter was based on the premise that continuous professional development is important to teachers in Cameroon, as everywhere else in the world where teachers face difficult circumstances.

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The following are lessons learnt about how CPD could be made effective not only for teachers in difficult circumstances but also for teachers worldwide:

First, teachers need to understand the importance of CPD and plan their own activities according to felt needs. The two teachers' responses to the questionnaire indicated that they were not aware of their need for CPD. As a result, they did not even attend all seminars organized by the authorities and had no personal plans for CPD. On the other hand, it is also the case that no other CPD activity besides occasional seminars is initiated by the authorities. Also, some principals still find it difficult to permit or sponsor teachers to attend CPD events. This spells the need for teachers to embrace other self-directed CPD activities. By imlpication, teachers need to be sensitized, encouraged and motivated to be involved in CPD activities. For this purpose, teachers should be involved in setting up their objectives for CPD so that their set objectives are need-based and realistic.

My role in raising awareness and accompanying teachers in this CPD journey could have been done by an inspector. Support from the state can also come from instituting a national CPD framework beginning with curriculum changes in training schools to include courses on professional development. The government could also institute a systematic CPD framework with incentives for teachers who attend conferences, workshops, seminars, webinars or short courses. Another way to make CPD sustainable is to institutionalize induction and mentoring practices at the school level.

Obanya (2010) believes that if teachers want to be transformative, they must imbibe lifelong learning and the Cameroonian teacher should be no exception. The results of this project indicate that teachers can be schooled on how to take charge of their own professional development through making development plans and implementing them for continuing professional development throughout their careers, despite the difficult working conditions.

Developing and implementing CPD plans following a development project approach is not only for teachers teaching in difficult circumstance but also for those in ideal environments. Teachers, no matter their age, qualification, experience or nature of learners, generally need professional development of one kind or the other and at different stages of their careers. The bottom-up approach to CPD, as demonstrated in this chapter, has proven to be more effective in all circumstances although Underhill (1999) and Burns (2005) posit that this approach can yield more fruits if supported by some top-down CPD activities. However as Borg (2015) cautions, there is no template for CPD that will guarantee success globally. CPD needs to be context relevant for it to be effective. What is essential is that there is awareness and

possibility of engaging in professional learning activities that enable teachers to tackle rapid changes through updating their knowledge and skills, experimenting with innovative methodology, engaging in reflective practice and sharing knowledge in collaborative teacher networks (Runhaar 2008).

Recommended Books

1) Obanya, P. (2010). *Bringing back the teacher to the African School*. Addis Ababa: UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa.
   This book is a call for African teachers and teaching in Africa to be restored through 'intellectual, professional and personal re-skilling'. It makes explicit the need for continuing professional development in the African context and by extension all teachers teaching in difficult circumstances.
2) Hayes, D. (Ed.). (2014). *Innovations in the continuing professional development of English language teachers.* London. The British Council.
   This is a collection of best practices in continuing professional development across the world. It sheds light on perceptions, constraints and creative approaches to teacher development in different contexts.
3) Davidson, G., Dunlop, F., Sorlano, D. H.,Kennedy, L., & Phillips, T. (2012). *Going forward: Continuing professional development for English language teachers in the UK*. London. The British Council.
   This document is very handy because it explains what CPD is, gives the rationale for CPD, lists different types of CPD activities and proposes a CPD framework for teachers at various stages of their career.
4) Pickering, G., & Gunashekar, P. (Eds.). (2014). *Innovations in English language teacher education*. London. The British Council.
   In this book, there is emphasis on teacher development in teacher education programmes and on self-directed approaches to CPD.

Engagement Priorities

1) CPD activities should focus on helping teachers solve problems, for example, in teaching very large classes of 100 or more (i.e. more research on context appropriate methodologies). How can teachers be facilitated to identify and address their individual problems, particularly in challenging contexts where not many teachers are aware of their needs and resources to improve their teaching and other skills on a continuing basis?
2) Do language inspectors who are supposed to upgrade teachers' skills particularly in school contexts need a CPD programme for their own development? Why? Why not?

3) Most of the research in the secondary school sector is done by university lecturers. How can secondary school teachers who live these experiences be supported to engage in teacher research and learn from it?
4) The chapter talks about top-down and bottom-up approaches to CPD. Can you identify some CPD practices in your context? Are these top-down or bottom-up? Which ones do you prefer and why?
5) Do you agree that those teachers who engage more in CPD activities are better teachers overall? How can you find this out in your specific teaching-learning context?

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11

Using Mediated Authentic Video as a Potential Innovative Solution for Training at Scale: A View from Bangladesh

Mike Solly and Clare Woodward

Introduction

A recent paper by UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO 2014) reveals the continuing shortage of teachers across the developing world. In an attempt to meet the demand of achieving universal primary education, teacher quality has sometimes been compromised with unqualified or underqualified teachers being employed (Education International 2007). In English language teaching, this has been a particular problem in many countries as their governments have identified a perceived need for English language improvement owing to global competition and the languages of the international market. This is the case in Bangladesh, which has resulted in the challenge to provide training at scale that is affordable and effective—bringing about observable and measurable systemic improvement.

This paper will examine the common ways of attempting to provide training at scale in challenging environments, by drawing on examples from the Bangladeshi context. We will also focus on English in Action, a UK aid-funded project supported by the Bangladesh government. This project offers

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a new approach to delivering in-service training to primary and secondary English teachers in Bangladesh. At the time of writing, this had reached around 15,000 school-based English teachers and is due to reach over 50,000 in the next two years with a cumulative student reach of over seven million. This training utilizes the teachers' own mobile phones as a content device only which means there is no need to have a connection to the internet—or even a phone line—and where both classroom practice and a trainer ('the trainer in your pocket') can be viewed at any time. The authors, both key members of the project team particularly responsible for the development of the mediated authentic video approach, will show that this is proving to be an effective method of training at scale in difficult circumstances and that the growing interest in this form of training from other fields, disciplines and areas indicates how the methodology could be used for wider education benefits in a range of key areas.

The Context

Bangladesh, despite a relatively small landmass, is the eighth most populous country in the world, with over 150 million people. Poverty and malnutrition remain chronic problems, despite some progress in recent years, with over 30% of the population living below the poverty line, and its per capita income of US$958 in 2013 (World Bank 2015) is one of the lowest in South Asia. The competing challenges of poverty, a very large population and severe environmental threats (Bangladesh is recognized as one of the countries most affected by climate change particularly from erosion and flooding) mean that the battle for public funding of the little finances available is very competitive. The infrastructure, while improving slowly, is likely to remain a big challenge for many years, and teachers and schools are likely to continue to have less than ideal resources and adequate teaching capacity. In addition, according to the National Education Policy Document for Bangladesh (2010), the government is unlikely in the immediate future to be able to provide extensive face-to-face teacher training. The state supported teaching profession has few attractions in terms of financial remuneration or status with the average primary teacher's salary having recently been raised, according to a recent Bangladeshi news report, to around 63USD per month for untrained teachers and just three dollars more for trained teachers. (bdnews24.com, 3rd Sept 2014).

