

USING *LANGLOL* TO TEACH VOCABULARY AND VALUES IN AN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

The teaching and learning of vocabulary are an important aspect of the language learning process. Vocabulary is often developed through reading. Relatedly, values form a vital part of the life of an individual. Vocabulary can be taught through learning to read the content, which is replete with values. In this context, the paper employs the Content-Based Instruction (CBI) Approach to incorporate the teaching of vocabulary and values in an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. In CBI Approach, the use of authentic material plays an important role in the language learning process. The paper explores the various possibilities of using Langlol, an indigenous moral discourse of Manipur, a state in Northeast India, as the main teaching material to integrate the teaching of vocabulary and values. The study was conducted with the students of one of the schools of Manipur. The findings of the study indicated that the CBI approach using the indigenous material assisted in developing vocabulary as well as understanding values.

Keywords: Content-Based Instruction (CBI), ESL, *Langlol*, Values, Vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary forms an integral part of teaching and learning a language. The knowledge of words is power as it serves as an important backbone of learning (Moeller et al., 2009). Vocabulary is often developed through reading. However, in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom, learning to read the content is tedious. Under this circumstance, teaching vocabulary through reading becomes a difficult task. The content designed to teach vocabulary has to be developed so that the learners are motivated and of interest to them. Relatedly, values form a vital part of the life of an individual. Vocabulary can be taught through learning to read the content, which is replete with values. The use of indigenous cultural materials in English Language Teaching enables the students to enhance their vocabulary, writing, and communication skills and also helps in understanding culture (Barfield & Uzarski, 2009). In this context, the paper employs the Content-Based Instruction (CBI) Approach to incorporate

the teaching of vocabulary and values in an ESL classroom. It explores the various possibilities of using *Langlol*, an indigenous moral discourse of Manipur, a state in Northeast India, as the main teaching material to integrate the teaching of vocabulary and values.

Objective

The objective of the study is to integrate the teaching of vocabulary and values through the CBI approach using the indigenous text, *Langlol* in the upper primary schools of Manipur.

Research Questions

1. How can the indigenous text, *Langlol*, be used as effective content to teach vocabulary in an ESL classroom?
2. What are the possibilities of promoting and preserving the practices of values when the learning objectives focus on teaching vocabulary?

LITERATURE REVIEW

CBI is an approach to second language teaching where the learners are trained to acquire the target language through the content. The term CBI has been defined by Richards and Rodgers (2001) “as an approach to second language teaching in which teaching is organized around the content or information that students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or another type of syllabus” (p. 204). Further, CBI is defined by Crandall and Tucker as “an approach to language instruction that integrates the presentation of topics or tasks from subjects matter classes within the context of teaching a second or foreign language” (1990, p. 187). So in the CBI approach, the focus is on teaching the content. At the same time, language is learned while learning the content. Thus, it is seen that content becomes a pertinent factor in the CBI approach. Authentic material is a vital component in a successful CBI approach programme. The authentic materials can be those used in native language instruction (Brinton et al., 1989). It can also be those materials used in magazines, newspapers, and any other medium of media (Brinton et al., 1989). In CBI, the teachers can use comprehensible, interesting, and meaningful

materials to motivate the learners (Brinton et al., 1989). According to Brinton (2003), language teachers should work on the following principles for CBI implementation:

- Instructions are given on the content and not on the criteria of the language
- Integrating the teaching of various skills
- In the learning process, the students should actively participate
- The relevance of the interests of the students has to be accounted for while choosing the content
- Selection of authentic materials and tasks

The research by Navas Brenes (2010) showed that using the CBI approach enhances the students' awareness of their impact on society and the world at large. If the content used in the CBI approach is more appealing to the students, their learning will be more meaningful and motivating, thereby enhancing the language learning process (Navas Brenes, 2010). Villalobos asserts that "CBI constitutes one of the most relevant and significant approaches of language teaching, basically because it offers important opportunities to match the learners' needs with meaningful content to promote language acquisition" (2014, p. 82). Ngan (2011) stressed that the learners' motivation is enhanced when CBI is used in the ESP (English for Specific Purposes) classrooms. Amrani (2019), in his research, showed that the use of CBI in ESP classrooms greatly enhances the comprehension and vocabulary capabilities of the learners. Therefore, in light of the above discussions, the application of the CBI approach has shown better development in the teaching and learning of the English language.

Values are an integral element that is entrenched in the behaviour and activity of one's life. The main aim of education for values is to prepare a child with the competencies, abilities, skills, and attitudes which will not only help them in schools but also embrace them with lifelong learning enabling them to live harmoniously in the community (Education for Values in Schools – A Framework, 29). Thus, education aims not only to cater to the current needs and objectives of society but to inculcate its lasting human aspirations and values in the community. The indigenous text, *Langlol* chronicled the moral and ethical doctrines imbibed by the traditional Meitei (one of the ethnic groups of Manipur) society. It narrates intrinsic moral treatises intermixed with proverbs and maxims. It may be used as the content in the CBI approach to impart values and to teach vocabulary in the upper primary schools of Manipur.

Implications of values in *Langlol*

Langlol is a moral and ethical treatise in proverbs and maxims which abounds in values like honesty, kindness, bravery, hard work, compassion, and gentleness. It describes the appalling consequences of evil deeds like stealing and lying. At the same time, it details the rewarding and satisfying results of good deeds. It also describes a list of traps that humankind should avoid. These traps caution humankind to avoid the vices by showing the differences between the good and the bad and the right and the wrong. Therefore, *Langlol* serves as a vital source of educational discourse for young learners to inculcate indispensable real-life values. Some of the proverbs from the text are given below:

- If lies and only lies are told by using conspiracy, they are surely exposed;
- He who keeps his eyes on many things suffers from indignity;
- Never drink the wine of the human superego. Yet, one should not lack self-confidence, nor should one keep one's reputation too low. One shall think that all human beings have the same soul: every human being is equal.

