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Discourse Analysis in ESL Classrooms: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract: Discourse analysis can be characterised as the study of relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used. The focus of discourse is on context and on the behavioural patterns that structure the social functions of a language, above and beyond the construction of structural models. For discourse analysts, context is of primary importance. Michel Foucault described discourse as a whole field or domain within which language is used in particular ways. This field or domain is produced in and through social practices, institutions, and actions. Language learning cannot be divorced from social context and the environment in which the learning takes place. The present study seeks to understand the various discourses at play in an English as second language classroom teaching. For this purpose, students and teachers of English of Class VII of a private school and a government aided school were selected to evaluate and unravel the interaction in the classroom and the dialogue of individual discourses with the larger social discourse of the classroom. The main focus of the study was to explore if and how classroom environment, gender and socio-economic status of the students impact the learning in ESL classrooms.

Index Terms - Discourse analysis, English as second language, Gender, Socio-economic status, language learning

I. INTRODUCTION

When we talk about Discourse, we look at language use that is relative to social, political and cultural formations. According to Fairclough (1992), in Discourse, the language reflects and shapes the social, thus shaping interactions of the individuals with society. Discourse analysis is the study of relationship between language use and its social context. It encompasses spoken interaction and written texts; and within written texts the grammatical structures, phonology and semiotic systems.

The main purpose of the study was to understand the various discourses at play in English as Second Language (ESL) classrooms, where the level of interaction is fairly complex with multiple levels of discourses at play. Each stakeholder comes into the classroom with their realities and individual, familial and societal discourses. It is important to note it is not just the social order that shapes language, but the language too shapes the social order. Knowledge is constructed, co-constructed and re-constructed in a classroom through constant interaction of various micro and macro discourses. The knowledge thus created defines the power relations that exist inside and outside the classroom.

In a second language learning situation, a classroom comprises students with varied backgrounds, who come with their own experiences to the classroom. How they understand and interpret phenomenon and situations is largely based on these experiences and realities. Apart from learner experiences, gender and socio-cultural background also plays a key role in knowledge construction and the learning process. Through interaction, the learners as well as the teacher construct a shared social reality. It is important to study these factors for ensuring meaningful learning outcomes among students.

In a second language learning classroom, “the quality of interaction is thought to have a considerable influence on learning” (Ellis, 1985). Thus, the role of teacher gains significance. The teacher is a friend, a mentor and a guide in the classroom and holds the power to direct the pace of learning. For studying learning in class, it is necessary to analyze the discourses of the learners and the teachers and how these discourses cross path, diverge and converge at various stances of language learning.

Another important factor is school environment. Many years of research shows that there are direct links between the quality of a school's climate and its educational outcomes. A culture of a school is an extremely important area of study. There are physical and symbolic aspects to a school's environment. Physical aspects constitute the infrastructure and the human resources required in running a school and the symbolic (or cultural) aspect may include factors such as school rules, ceremonies, rituals, discipline, conduct of teachers and such other factors. Analysis of these aspects is also crucial as they impact the teaching-learning process.

Apart from learner differences, interaction and role of the teacher in an ESL classroom and school environment, the discourse surrounding the learning of English as a matter of social status becomes prominent in Indian context. In a second language learning situation, proficiency in English is often associated with superiority and misunderstood as intelligence. It is seen as a language of ‘the classes’ and not ‘the

masses.' Speaking in English in India is a matter of class and in the minds of Indians, English represents better education, culture and higher intellect. There is a certain level of urgency amongst parents to get their children to excel in English and study in English medium schools. There is a need to explore the existence of such discourses in ESL classrooms.

II. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

2.1 Research Questions

- Whether the social differences of the learners interact with the classroom environment?
- How does the discourse of teachers and learners affect the teaching-learning process in English as Second Language classrooms?
- Whether or not the discourse of the school finds space in students' learning?

2.2 Objectives

1. To develop the profiles of the learners
2. To study the school environment
3. To observe the discourse used by the teachers in:
 - transacting the content
 - asking questions and taking feedback.
4. To study how discourses affect the learners' performance in language classroom
5. To compare the discourses existent in the two schools selected

2.3 Methodology

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the researcher selected Class VII students and teachers of English as Second Language from two co-educational schools of Bangalore, one government-aided and one private.

A mixed methods design of research was adopted that sought to employ and utilize the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative and quantitative research methods, techniques and approaches were mixed/combined to look at the problem in a more inclusive, pluralistic and complementary way.

Triangulation of data was also done by employing several methods of data collection for examining the same phenomenon. Triangulation helps in identifying different aspects of a phenomenon in a more accurate form as we approach it from various vantage points using different methods and techniques. Apart from this, it also helps in validation of the data. For the purpose of triangulation, data was collected through checklists, questionnaires, profile development tools, standardized tools for recording SES, inventory for schools, observation schedules, field notes and interview schedule.

2.3.1 Sample

The main requirement of the study was to sample population within schools that were speakers of ESL and choose schools that were English medium.