This income alone is often not enough to support the needs and family responsibilities of teachers, and it is common for many to have second jobs or,

particularly with secondary teachers, to offer private tuition to subsidize incomes. As a consequence of the very full professional and family lives that teachers often lead, there may be little space or inclination for committing more time and potential resources (through loss of private teaching or other income) to periods of teacher professional development outside their normal structured teaching duties. This reality of the constraints of time and space for out of classroom professional commitments has clear implications for any teacher education and development programme. It therefore influenced the approach taken in English in Action of incorporating and integrating professional development into classroom practice and being pragmatic about the ability of teachers to find time and resources for professional development.

Donor-funded education projects, to have any chance of sustainable success, have to work with the additional reality that most teachers, both primary and secondary, have received inadequate training and that while many may be familiar with the academic concepts of a communicative approach to language teaching (the national textbook *English for Today* generally encourages a student-centred approach as underlined in the English curriculum for secondary (2012: 35)), the reality is that they have received little, if any, sustained training in practical classroom activities. In fact, teachers' knowledge often remains at a theoretical level, frequently leaving them unable to put this knowledge into practice in very large multi-level and under-resourced classrooms. In addition, the assessment system often works against communicative teaching practices with a desire for increased communicative English provision alongside a testing system that largely only demands a detailed knowledge of language structure and form.

There have been a number of donor-funded projects in Bangladesh that have attempted to improve the professional practice of English teachers in recent years with inevitably mixed outcomes. Included in these are two government-supported projects aimed at improving teaching in secondary schools across a range of subjects: the Teaching Quality in Secondary Education Project 2005–2011 (TQI) and the Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project 2008–2014 (SEQAEP). Both of these projects provided some face-to-face teacher training, and, in the case of SEQAEP, extra classes for students. For primary teachers, there was also the British Council's regional English teacher development project, 'English for teaching, teaching for English' 2008–2010 (ETTE) which was relatively small scale and focussed on improving access to high-quality materials as well as providing some initial training for around 2000 teachers. The most significant example of these other projects, in terms of reach and arguably effect for secondary teachers, was The English Language Teaching Improvement Programme

(ELTIP 1997–2012), which aimed at introducing a communicative approach to English language teaching in the classroom and embed this in course books. Its two key objectives when it was set up were to (1) provide CLT training to school English teachers who were expected to introduce CLT in their classrooms, and (2) produce an English textbook for Grades 9–10 in the light of CLT principles (Hamid and Baldauf 2008; Hunter 2009). The outcomes of this project have not been thoroughly researched, and the isolated studies that do exist give mixed results (e.g. Hoque 2009; Rahman 2007). In general the reports showed that while ELTIP did improve teacher knowledge about CLT, there was very little evidence of the application of this knowledge through classroom practice (Hamid 2010). This lack of evidence of CLT practice in the classroom, despite lengthy and expensive attempts to improve teacher knowledge of ELT (with some success), was also evidenced in the baseline reports for English in Action project (EIA Baseline Study 3 2009) and led to much thought and examination by the project's creators to find a way of mediating the professional development that demonstrated (rather than talked about) classroom practice of CLT techniques and methodologies in a clearly mediated and assessable way. It also led to a new model of teacher professional development through mediated authentic video. It is this mediated authentic video (MAV) element of the English in Action project that we will be focusing on in this chapter.

Current Models of English Language Teacher Professional Development for Use at Scale in Bangladesh

Pre-service teacher training in Bangladesh attempts to provide teachers with at least the essential tools they will need in the classroom, but, as in many countries, this is not adequate for sustained teacher development, and the provision of in-service training is patchy for both primary and secondary teachers with administrative tasks taking up a considerable amount of the time (Hamid 2010).

There have been a number of donors and government-funded projects that were designed to develop teacher education as an additional element to the minimally provided state provision, and these have utilized a number of models of teacher development, two of which have been particularly used in Bangladesh and have become standard for all subjects throughout much of the globe.

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Occasional Workshop Training with Expert Teachers

This brings teachers together regionally for training development workshops led by experts, sometimes from within the teacher training system or sometimes as a part of international donor projects with local or international ELT trainers.

Advantages: These can be centrally controlled and keep the teachers on the same page. The training itself can also be uniform, making it easier to measure what has been delivered. This form of training has the additional advantage of adhering to the standard perception by teachers and education officials of what training should look like.

Disadvantages: Logistically such training can be very difficult to organize, particularly in a country like Bangladesh where the infrastructure can make travelling distances unreliable and sometimes unsafe. In addition, such occasional or one-off workshops, while potentially imparting information and perhaps demonstrating some effective methodologies during the workshop, provide little or no opportunity for sustained practice and improvement within the classroom. It may also be difficult to find an adequate number of trainers with the capabilities needed.

Cascade Training

This model uses different levels of trainer with the top level (the expert trainer) passing on knowledge to the next level with the intention of a controlled knowledge transfer from one level to the next.

Advantages: The popularity of this method may be partially explained by the fact that there is a far wider pool of trainers to draw on, and this means more people can be reached at a smaller cost. 'It is cost effective, it does not require long periods out of service, and it uses existing teaching staff as co-trainers' (Gilpin 1997: 185).

Disadvantages: Perhaps the biggest drawback of cascade training is, like the gossip game 'Chinese Whispers', that it is very difficult to know how much relationship the final training and resultant classroom practice bears to the top layer of training. 'The cascade is more often reduced to a trickle by the time it reaches the classroom teacher, on whom the success of the curricular change depends' (Hayes 2000: 135).

English in Action: A School-Based Approach

In order to overcome the central disadvantages of the two prevailing models of teacher development outlined in the previous section, there has been a recent move to sustain teacher development by centring the training and practice in the reality of teachers own schools and building a gradualist approach to development, often strongly tied to the curriculum and teachers current practice. Success can be recognized in small but significant steps to change and sometimes radically improve teachers' practices in classrooms. This has been the approach with the English in Action project in Bangladesh (English in Action 2016).

English in Action (EIA), which aims to improve teaching and learning of English in primary and secondary schools, has utilized a school-based approach to teacher development by putting the realities of the real school environment, systemic training (or lack of) and the demands of the curriculum and assessment system at the heart of what it does. The materials in the pilot phase (2008–2011) consisted of a workbook that consistently refers to the school textbook (*English for Today*), and these were initially supported by some audio-visual materials delivered through MP3 players, modelling classroom practice and using actors in a studio to do this. This was not totally successful as will be described in a later section of this paper, but it did lead the project team to rethink the way video could be used, and from this, the notion of mediated authentic video (MAV) developed, and the MAV clips of classroom practice moved to centre stage of the project. It is the MAV aspect of the project that is the focus of this chapter. A face-to-face element in the training was also instigated from the pilot stage of the project (2008–2011) that reached around 700 teachers and included regular cluster meetings at 6–8-week intervals. These development sessions were coordinated and led by peer teachers who were also working through the materials but receiving regular training in conducting the cluster meetings. In the second phase (2011–2014) where 12,500 teachers were reached, the audio-visual aspect became more central, as the project reduced face-to-face contact time and the volume of written materials and incorporated much of this training into the audio-visual mode, thus enabling many more people to be reached at reduced cost. The most recent version of the materials (produced in 2014) with a planned reach of around 60,000 teachers are designed to be used either with face-to-face support (the preferred option where possible), but also, where this is not possible, independently by teachers. The core of the teachers' materials, developed between 2011–2014, are mediated authentic video (MAV)—clips of classroom practice mediated by a video narrator and delivered to teachers via SD card on affordable mobile phones.