(Naorem, 1991, p. 92)

These priceless proverbs serve to educate humankind to imbibe moral and ethical values and foster the use of reason on the part of the individual to make one's own decisions. They are a set of specific guidelines laid down in the society for a peaceful socio-political existence. *Langlol* also records a list of traps that humankind should try to keep away from, which are listed as:

"Looking at things which should not be looked at, and overlooking those things which should be looked at; love for someone who should be hated, and aversion for someone who should be loved; to be credulous, and to follow the evil instigations of some people; to be unmindful of what other people will think; to have extreme likes and dislikes."

(Shyamkishor in Naorem, 1991, p. 143)

The list of traps listed in *Langlol* exemplifies the difference between goodness and badness, rightness and wrongness, virtues and vices, and moral and non-moral value. The

existence of humankind in a society is characterized by upholding specific rules and regulations set up in the system. The 'trap' tries to caution people with all the vices that are contrasted with the virtues. It asserts the troubles and the undesirable misfortunes which are associated with the erroneous deeds. The 'traps' in *Langlol* thus prepares a person to live an ethical and virtuous life by carefully circumventing the various vices.

METHODOLOGY

In the CBI approach, language is learned through learning the content. It is assumed that the learner's familiarisation of the language and the content is achievable through a literary text that can be used to learn the content and the language. For the content, the indigenous text, *Langlol*, is taken up for the study. The study was conducted with the students of class VI from the school of Imphal, Manipur. The number of students who participated in the study is 88. Pre-test and post-test methods were used to test the learning of vocabulary. Conventional prose, *King Solomon the Wise*, as prescribed in the Board of Secondary Education curriculum, Manipur (BSEM) was used in the pre-test. This conventional prose was already taught in the class. Based on the lesson, a pre-test was conducted to test the learning of vocabulary based on understanding and its application. In the post-test method, the text, *Langlol* adopting the CBI approach was used. The assessment of vocabulary learning was done based on the student participants' understanding of content knowledge, learning vocabulary, and application of the learned vocabulary and content in real-life situations. Based on the content, the activities and exercises are carried out in two parts. The first part tests the student participants' understanding of the knowledge of the content. In the second part, the student participants are tested based on their ability to apply the understanding of the knowledge of the content in real-life situations. Some of the tasks and activities which are used in the post-test are:

1. Group discussion based on the topic 'Values in *Langlol*' and to discuss the use of a vocabulary which describes their most treasured values.
2. Group activity: Write a paragraph illustrating the following positive life values and vocabulary from the text, *Langlol*: Honesty, Compassion, Truthfulness, Courageous, Hard work.

3. Read an extract from the text, *Langlol*. Ask the students to identify keywords from the extract and attempt to write their meanings.
4. Story strip activity with a key vocabulary and a valuable educational theme: divide the class into groups of six. Give the sentence strips (not in order) for one paragraph of the story to each of the six groups.
5. Words like advance, aversion, succeed, self-confidence, etc., are taken from the text. These words can be written on the board and asked the students to read the word and think of words that come to their mind. Many words related to the words are written on the board can be exchanged amongst the students in the class.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following table shows the assessment of the student participants when using conventional prose and *Langlol*.

Table 1: Learning of vocabulary when using the conventional prose and *Langlol*

Criteria of assessment	Pre-test score (%) (Conventional prose)	Post-test score (%) (<i>Langlol</i>)	Difference (%)
Understanding of the knowledge of the content	56	61	5
Ability to apply the understanding of the knowledge of the content in real-life situations	30.5	51.7	21.2

In the first part, when the student participants' understanding of the knowledge of the content was tested, there has been a slight increase in the level of learning from 56% when the conventional text was used to 61% when the extract of *Langlol* was used. The second part of the testing of the student participants' ability to apply the understanding of the knowledge of the content in real-life situations showed that there had been an increase from 30.5% when the

conventional text was used to 51.7% when the extract of *Langlol* was used. This entails the student participants' increase in the use of their cognitive faculties to apply the understanding of the knowledge of the content in real-life situations. The reason might be because of the use of material that is familiar to the student participants. This increases the learners' motivation level, enhancing the learning of vocabulary and understanding of the values. Relatedly, the tasks and activities in the post-test enabled the student participants to exercise their cognitive skills. The student participants were instructed to use the English language in performing the tasks and activities.

In the group discussion based on the topic 'Importance of Values', the student participants engaged in dialogue with their classmates to discuss the various facets of values and their importance in their lives and how it will help build a better world. The story strip activity, the exercises, and the group activities enhance the motivation level, and so the learners actively participate in the activities. In the CBI learning process, the active participation of the learners is an important criterion in its successful implementation. As the learners in the study actively participate in the learning process, it implies that the CBI approach is successfully used. Relatedly, in the CBI approach, the materials used should appeal to the learners. The indigenous text, *Langlol*, arouses the learners' interest as they are familiar with the text. Therefore, the level of integrative learning of values and vocabulary is found to be higher when the extract of *Langlol* is used.

CONCLUSION

The study indicated that concurrent learning of content and language occurs when using the conventional prose and using the indigenous text, *Langlol*. However, it clearly shows that using the moral and ethical values infused in the indigenous text, *Langlol*, enhances the learning of vocabulary and helps in a greater understanding of values. In the CBI approach, as the use of authentic material plays an important role in the learning process, the use of indigenous text in the study is found to be effective. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of the CBI approach assisted in developing vocabulary as well as to understand values.

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