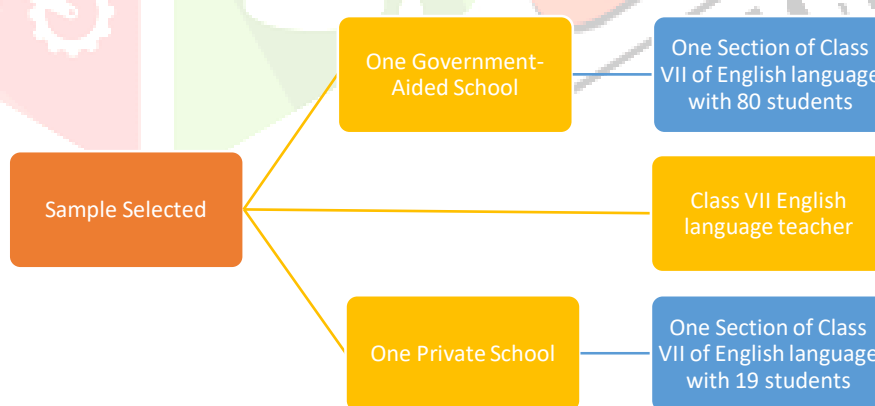


fig 2.1 sampling

In the present study, one section each of Class VII from two schools of Bangalore – one co-educational government-aided and one co-educational private – was selected. The reason for choosing a co-educational school was to study the influence of gender on learning of English. One government-aided school catering to low-income groups was selected as the majority of the government schools in Karnataka are Kannada medium, where teachers themselves find it difficult to speak in the target language and mostly teach English through mother tongue. Selection of a private school was crucial in order to understand how socio-economic status and cultural differences impact the learning of the students. Hence, the purpose behind choosing one government-aided and one private school as sample was to know whether socio-economic background of the learners has any effect on classroom learning.

Apart from this, Class VII students were selected keeping in mind the factors such as exposure to English language, teacher support in class and identity formation amongst students. The students of Class VII have had six years of exposure to the English language; hence they have a fair understanding of the language. Teacher support in second language learning becomes crucial as it is a highly interactive process,

where the teacher largely directs the learning. Fluency and accuracy of the teacher in the language is of utmost importance as the teacher is supposed to generate opportunities of contextual learning.

The students are in their adolescent years and undergoing physical as well as mental development. The process of identity formation is maximized at this stage. German Psychologist Erik Erikson's 'Theory of Psychosocial Development' (1950) discussed eight stages of psychosocial development, from infancy to adulthood. Identity versus confusion is the fifth stage which occurs during adolescent years, between the ages of 12 and 18 approximately. During this stage, adolescents develop a sense of self and identity formation is at its highest. Adolescents re-examine their identity and try to find out who they are. They are struggling to determine their identities while negotiating their place within the society.

2.3.2 Tools

For the purpose of the present investigation, the following tools were used:

1. A format for developing learner's profile with focus on aspects like home environment, social aspirations, interests etc.
2. A SES scale for students
3. School Inventory, covering physical and non-physical aspects of the schools
4. Observation Schedule with focus on:
 - a. Teacher's interaction with the learners
 - b. Students' interaction amongst themselves
5. A semi-structured interview schedule for teachers

Non-participant observation method was used by the researcher to achieve the objectives of the study. This method has been adopted for two reasons. Firstly, being disengaged from the process allowed the researcher to be more objective than being a participant. Secondly, as the researcher did not interact with the subjects of the observation, it gave him/her sufficient time to take field notes and add his/her reflections on the events being observed.

The study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, schools were selected and visited by the researcher; at this stage the profiling of the sampled students and the school was done. In the second phase, two observation schedules were developed, based on the initial visit to the schools and the classrooms. These tools were implemented, followed by interview with teachers.

2.3.3 Analysis of the Data

The data thus collected was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. For qualitative data, the scheme of analysis has been mentioned in brief below.