Use of Video in Teacher Education

Over recent years digital video use has become more prevalent in teacher education as an important resource for enabling teachers to examine what is happening in a classroom (Sherin and Han 2004; Sherin et al. 2009; Rich and Calandra 2010). Its development as a technology has moved from being simply a means of exposing teachers to practices that can be copied in microteaching settings to a tool in the development of teachers' professional judgement. For example, McConnell et al. (2008) found that teachers who used video to reflect on their practice showed a significantly greater increase in their science-teaching efficacy than those who did not use video. Participating teachers, having viewed the video of their own classes, described the context of their lesson and their own reflections and analysis of the effectiveness of the lesson, including evidence of student learning or thinking. The resulting research suggests that teachers' analysis of their practice might be more meaningful when using videotaped records of practice.

Broadly speaking, two main types of classroom video have been developed for teacher professional development: the first (type one) consists of those that feature other teachers—that is, to say, practitioners who are generally unknown to the trainee. Usually the product of professional filming and editing, and involving some form of thematic organization and viewer guidance, is generally intended to be distributed to a large number of end-users; the second (type two) consists of those that feature the teacher themselves. Normally filmed in-house, these serve primarily as prompts for personal reflection and trainer or peer feedback as part of a microteaching exercise, requires intensive face-to-face mediation and are not intended for wider viewing.

The type two model of teacher development, using personal video in intensive small-group mentoring, is without doubt useful and constructive for teachers in aiding them to analyse and improve their teaching practice, (Rich and Calandra 2010; Rook and McDonald 2012), but in the under-resourced classrooms of the developing world such as Bangladesh, where teachers frequently need to have two or three jobs in order to make a living, the luxury of in-house professional support and the time with which to analyse video seems far off.

Developing Mediated Authentic Video in English in Action

Type one video material (described above) is not designed for any specific country or region but is used as an exemplar of the type of classroom practice that ideally would be adopted across a range of environments. In Bangladesh,

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English in Action (EIA) has taken this concept but customized the video to mirror the classrooms in which teachers viewing the videos would themselves be teaching. By filming local teachers in their own classes teaching with the national ELT textbook and then mediating this authentic classroom practice with a local video narrator who provides context and deconstruction and encourages reflection and practice, EIA has produced a school-based approach to teacher professional development which is peer supported and mobile enhanced.

A key element of the EIA approach is in the delivery of the video directly to teachers. As access to the internet cannot be relied on across rural Bangladesh for both technical and economic reasons, the project has developed video and audio resources delivered offline on SD cards that teachers can insert into affordable mobile phones. The delivery of video through teachers' own mobile phones offers an immediacy of impact and a degree of flexibility that much conventional training-room based, trainer-led and time-bound input often cannot match (Woodward et al. 2014). These videos of classroom practice do not merely bring teacher professional development (TPD) directly to the teachers but also take teachers into other teachers' classrooms to see models of good practice but in a recognizable and relevant environment.

Producing the MAV

This approach to using video for TPD developed iteratively over the duration of the nine-year project. In 2008, at the pilot phase, video materials were used to *support* print and consisted of staged classes filmed in a studio with actors as teachers. Feedback on these resources from participating pilot phase teachers was clear—teachers recognized the 'fake' element of the videos and were unequivocal in their response that while the modelled activities were interesting, they would be impossible to carry out in their own classrooms. Following this, the project moved to the other extreme and used handheld video devices to film real classrooms and teachers. However, the quality of the recordings was so poor that it was difficult to ascertain what was happening in the classrooms and was of minimal use as a tool for TPD. Finally, in 2011, the authors of this paper developed the concept of mediated authentic video. In brief this comprises of three elements: a teacher with his/her own class in their own school, a video narrator who introduces and deconstructs each piece of classroom video and a professional film crew. Prior to filming, permission to film was requested from guardians and head teachers; all students involved had to have agreement from their guardians.

The classroom video in EIA was professionally filmed by a local film crew, comprising two fixed cameras (one facing the students and one facing the teacher), which could be detached for close up shots, and three tracks of microphone (one attached to the teacher, one in the ceiling capturing general student interaction plus booms for individual students where necessary/appropriate).

The teachers on the videos were all Bangladeshi government schoolteachers, just like those who would be viewing the material, and were selected for filming following their participation in EIA. The iterative approach taken in the development of EIA materials led to classes being filmed over various periods between 2011 and 2014. This model differs from the traditional definition of participatory video, (type two above) wherein teachers film themselves or their colleagues; however it could be argued that the MAV approach takes participatory video in a new direction. The filmed teachers and classrooms were not selected arbitrarily. Rather, local teachers who had engaged in the project and, through a strong monitoring and evaluation process, had themselves contributed to changes and alterations to the materials were filmed teaching their own classes using the approaches and pedagogy that they had become confident in using through their own professional development on the project.

In all classroom filming, the teachers used the national government textbook, *English for Today* (EfT). In general, about 30 minutes preparation time took place with each teacher, and then filming commenced. Preparation consisted of teacher educators/project staff discussing the textbook unit with the teacher and identifying some communicative language activities/techniques to demonstrate. These lessons were not practiced with the students in advance, although at times teachers explained something they thought might be confusing to students in the local language prior to filming. The lessons selected came from the EfT units the class was currently studying so the teaching and learning demonstrated in the video is authentic and not contrived. As mentioned earlier, all the videos are based on the national textbook, using teachers with their own students in their own classrooms with no resources other than blackboard, chalk, textbook and the audio recording of textbook dialogues or stories on the teachers' mobile phones played through an affordable and rechargeable speaker, provided by the project until end 2013, and now by the Bangladeshi department of education.

The next step in the material development was an intensive stage in the design process, as the footage from both cameras was scrutinized and edited to demonstrate both the narrative of a complete activity or lesson, alongside

key elements of communicative language teaching practice and the learning process. In general 60 minutes of classroom film resulted in approximately ten minutes of edited footage.

In the pilot stage with only 751 teachers, the AV materials were entirely mediated through face-to-face interaction. However, as the later version of the video resources were designed for use in a predominantly self-access mode, the classroom film alone was not sufficient to offer focused and reflective professional development.

