# Teaching EFL Management (TEEM): Innovative Approaches to the Development of EFL Learning Materials

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## Short description of the paper

The main goal of this paper is a systematic, collaborative, and research-based development of a model for teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) that contains information on: a) specific cultural artifacts of India and b) the Indian approach to issues of multilingualism. This paper proposes an innovative and alternative approach to the entrepreneurial task of EFL material development: it encourages application of folk and performing arts of different regions of India in the EFL focusing on Learning Through the Arts (LTTA) Education Modeli.e, it allows the agents, whose culture and language constitute the subject matter, to co-construct the learning materials along with language teachers, who are end users of the product.

## The rationale behind the paper

a) *Current lack of pedagogically sound digitalized, multimodal, and interactive EFL teaching materials, which can be easily updated and evaluated, and which are co-constructed by members of the culture and community they are supposed to represent.*

There is no mention of the need for these materials to rely on various media inputs and include different forms of expression. In fact, EFL text books are required to be complete and available for independent use of any other medium. This leads to a lack of pedagogically sound, digitalized, multimodal, and interactive EFL teaching materials, which can be easily updated and evaluated.

The main arguments in the literature against the infusion of new technologies into language learning are high costs, simple repetition of textbook activities, de-humanizing language learning experience by reducing human interaction and relying on the possibilities of such new media rather than on pedagogical principles (Tomlinson, 2012).

In response to these issues, the proposed paper aims at concentrating on the importance of developing learning materials that can be considered innovative since they make use of the

interactive, social and flexible nature of modern digital media, which allow for more authentic opportunities for cross-cultural communication, making them pedagogically sound. In addition, such materials, contrary to print works, allow for constant development, evaluation and modification. Most importantly though, giving voice to one specific target group, the Indian community, who is the subject matter in EFL classes, to co-construct the content that is supposed to represent it, humanizes the experience. This move is exceptionally innovative as it steers away from the status quo of single textbook authors, acting in Lewin's (1943) and Schoemaker& Vos's (2009) terms as the gatekeepers, who create the representation of the world of Englishness for other people largely based on their own intuitions, subjective interpretations and experiences. Tomlinson (2003) reveals that many experienced textbook authors indeed rely on their own gut-feeling what works and what is a good topic.

b)  *Current lack of an explicit focus on authentic elements of the Indian culture as a representative of the English speaking world*

Although the field of EFL teaching has experienced a steady and gradual pedagogical paradigm shift to communicative language teaching, which resulted in the need to incorporate authentic and culture-infused materials into teaching, such materials have often been reduced to means to teach language only. By now, however, the notion that language and cultures that use it are firmly intertwined and thus cannot be taught in isolation has been widely accepted on the theoretical level (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993). Yet, massive, tested and reliable practical solutions to incorporating authentic representations of culture in learning materials are still virtually non-existent. This is especially true for content that deals with the Indian part of the English-speaking world.

In response to these issues, this paper seeks ways to deliver a reliable, stereotype-free and authentic representation of the Indian culture that can be used as material in EFL classes which fosters language and intercultural skills of pupils.

c)  *Current limited concrete practical solutions how to apply the arts and cultural artifacts as pedagogical tools in International EFL classrooms in a sustainable way*;

There is some indication in the literature that the inclusion of the arts can have a beneficial impact on learners' performance, largely stemming from the success of the *Learning Through the Arts* (LTTA)education model, which originated in the mid-1990s in Canada as an "artist-teacher-institutional collaboration" (Elster, 2001: 19). The LLTA model aimed at the infusion of arts directly into the general curriculum in a way that could support the acquisition of knowledge required in various disciplines. The effectiveness of the program has been subjected to an extensive empirical investigation, which points to a beneficial emotional, physical, cognitive and social impact of involvement in the arts on learning (Upitis&Smithrim, 2003). This result is corroborated by other studies, which show that involvement in the arts is correlated with (Eisner, 2001): (a) higher academic achievement (e.g. Catterall, 1998; Deasy, 2002); (b) development of analytical, thinking and problem-solving skills (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Greene, 1995); (c) development of natural curiosity (Pitman, 1998); (d) an increase in the relevance of learning for students with diverse cultural backgrounds (Pitman, 1998); (d) an emphasis placed on the connections between academic areas and events outside the classrooms (Miller, 1994; Drake, 1998); (e) enhancing teamwork (Pitman, 1998); (f) strengthening the ability to use and acquire information and to master different types of symbol systems (Abbott, 1999; Gardner, 1999); and (g) enhancing the process of making meaning of learning (Greene, 1995). Furthermore, in a synthesis of 685 studies, Hattie (2009) shows that creativity programs, which try to foster fluency and flexibility in thinking and in responses to questions or problems (Cohen, 1986), exert a strong influence on student achievement outcome that can be compared to those taking place during one typical year of schooling. A similar effect could be observed for educational programs that incorporated play (Hattie, 2009).