As experts in the field (Borko et al. 2008; Santagata 2009; Sherin and Han 2004; Sherin and van Es 2005; Sherin et al. 2009) explain, teachers need to be guided through the video by an expert facilitator, in order to be scaffolded and made aware of the objectives of the activities and techniques, and how to incorporate them into their own teaching practice. The classroom film needs, therefore, to be mediated by an 'expert' who can deconstruct what the teachers are seeing in the classrooms on the video and enable them to find ways of applying these techniques in their own teaching. In a large-scale TPD scenario such as EIA, this expert mediation cannot be done in a face-to-face environment without a significant dilution of the message as it travels from expert, through master trainer, to local trainer and ultimately to the individual teacher. To avoid this weakening of crucial information, the dilemma of many cascade models (Fiske and Ladd 2004), in mediated authentic video (MAV), the expert mediation goes directly to each teacher via the mobile phone materials. Following the editing of the classroom video, this expert narrative is scripted by experienced ELT practitioners, highlighting key elements within the authentic video. The script is then filmed in a studio using a local professional narrator and 'stitched' together with the classroom video in the editing studio, incorporating both video of the narrator as a 'talking head' and audio voiceover. The video narrator, who is essentially the ELT expert voice, thus mediates the classroom video, setting pre-viewing questions for the teachers to think about while watching and asking them to reflect upon what they have seen and applying similar techniques to classes they are currently teaching, in a *Try in your Class* section.

Teachers are able to view the resources on their mobile phones at no cost to themselves and at any time and are also paired in their schools so they can reflect on the materials with their peers. In addition where logistically possible, they may also meet occasionally with other teachers from nearby schools in local cluster meetings where further group reflection takes place.

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Social Presence of the Video Narrator

An important component of the materials is the forging of the social presence of the Bangladeshi video narrator speaking directly to the teachers from their mobile phones. In developing the current materials for EIA, the video narrator is a tool to assist in the creation of social presence, defined as the sense of being with others by Heeter (1992) and the 'level of awareness of the co-presence of another human being, or intelligence' (Biocca and Nowak 2001: 13). In trials comparing pilot materials and the final materials, teachers were found to take more notice and be more engaged when a video narrator was used rather than an audio narrator (Fig. 11.1).

Biocca and Harms (2002) suggest that the brain may be hardwired to react to many environmental cues that suggest the presence of another, even when no physical other is really there. The theoretical framework that has emerged to conceptualize and measure this mediated sense of the other's presence has come to be called social presence (Biocca and Harms 2002; de Greef and IJsselsteijn 2000).

This meaning of social presence can be directly traced to the work of Goffman (1963) who made clear that co-presence involved two moments: (1) when individuals sense that they are able to perceive others and (2) when others are able to perceive them. In this use of video and presence, of particular interest is the user's perception of the sensory awareness of the narrator. For example, the gaze and eye movement of the video narrator may lead the teacher to infer some 'watching' behaviour, even though there is no sensory awareness of them. This corresponds with findings by Von der Putten et al.

Fig. 11.1 Bangladeshi video narrator

(2009) who found that participants experienced an equal measure of social presence whether they were interacting with a real person or an avatar.

This engagement may lead to the teacher interacting more positively with the content of the video and associated materials, resulting in what Anderson (2004: 47) refers to as 'student-content interaction' and thus engagement, mindfulness and motivation. This conceptual framework of social presence is something that the authors became further aware of as the project developed and will be returned to in subsequent research.

Facilitating Teachers' Access to the MAV

A major challenge in using technology in Bangladesh and other development contexts is the issue of reliable and affordable accessibility to the internet. Generally this tends to limit the use of innovations to the already privileged few. In the EIA project, the use of offline digital resources delivered via SD card enables accessibility to any teacher in possession of a basic Nokia feature phone, a very common model within the Bangladeshi mobile phone market.

Mediated authentic video (MAV) facilitates a model of large-scale TPD where each teacher receives ELT expertise in its original concentrated form, directly from the expert through the video narrator. Crucially it is not delivered in a workshop scenario far from their classroom but is with the teacher, at school, at home, on a bus—wherever in fact they have an opportunity to access it.

These two unique aspects of the EIA approach, the mediated authentic video and the storage of the multimedia materials on the SD card on a low-cost mobile phone, combine to enable all teachers to engage in meaningful and authentic school-based professional development with a strong focus on reflective practice. The third element of the EIA approach is peer support, which has been consciously integrated within the programme design. Teachers engage with the project in pairs within their schools, and head teachers encourage fortnightly school-based reflective meetings. In contrast to traditional TPD sessions, these school-based meetings complement the input from the self-access materials and are opportunities for teachers to share their experiences in the classroom, both successes and challenges, reflect on common issues and prepare themselves for future units on their mobile phone.

In an ideal situation each school pair would occasionally meet up with other pairs of teachers from 10 to 12 schools across their district or *upazilla.* In the earlier stages of the project, the cost of travel and teachers' stipend was enabled through project funding; however, since late 2014 any face-to-face

meetings *beyond* the school itself take place within the constraints of teacher workshops organized by the Bangladesh Department of Education. A key institutionalization element in the latter years of the project has been that of engaging with government officials to encourage them to allocate time for collaborative reflection in divisional-level teacher workshops organized by the Department of Education.

To promote the concept of community building and to offset the few opportunities that teachers have to meet with their peers, the current version of the mobile phone materials also contains video of unscripted conversations held by small groups of teachers who were involved in the EIA project. Each conversation is on a specific topic connected with English Language teaching, for example, encouraging pair and group work, using visuals in the classroom, building peer and self-correction techniques, etc., and is shaped by the participating teachers themselves, who demonstrate examples of techniques they have employed, and together discuss challenges that they have encountered. This agency of local voice is empowering; watching teachers who closely resemble themselves allows teachers to believe that they too can change their teaching style and builds on both the affective and social domains. Using the mobile phone as a delivery mechanism, the training is literally 'held' by the teachers and is very much in their own hands. This accessibility means that individual teachers are in control of the amount and frequency of content delivery thus allowing them to build their own understanding of the concepts in a bottom-up manner, through guided reflection, both individually and with support from peers.

Assessing the Impact of MAV in Bangladesh

Following a pilot intervention with 751 teachers in 2011, by the end of 2014, over 12,000 teachers had been reached, and by the end of the project in 2017, the number of teachers engaged will have increased to over 60,000. This increase has been enabled by a greater emphasis on the MAV teacher development videos and local peer support, with less direct contact with English language teaching (ELT) specialists.

Rigorous monitoring and evaluation is embedded in EIA with teachers being regularly observed throughout the programme both by internal and external organizations and stakeholders. Owing to the large numbers of participants, the monitoring and evaluation has mainly concentrated on broad quantitative outcomes looking at changes in classroom practice.

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Although these observations of classroom practices show substantial increase in students' active participation and in opportunities to speak and practise the target language, in these quantitative studies it was difficult to ascertain what, if any, impact MAV combined with peer support had had on teaching practice. The data suggests that these changes were achieved by teachers making great efforts to promote and model the use of the target language and organizing increased student participation in lessons. Subsequently a smaller scale, qualitative study was undertaken to get a richer picture of what exactly was happening in the EIA classrooms.

ELT experts working on the project from the Open University observed and interviewed a number of teachers, looking specifically for how they used and felt about a number of the unique elements of EIA, and prominent among these was the use of the mediated authentic video. One of these studies visited three schools and observed seven EIA teachers with their classes, with detailed teacher interviews taking place immediately afterwards. It should be said that teachers had very little (and in one case—no) advance warning of these observations.

All seven of the observed teachers spoke very positively of the videos in their interviews indicating a transformative effect on their classroom practice. More significantly though was the direct evidence of the influence of the video in the observed classroom practice, and although the quality and quantity of this practice varied, it was certainly evident in all classes. In the early stage of the project, audio- visual resources were used as a support and an enhancement to what were at that time perceived as the core materials, that is, written resources in book form. However, as our knowledge of the context and the available technologies increased, audio-visual resources developed into the MAV construct, and its role in the project reversed so that by 2013 the videos occupied centre stage. Other materials were effectively used to support and wrap around the MAV that could also function as a standalone resource.

Findings revealed that elements of teachers' classroom practice were influenced by activity that they had observed on the videos. For example, Teacher 1 from school 1 demonstrated clear stages of a communicative lesson that would generally be absent from a traditional Bangladeshi classroom, and the observer commented that the teacher's particular monitoring techniques had been specifically demonstrated in the EIA videos (New Element Study, Oct 2013). When asked what he liked best about EIA from all the various elements, he replied that it was the teacher videos and that he watched them 'every day….even twice a day'. The teacher went on to indicate that the technological innovations of EIA had transformed his teaching and that previ-

ously he did not use the techniques introduced and demonstrated on the video. In the past his classes were 'not very interesting – only text book, duster, chalk'.

Prior to the introduction of MAV through the English in Action project, it was rare to see a meaningful pair and group work activity in English Language classes in Bangladesh, but both the qualitative and quantitative research from the project shows a transformation now. The observers in this study commented a number of times on the quality of pair and group work, and the fact that this, along with other demonstrated practices on the videos, had become routine and embedded in the observed classes. This was the case with Teacher 2 from school 1 where the teacher emphasized the 'radical transformation' that had come about in his classes and that the video (which 'we view often… in our free periods') and the other audio-visual materials had greatly increased his confidence as a teacher. Previous projects had *told* teachers how to improve: this *demonstrated* it and therefore had a deeper and more long-lasting effect.

Teacher 1 from school 2 demonstrated a very specific activity from the videos, and he referred to it in the interview with the observer afterwards saying that he had learnt some of the activities in his observed lesson from a specific video; he went on to report that he (in common with all the other teachers in this study) had no problems at all in accessing the videos on his mobile phone.

Teacher 2 from this same school also commented positively on how the videos had helped transform his teaching ('I am now totally changed') and particularly commented on the very beneficial effects this has had on his students, and the radically improved student attendance in his classes.

In the third school used for observations in this study, all three observed teachers commented positively on the effectiveness of the video and particularly on the fact that they could watch it at any time they wanted to. Teacher 3 (who had no warning about the observation) gave a model lesson where he drew on (and developed in many cases) a range of activities from the videos. In the interview this teacher was vociferous in his enthusiastic endorsement of the videos, saying that he had taken part in training projects in the past but that the videos had a truly transformative effect as he could watch them again and again. His students also spoke to the observer after the class and were also enthusiastic in saying how much they enjoyed this teacher's classes since he had been working on EIA and using the videos. The teacher commented that without the video the project would not have had been so effective.

As a part of this study, the observers also visited one primary and one secondary cluster meeting, where 24 teachers gather several times a year to review what they have been doing in class as a result of EIA and to view and examine

together the videos. These meetings were mediated by peer teachers (Teacher Facilitators). The importance of the videos was consistently stressed in these meetings and in interviews with the Teacher Facilitators after the meeting; they all highlighted the central place of the MAV in bringing about positive classroom-based changes in teaching practice. Interestingly they also all stressed that they felt their role, as peer facilitators of these face-to-face meetings, would greatly benefit from the production of similar authentic mediated video designed especially for them. A series of such MAVs were then produced for the next cadre of Teacher Facilitators, and this indicates the flexibility of this approach not only to teaching, or even to teacher training, but to any learning situation where a learning element needs to be demonstrated and deconstructed.

Relevance of Approach in Other Development Contexts

As implied at the beginning of this chapter, when considering what makes an environment for training at scale challenging, Bangladesh is likely to have more than its share of those elements. We have already mentioned environmental and logistical problems (and the influence of one over the other) with frequent flooding and poor infrastructure hindering face-to-face teacher development, as well as the economic challenges. Added to this there are a range of systemic challenges including the fact that in recent years political unrest has led to many days lost to general strikes (hartels) making any arrangements involving travel very unpredictable at almost any time. While Bangladesh has its own particular list of difficulties and challenges, many other developing nations would have a similar (and sometimes more extensive) list.

Sustainability of MAV

A key determiner of success in the EIA approach, we contend, is the flexibility of the training being easily viewable at any time by the user, with clear mediation and demonstration combined with reflective activities being available cheaply on a ubiquitous device (the mobile phone). While mobile phone ownership still varies greatly, there has in recent years been a substantive rise across the developing world, with simple inexpensive feature phones (able to take an SD card or be directly uploaded with content) rapidly replacing earlier phone

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models (Monodol and Walsh 2011). This means that the model described above is likely to be replicable in many other developing country contexts. The approach can also be delivered to a range of digital devices, dependent upon the ownership and accessibility issues of any given set of users.

Of course in each country context, it would be crucial to adapt the model to local circumstances to keep the materials authentic in accordance with the particularities of the local teaching context. For example, the authors are currently developing MAV for professional development of ELT teachers in the Antioquia region of Colombia. In this situation, we used a local Colombian film crew and worked in partnership with the British Council in Bogota and Medellin to identify teachers for filming. Accompanying the filming team were two academics from the University of Antioquia who are engaging with and learning from the project and thereby developing their own capacity to develop similar materials so that this approach can ultimately be 'owned' by them. The group of teachers receiving the completed MAV will meet at the local 'Education Parques' to reflect upon and exchange experiences of using the approach shown in the MAV in their own classes. These meetings will be facilitated by peer teachers, and the MAV will be delivered by the Antioquian government to a range of devices—tablets, mobile phones and laptops—depending on individual teachers' access.

Using MAVs in Other Sectors

But it is not only in the field of English teaching or education generally that the model has potential relevance. On presenting the model at the educational technology-focused 'Diverse' conference in Belgium in 2012, interest came from other educationalists in various subjects but particularly from organizations working with front-line health care workers in developing contexts. Save the Children, for example, are looking at the potential of MAV to help educate health care workers administer basic treatments and offer advice for malaria prevention.

A further example, but in a completely different field, is also from Bangladesh where the writers have developed some prototype MAV materials to help the large population of migrant workers from Bangladesh going to work in the Middle East. Bangladeshi government figures estimate that more than eleven million have made this (or similar) journeys in between 1976 and 2017 (BMET 2017). In an upcoming study by Erling et al. (2015), it was found that most migrants receive no, or very inadequate, training prior and post-departure to orientate them to issues of language (and not just English)

and indeed to the intense cultural differences for people who, in the main, are unlikely to have travelled much beyond their immediate areas. Many of them are also illiterate or semi-literate in their own language of Bangla, and so written materials are of little use. However, virtually all of them have mobile phones that can take audio-visual material. The potential for an EIA-like use of MAV in these circumstances, although presenting a different range of challenges and difficulties, is clear, and interest in the development of this has been expressed by key figures in organizations such as the World Bank.