Based on the success of the LTTA model, it can be assumed that the arts and cultural artifacts can be a valuable tool for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) globally. In the field of EFL, the dominant paradigm over the last 30 years has been the *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) approach. It assumes that foreign languages are learned best through the exposure to comprehensible input, in collaboration and in settings that support the development of thinking skills and learner autonomy. In addition, modern EFL/CLT-based classrooms should involve teachers, who are co-learners, and place an emphasis on the expression of meaning, possibly through curricular integration (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003).

In response to these issues, the paper seeks ways to design reliable and sustainable classroom solutions to include the various types of folk arts exercised in India as well as its cultural

artifacts that exert a positive effect on students' learning processes, creative and analytical thinking, as well as problem-solving skills.

d) *Current lack of strategies to accommodate to linguistic diversity of Indian pupils and to search for synergies between the languages spoken in India; which is applicable globally too.*

India is a prime example of a country in desperate need for innovative strategies to deal with linguisticdiversity of the citizens. Teachers' tendency to fail at recognizing and treating linguistic diversity as a norm is still strongly visible in practice. This paper emphasize the vastness of a very specific target group, who needs specific linguistic support in order to developtheir existing multilingualism into an entrepreneurial asset that helps with better market integration

With two official and 22 regional languages recognized in the Eighth Schedule to the Indian Constitution, India needs to apply better strategies to accommodate to linguistic diversity, which could prove useful in the highly multilingual global context currently lacking such solutions.

In response to these issues, the paper seeks ways to introduce sustainable classroom solutions to search for synergies between various languages spoken by pupils, to award linguistic diversity the recognition it deserves and to identify strategies, which enhance the EFL learning process through the inclusion of other linguistic forms.

From the perspective of Indian business administration students and staff, the paper offers a chance to study the processes of product development for a specific audience, to practice communication management in an intercultural setting, as well as needs-based presentation and adaptation of content and its digitalization.

a) *The current need for the Management Studies courses to develop a sound theoretical and practical basis*

Management Studies courses to date has not progressed into the original motive and still remains as a conventional course. While there is nothing wrong in adopting a conventional structure for this program, unlike other conventional courses such as Bachelor Arts in English, Economics, Anthropology, Management Studies lack a proper literature background and sufficient level of scientific base. The goals to be realized in the proposed paper – the

development of a needs-based product in an international context –provide such a solid practical and theoretical basis for the Management Studies to materialize the original objectives of the designed program.In fact, encouraging students to develop their entrepreneurial skills, on an individual basis as well as with the help of their teachers, is among the core skills that Management and Business Administration programs need to offer.

A product is any offering that can satisfy a need or want, such as one of the 10 basic offerings of goods, services, experiences, events, persons, places, properties, organizations, information, and ideas (Kotler, 2002). Given that the ability to develop products is the core idea behind business and management, being exposed to aprocess of product development offers the students a unique chance to look into the mechanisms that underlie the creative process as well as international transactions. Furthermore, the process of product development in this case is authentic as it is driven by actual customer needs. Koshy (2012) emphasizes that the relevance of customer value is the driving force behind all marketing decisions. Yet, business is also about generating value. In the case of the project, we find a potential class of customers for our product in India and worldwide and thus expect a fruitful result. The aspect of social sensitivity of, which Koshy (2012) also highlights, is equally strong in the case of the project as it primarily focuses on internationalizing and popularizing the 'Performing Arts' of Kerala/India. If the paper is able to convince the rest of the world about the depth and width of 'Indian Tourism', the social sensitivity of the project will peak by generating state revenue, employment and finally as a result economic, social and infrastructure development.