Conclusion

Any programme that aims to improve teaching and the delivery of training in difficult circumstances entails both a deep level of understanding of the local demands, drivers and limitations and the ability to put any materials into the hands of the recipients in the most practical and cost-effective way. In EIA, teachers, head teachers, teacher educators and, increasingly, policy makers have recognized the implications of a mode of training that can help overcome many of the difficulties that they face in receiving or conducting teacher professional development at scale. The research carried out to date on using MAV as an approach to large-scale TPD demonstrates a strong impact on teachers' classroom practice, based on the combination of MAV and peer support. The influence of MAV can be seen both in the enthusiastic way in which teachers view the techniques modelled in the videos and in their successful adaptation in the context of their own classes. The peer support model encourages a reflective and proactive response to the materials. Future research needs to be carried out to measure whether these changes in classroom practice are sustained over time, but the current research has shown that using local authentic and mediated video on accessible mobile devices supported by peer-led reflective meetings has the potential to deliver high-quality professional development at scale without the necessity of providing expensive face-to-face mediation by experts at a location far removed from the school and classroom. There are also some early expressions of interest in adapting a moderated authentic video mode of delivery to other development fields.

Recommended Texts

1. Hayes, D. (Ed.). (2014). *Innovations in the continuing professional development of English language teachers.* London: British Council. Available at http://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/sites/ec/files/E168%20Innovations%20in%20CPD_FINAL%20V2%20web.pdf

The 13 very varied chapters in this practically orientated book, drawing on a number of contexts from around the world, provide a great case study-type analysis of teacher professional development—with classroom practice and pedagogical innovation at its heart.

2. Westbrook, J., Durrani, N., Brown, R., Orr, D., Pryor, J., Boddy, J., & Salvi, F. (2013). *Pedagogy, curriculum, teaching practices and teacher education in developing countries: Final report.* Education rigorous literature review, EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/305154/Pedagogy-curriculum-teaching-practices-education.pdf

The main interest in this DFID commissioned report is that it draws together reviews of major education projects with the aim of looking at common elements of success.

3. Sherin, M. G., & Van Es, E. A. (2005). Using video to support teachers' ability to notice classroom *interactions. Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, *13*(3), 475–491.

This article will appeal to anyone with an interest in the capabilities of video to enhance the reflective aspects of teacher development in any subject.

Engagement Priorities

1. The project designers and film-makers (both Bangladeshi and international) were largely from urban backgrounds. The teachers and students being filmed were all from impoverished traditional rural backgrounds. What tensions do you think may be encountered with this mix, and how do you think they can be mitigated or overcome?
2. The chapter emphasizes the importance of the narrator in mediating the content of the filmed classes. Teachers sometimes described a feeling of 'knowing' the narrator. Why do you think the narrator is seen as so central in the process? What are the inherent disadvantages of mediating the materials like this? Is there a better way?
3. For the pilot of EIA, we had a set plan of what we wanted to film before filming it. We also used a studio and actors for the filming. In the later

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stages we filmed using only practicing teachers and their own classes in their own schools ('warts and all'). At the outset we had a list of practices, techniques and structures that we planned to cover, but much was left to serendipity and the editing. What do you think are the advantages of this potentially unpredictable way of working?

4. Working with peers was a key ingredient of English in Action—playing the role of critical friend, reflection partner and, sometimes, facilitating teacher reflection sessions. This kind of peer working and reflection is not common in all contexts. What kind of challenges or misunderstandings do you think may be encountered with working this way, and what actions may help you to overcome them in your context?
5. The chapter describes a way video can be used in teacher professional development using high-quality video and utilizing a film team and then uploading the video onto teachers' mobile phones. However, teachers' mobile phones could be used in other ways to video classroom practice to help both students and teachers in the learning and teaching of English. Can you think of some of the ways that teachers could utilize video on their own mobile devices in the classroom?

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12

Conclusion: Teaching English in Difficult Circumstances—Lessons Learnt and the Way Forward

Fauzia Shamim

Why do the kinds of difficult circumstances described in this book exist in some contexts? How do policy decisions (planned or unplanned) and/or their implementation contribute to creating difficult circumstances for teachers and learners? What do teachers do to address these challenges for improving student learning outcomes in their specific educational contexts? Is the training provided to teachers in difficult circumstances appropriate, and by extension, how does it help them to teach effectively in large under-resourced classrooms or in contexts of conflict, confinement and special educational needs? The chapters in the book address these basic questions (and more) in regard to the quality of English language teaching, as well as its impact on the quality and outcomes of student learning. In this concluding chapter, we highlight the major themes and lessons learnt from the contributions to this volume representing the myriad worlds in which English is taught across three continents, that is, Asia, Africa and Latin America. More important, future directions for policy, practice and research are gleaned from these lessons in order to help both policy makers and practitioners improve the effectiveness of teaching-learning of English in difficult circumstances.

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Contexts for Learning English

When we started work on the book, we were only thinking of difficult circumstances in broad terms such as scarce resources and large classes in mainstream ELT. However, discussions with colleagues and chapter contributors made us realize that the difficulties experienced by teachers and teacher educators especially in developing world contexts were more complex and varied than the current emphasis on large and under-resourced classes shows. For example, Coleman in Chap. 2 points out how teacher-pupil ratio, ostensibly a simple indicator used by many world organizations for defining class size, may not represent the real class size in many classrooms in different schools even in the same school district. Thus, as Coleman shows through his fine-grained descriptions and analysis of data from three case studies (Malaysia, Indonesia and Francophone West Africa) that while there may be some classrooms that are smaller than the estimated teacher-student ratio for the country, other classes may be larger or even much larger than the national statistical indicators reveal and taught in conditions that are not conducive to learning such as in a shared classroom. Thus there are 'contexts within contexts'. Hence, policy makers need to be sensitized to this variation in contexts and the 'invisible' difficult circumstances, often masked by country level data and statistics.

Equally important is the need identified in various chapters in this book to extend the boundaries of difficult circumstances beyond mainstream ELT to include teaching English in other less discussed contexts such as prisons, refugee camps and special needs (see Chaps. 7, 8, 9). Another emergent theme is that whatever the context, extending ELT beyond the confines of the classroom, prescribed curriculum and textbooks in order to address learners' needs for using English for communication in real life should be central to discussions about teaching English in difficult circumstances. In this regard, Gautam and Sarwar (Chap. 5) present an example of what teachers can do to meet learners' needs outside the precincts of the regular syllabus, textbooks and the classroom. Another context is that in which learners do not have opportunities for schooling but may have access to low-tech mobile phones. As Tyers and Lightfoot show us (Chap. 6), in contexts where there are limited opportunities for schooling but where low-tech mobile technology exists, learners' needs, for example, for learning English for job interviews, could be partially met by making low-tech resources available for them through a range of mediums including mobile, DVD and/or desktop computers.

The contexts of learners described in the book may be different in terms of resource provision, affordability or teaching-learning environment (inside/outside the classroom). Similarly, even though they have a common goal—

that is, to learn English—their pathways may be different due to their individual circumstances and constraints. Hence, the ELT profession needs to be responsive to the numerous worlds of its 'agents' and 'clients' (teachers and learners). Also, this multitude of contexts highlights the need for a variety of approaches to address local exigencies within the global trends in ELT.

Additionally, as the contexts for teaching English in difficult circumstances are both specific and varied, even within the same country, the need of the hour is to move on from a questioning of the hegemony of centre-derived pedagogies in varied educational settings to more individual or collaborative practitioner-based inquiries so as to enable the emergence to contextually appropriate ways of ensuring quality teaching and learning in difficult contexts. To achieve this, we need to recognize and bring to the fore the contribution of skilled teachers and to impress on policy makers the need to give them a fair degree of autonomy to tailor their materials and curriculum to the needs of the students within their specific social and cultural context.

Teacher Quality and Teacher Development

The pivotal role of teachers working in difficult circumstances in 'making a difference' in their students' lives, directly or indirectly, is a theme that cuts across all the chapters in the book. It is demonstrated how teachers who are committed to making a difference in the lives of their learners do not wait for help to arrive from the administrators and policy makers. Instead, they use their own initiative and agency to develop and use alternative strategies, including contextually appropriate materials, for providing needs-based teaching to their learners. However, policy and administrative support, if available, can ease the teachers' task (as demonstrated by Benegas in Chap. 7), which in turn, may encourage and motivate other teachers to experiment with alternative methodologies. This indicates that both bottom-up and top-down approaches to teacher development need to work in tandem to improve teaching-learning of English in difficult circumstances.

According to Darling-Hammond (2000), based on results of an extensive survey of data from 50 states in the USA, of all the policy inputs, teacher quality is most closely linked to student achievement. If teacher quality is considered to be central to student learning in well-resourced contexts (including small classes), needless to say how important it would be in contexts with few textbooks and a blackboard at best, where often the teacher is the only resource in the classroom (see Michaelowa 2001). The emphasis on improving teacher quality (e.g. Buckingham 2003; Hattie 2003; UNESCO 2007; Vespoor 2005)

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as a way to improve the effectiveness of teaching-learning in difficult circumstances is reinforced in various chapters in this book (see in particular, AlYasin; Focho; Solly and Woodward).

However, as with learners, teachers have individualized needs for development. Hence, one-size-fits-all in-service training programmes are often considered irrelevant by the teachers (Shamim 2013). Sometimes, teachers actively resist participating in these INSETT programmes that seem to add little value to their pedagogical skills and knowledge (Knight 2009). Normally, there is no follow-up support for teachers to experiment with the 'new' knowledge and techniques in the reality of their classroom. As a result, the training gets folded up with the handouts while the certificates get filed in teachers' portfolios as evidence of their learning. Thus benefits of the training do not reach the end users, that is, the students (UNESCO 2014).

The contextual constraints in training at scale and low quality of pre-service and in-service programmes in Bangladesh are highlighted by Solly and Woodward (Chap. 11). Pyhak (Chap. 3) identifies another important issue for teacher education in Nepal: normally primary level teachers in public school are not trained to teach English to young learners. Even if teachers have some initial training in teaching skills more generally, there is a lack of effective monitoring, supervision and/or provision of follow-up support to enable the teachers to translate their training experiences into effective pedagogy in their classrooms. These scenarios are not uncommon in developing countries, in particular, and therefore require rethinking approaches to teacher development. Solly and Woodward sought to address the various challenges for teacher development at scale in Bangladesh where it is difficult for teachers to travel long distances due to lack of financial support or permission from the head teacher to attend a training programme and personal reasons such as a second job necessary for survival, by taking the training to the teacher (the trainer in the pocket), through the use of low-tech mobile phones. In contrast, Focho (Chap. 10) set up a one-year partnership with two teachers in Cameroon to systematically support their school-based continuing professional development by using what she calls 'the project approach'. Though such individualized approaches to professional development, being highly resource intensive, have often been criticized as the 'boutique' approaches particularly for teacher development at scale, Focho suggests ways in which school inspectors could take some of the roles she was performing to support the two teachers' ongoing professional development. This resonates with Power et al.'s (2012: 525) conclusion, based on research evidence from English in Action, a large-scale project in Bangladesh, that 'school based teacher development approaches, appropriately implemented and monitored in line with

the principles for effective CPD… are capable of bringing about significant improvements in classroom practice' which in turn, result in improved student learning outcomes. Westbrook et al. (2013) identify a number of factors as central to effective initial teacher education and continuing professional development such as alignment of curriculum and classroom realities, for example, large classes or few resources; the relationship of training to teachers' existing knowledge and pedagogy, and regular follow-up support in applying newly learnt strategies at the classroom level, including peer support. However, for this model of teacher education to work, teacher educators should have both understanding and experience of the current school curriculum and pedagogies and use innovative pedagogical practices in their own teaching. Equally important is the support from the school head and the community. This model of teacher education, though very comprehensive, may not be easy to implement in most of the contexts described in the book. Thus, in the context of difficult circumstances, an important conclusion arrived at by Focho on the basis of her close working with two teachers on the design and implementation of their professional development plans is that teacher agency is as important as external support. Similarly, in Chap. 8, we see how Salma, a teacher working in a Syrian war camp in Turkey and a refugee herself, uses her agency to join the opportunity provided by a doctoral scholar, to engage in reflection on her teaching in a research partnership. This, in turn, empowers her to begin to use innovative strategies within the realities of her context and, more important, to identify and address the immediate and long-term needs of her learners. This underlines the importance of self-directed teacher professional development, particularly in situations where there are no other well-organized, or easily available professional development opportunities.

It is well established that teacher motivation is the key to their engagement in CPD activities (Schieb and Karabenick 2011); when teachers are intrinsically motivated, for example, due to concerns of social justice as found by Benegas in his study of the motivation of two teachers involved in prison education in Argentina (Chap. 7), they can begin to make a difference in their learners' lives. However, in order to do this, they need to be given some autonomy in creating materials and tuning their lessons to their learners' needs. For example, Clara and Martha, the two teachers engaged in prison education, used the given autonomy to develop contextually appropriate methods and materials. Their feelings of self-efficacy to experiment with new techniques and materials stemmed from their experience as well as their commitment to social justice. Similarly, Khurram (Chap. 4) demonstrates how she used her own initiative to infuse enthusiasm for learning English among her learners in a large class in a public sector university in Pakistan. Khurram used classroom-

based research as a strategy to plan and implement innovative techniques to increase learner involvement and engagement. Working both within affective and cognitive domains, she succeeded against several odds including learner passivity and low motivation levels. While Khurram worked on improving learner engagement within her classroom in a higher education setting in Pakistan, Gautum and Sarwar (Chap. 5) describe how Gautam adapted Sarwar's model of 'project-based learning' in Pakistan to develop a learner autonomy-oriented pedagogy in Nepal. Through ongoing collaboration with Sarwar, Gautam's adaptation enabled his students and himself to move outside the prescribed curriculum mainly in order to address learners' needs for learning English for real-life communication. The success of the Nepali model, developed initially in Pakistan, shows how locally grounded pedagogies can be adapted by self-motivated teachers for use in similar contexts elsewhere.