An added benefit of the proposed project is the fact that the expected outcome of the project will likely exert a positive effect on the domestic tourism. In this sense, the project might be considered as the major outreach program of any institute promoting this paper, which is slightly deviating from the traditional way of product development, but would increase the pace of growth of the courses of Management Studies.

b) *The management of English as a foreign language and medium of higher education in India with no less importance given to other regional and scheduled languages could enhance the scope of the paper,*

The eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution lists 22 languages, which have been referred to as scheduled languages and given recognition, status and official encouragement. All these languages are fully spoken, independent and classical. The novel, poetry and literature of all

the 22 languages are equally encouraged and enjoyed. The people of different states in India enjoy the classics of each language and all of the languages have an established existence in the infotainment through cinematography, drama, novels and poetry. The fact, this is a model for the rest of the world highlights the interest in these aspects of the Indian linguistic culture shows that giving importance to regional and scheduled languages, among other advantages, focuses on the needs and wants of potential international customers. Thus, there is a clear need to find ways to manage the presentation and presence of all of the 22 languages in international communication.

Although the government is able to encourage all the scheduled languages and their literature, the English language largely influences the higher education system. In classes where learners all share the same first language or national language, teachers need to use a range of options to encourage learners to use the second language as much as possible (Nation 1997). This issue is also providing ample scope for research and it leads to a number of research areas.

1. The quality of higher education using English as a medium of study.
2. A comparative analysis of quality of higher education using English as medium of study on one side and other languages as a medium of study on the other side.
3. The intellectual output of the present system.
4. The relevance of usages of various languages in higher education along with English.
5. More importantly the management of English as a foreign language both for teachers and students.

In this sense, the management of English as a foreign language in parallel to the recognition of the other languages is yet another innovative aspect of the paper.

Thispaper proposes the Ministry to develop a web portal which will focus on a balanced representation of the linguistic culture in India.

c) *The need for digital internationalizing the culture, system and tourism of the home country through the education system.*

The EFL Web portal product development will help the students with an exposure to internationalize the culture, system and the tourism of the home country. This can be perceived as an exercise for theIndian students to strengthen their connections with their local surroundings, their domestic culture and the linguistic peripherals and at the same time, to

present and package their cultural artifacts on the international arena as marketable products that can be of use to stakeholders in the communication/literature discipline, which ultimately leads to the fostering of tourism and hospitality. These are crucial skills to acquire in modern business and in the era of globalization.

The modern business era also requires highly digitally literate actors. The paper offers the students a chance to develop both their Internet presence and an online tool.

This paper thus proposes the need to enhance the depth of courses of Management Studies and EFL incorporating the arts, artifacts and performing arts in it adopting LTTA.

Examples of performing arts applicable for the LTTA model which are included only from the state of Kerala and the cultural arts and artifacts and performing arts of various Indian states need to be incorporated to EFL.

1. Koodiyattom - which is a form of Sanskrit drama or theatre and a UNESCO-designated Human Heritage Art

2. Kathakali - a 500-year-old form of dance-drama that interprets ancient epics

3. Kerala Natanam - a popularized offshoot of kathakali is (developed in the 20th century by dancer Guru Gopinath.

4. Koothu - is a more light-hearted performance mode, akin to modern stand-up comedy; an ancient art originally confined to temple sanctuaries, it was later popularized by Mani Madhava Chakyar

5. Mohiniyaattam - a type of graceful choreographed dance performed by women and accompanied by musical vocalizations

6. Thullal and padayani – these are also important performing arts of Keralites

7. Theyyam - Baali, PuliyoorKaali, MavilayiDaivathar, RakthaChamundi, KalakattuKarimkuttisasthan, Aryakkarabhagavathi, Elamkolam, MuchilottuBhagavathy etc. are different forms of Theyyam.

8. Thirayattam - which is one of the most outstanding folk art of Kerala and this vibrant ritual performing folk art form enacted in courtyards of "Kaavukal"(sacred groves) and village shrine

9. Kummattikali – It is a tribal and folk art forms. It is the famous colorful mask-dance of South Malabar, performed during the festival of Onam.

10. Kannyar Kali – is a dance form (also known as Desathukali) is a fast moving, militant dance attuned to rhythmic devotional folk songs and asuravadyas.

11. Oppana - It is an Islam themed dance form. It is widely popular among Keralite Muslims and is a native to Malabar. Oppana incorporates group dance accompanied by the beat of rhythmic hand clapping and *ishal* vocalizations.

12. Margam Kali - is one of the ancient round group-dance of Kerala practiced by St.Thomas Christians.

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