Thus, providing opportunities for, and supporting, teachers' continuous professional development for improving teacher quality seems to provide one clear pathway to improving student learning outcomes in difficult circumstances. This CPD could be bottom-up and/or top-down and individualized or provided at scale with follow-up classroom level support through peers and mentors using available technological resources.

Using Technology: Opportunities and Challenges

A question often raised by teachers and administrators in educational settings characterized by difficult circumstances is: How feasible is the use of technology for improving teaching-learning in these contexts? Technology-based solutions, such as mediated authentic video for teacher development at large scale in the EIA project in Bangladesh (Chap. 11) and the British Council's Jobseekers project in India and Bangladesh (Chap. 6), indicate that technology, if used with a clear understanding of contextual constraints, can go a long way to ease some of the difficult circumstances in teaching and teacher development. One important lesson learnt, however, is that there is need to develop a variety of media such as SD card, DVDs, apps and so on to suit the available infrastructure and support within a specific context. Thus, it seems that project designers and administrators need to be cognizant of at least three things at the design or planning stage for 'product' uptake by teachers and learners: (1) What are the available technological resources, particularly in low-tech contexts? (2) How can teachers and learners' access to these and other identified resources be improved in a given context? (3) How can the available technology be used as a tool to develop and/or support context-appropriate pedagogy?

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Praxis Between Policy and Practice

Policies about English language education, and English as medium of instruction, are either too ambitious or ambivalent with little implementation planning (Dearden 2015; Kirkpatrick and Bui 2016) leading to a wide gap between policy and classroom practices (Hu et al. 2014). Often, these policies themselves are unplanned, as pointed out by Pyhak (Chap. 3), thereby creating difficult circumstances for both the teachers and students. Even in cases where policies have been planned, such as the Teacher-Pupil Ratio policy in Indonesia (Chap. 2), they may be based on incorrect assumptions, that is, TPR is a good indicator of class size. Another common assumption is that EMI equals quality education (Dearden 2015); this has been questioned by Pyhak who proposes translanguaging as a strategy to overcome the difficulties faced both by teachers and learners due to the English-only and English as medium of instruction policies in Nepalese public sector schools. Similarly, a questionable belief is that the communicative approach, being learner-centred, would work well for teaching English in early years in all contexts (Hamid and Honan 2012). Often, international interventions and policies premised on conditions different from those on the ground add to teachers' difficulties in significant ways instead of ameliorating them. Such interventions and policies might lead to practices such as 'silencing' of students' voices, poor understanding of content, limited creativity and teacher-centredness and promote students' reliance on memorization (Shohamy 2013). These may, in turn, affect learning outcomes thereby making it difficult to achieve the national curricular goals for teaching-learning of English. Similarly, language policies, whether planned or unplanned, have important consequences for teaching and teachers' classroom practices (as demonstrated by Pyhak in Chap. 3). These gaps between policy and practice can influence negatively the overall quality of teaching-learning of English, particularly in environments where few opportunities exist for learning and using English in everyday communication in students' real-life contexts. Hence, policy makers and administrators need to engage with the practitioners to critically reflect on global trends and local realities in varied contexts to identify and address learners' needs through locally responsive context-based pedagogy, which is also feasible for use by teachers in those contexts (see Holliday 1992, 1994).

Conclusion and the Way Forward

A key message from the various contributions in this book is that 'the global ELT landscape is complex and diverse and that contexts of learning are both localised and fluid' (Ushioda's 2013: 235). The authors demonstrate, through

the different issues they address, the situated, complex and diverse nature of educational contexts for teaching English in difficult circumstances. The book therefore has the merit of providing readers with critical insights into the conditions and nature of learning, teaching and teacher education in contexts that have hitherto received little attention in the ELT literature and shows how locally generated understandings and pedagogies may inform current global knowledge about English language education. More important, the different accounts from teachers, teacher educators and researchers in this book underline the need to extend the boundaries of the discipline to include teaching-learning in difficult circumstances and highlight the benefits of more localized inquiry-based interventions in less-privileged circumstances.

The following action points emerge from teachers' accounts of teaching-learning in difficult circumstances, in particular. First, we need to develop research-based profiles of teaching-learning of English in different contexts, including success stories, to enable policy makers and administrators to provide needs-based and contextually appropriate kinds of support for identified difficulties. Second, teacher quality can be improved through both top-down continuing professional development programmes, located within a district and school development plan, and by encouraging teachers to develop and experiment with alternative methodologies and contextually appropriate material in school-based professional learning communities (DuFour 2004; also see Smith n.d.). Teacher research, either by individual teachers or done collaboratively within their professional communities, could empower teachers working in difficult circumstances and develop feelings of self-efficacy. These teachers could be supported both within teacher education programmes and through onsite mentoring and support (EIA 2016; Smith et al. 2015).

Third, the scope of language teacher education should be widened to include the teaching of English in difficult circumstances, including non-mainstream contexts. The focus should be on helping teachers develop feelings of self-efficacy (Borg and Sanchez 2015) in varied educational settings. These measures, accompanied by teacher agency and teacher autonomy, are necessary for addressing 'local' challenges with the aim of making a difference to learners' future life chances. The three action points mentioned above underline, in particular, the need for setting up a research agenda preferably in consultation with local teacher associations with guidance from available research agendas such as that published periodically by TESOL International Association (available at http://www.tesol.org/docs/default-source/pdf/2014_tesol-research-agenda.pdf.). This is even more important, given that in most developing world contexts, teacher associations play an important role in both teacher training and teacher development (Smith and Kuchah 2016;

Samb 2013) as well as create a space for collegiality which is useful in enhancing positive change in a nonthreatening environment.

We hope that teachers in difficult contexts will be able to identify with the accounts of teaching and teacher development in varied educational settings presented in this volume. For us, these accounts of teacher agency and resilience in the face of all odds reaffirm our faith in the teachers as central to the success of any educational reform; if teachers are committed to making a difference in the lives of their students, they do not get dissuaded by the challenges they face. In fact, contextual constraints such as large classes help them rethink their own pedagogy and approaches to teaching-learning, which in turn, helps their learners achieve better, while helping them grow professionally at the same time. This, along with a confidence in their own and their learners' resourcefulness helps them experiment with alternative approaches (or adapt existing ones) to suit the needs of their learners and exploit localized teaching materials and practices for this purpose. If you leave this book feeling you can also make a difference, even if it is at the level of your own classroom only, the book will have achieved its purpose.

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Erratum to: International Perspectives on Teaching English in Difficult Circumstances

Kuchah Kuchah and Fauzia Shamim

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