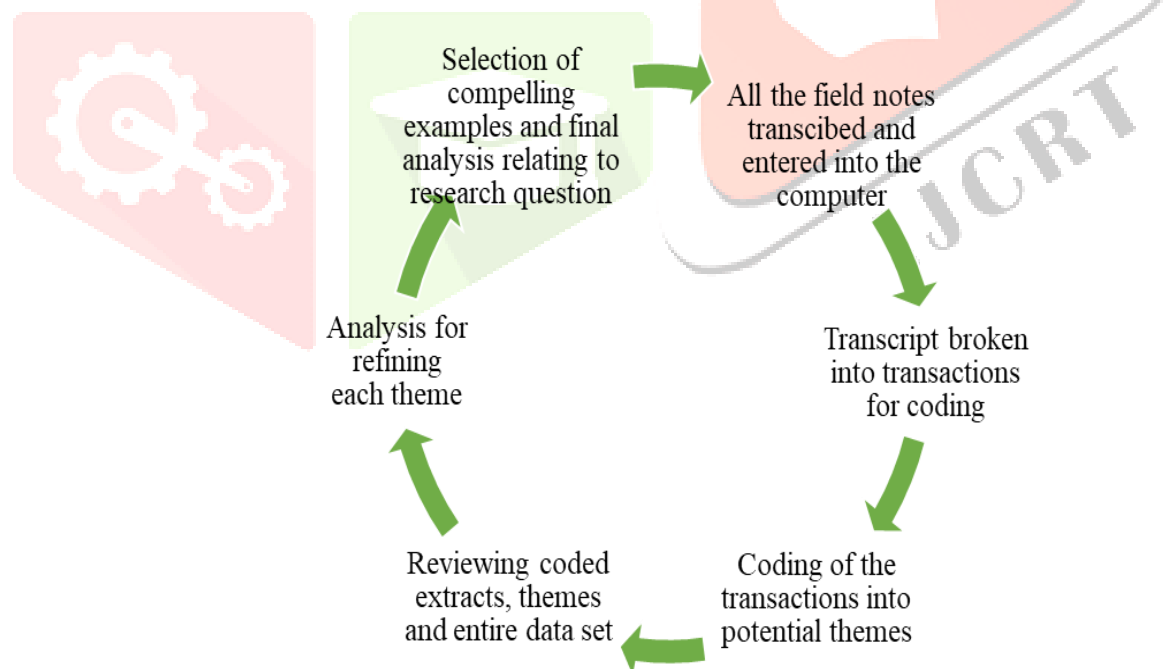


fig 2.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Coding of Data into Themes	
Data / Description	Code
Teacher asked students to memorise the poem and write in their notebooks. Simultaneously, one by one the students are reading the poem, while the teacher is monitoring and listening to each student recite.	Method of teaching
She has pointed out to girls a second time, "have you written in your notebooks."	Feedback mechanisms
She then corrects a student on a sentence he spoke incorrectly. Knows the name of the student.	Approach to gender
She says, "girls are a little slow. I want them to speed up."	Familiarity with learners

fig 2.3 Coding and Categorization of Qualitative Data

For quantitative data, non-parametric tests were used. Statistical Analysis was done to see the relation between student performance and classroom discourses. Descriptive statistics were presented for students' profile including socio-demographic and economic characteristics, academic performance and environment towards learning. Since all the variables were categorical, frequency with percentages was presented to summarize those by school type and overall.

The association between all parameters and students' performance in English was assessed by using Chi-square test or Fisher's exact test as applicable. A multinomial logistic regression model was also applied to test the difference in students' performance between two school types after adjusting for gender and SES. Summary statistics in terms of frequency with percentages was provided for all the parameters of classroom environment in overall data and also separately for two school types. Chi-square and Fisher's exact test was applied to test the difference in classroom environment parameters between two school types. The association is considered statistically significant at five percent level of significance i.e. at $p \leq 0.05$. All quantitative analysis was performed by using statistical software SPSS version 20.0.

III. DISCUSSION

3.1 Objective 1: To develop the profiles of the learners

3.1.1 Gender and SES of Learners:

In the private school, the total class strength was 19 students, out of which 63% were boys and 36% were girls. For majority of the students, their mother tongue was Kannada and it was also the language of communication at home. With respect to SES background of the learners, it was found that 53% were from Upper Middle SES, 26% were from Upper SES and 11% were from Lower Middle SES and Upper Lower SES each. This indicates that the students in the private school were mostly from Upper and Upper Middle class with parents as working professionals. Very few students were from Lower Middle and Upper Lower class, with no student from Lower SES. One reason for this can be attributed to the affordability of the school.

In the government aided school, the total strength of the class was 80, in which 52% were girls and 48% were boys. For 91% students, their mother tongue was Kannada and it was also the medium of communication at home. With regard to SES of the learners, it was found that 44% of the learners were from Upper Lower SES, 42% were from Lower Middle SES, 13% were from Upper Middle SES and only 1% was from Lower SES. This indicates that the majority of the students in the government aided school came from Upper Lower and Lower Middle SES, while a handful came from Upper Middle SES. No student belonged to Upper SES.

3.1.2 Academic excellence:

Academic excellence was studied and it was found that 65% of the private school students scored 85% and above in their recent English tests. 19% were in the range of 75-84%, 11% in 65-74% and only 5% scored between 50-64%. There were no students in class who scored below 50% in English. Compared to this, among government aided school students, 21% of the students scored 85% and above. Majority (53%) were in the range of 75-84%, 5% in 65-74% and 21% scored between 50-64%. There were no students in class who scored below 50%.

3.1.3 Interests and Activities:

The private school students liked to engage in various activities like sports, karate, taekwondo, art and craft, creative writing, video making, digital content creation, dancing, singing, field trips and so on in their free time. 42% engaged in physical activities, 32% in creative and 16% in recreational activities. In the government aided school, it was found that 54% of the students liked to engage in recreational activities like dancing and singing, 30% showed interest in activities like going out with friends, field trips and playing games. The remaining 16% engaged in some kind of physical activity or sports, which included activities like yoga and cricket. The students of government aided school rarely engaged in creative activities outside of the school, in comparison to the private school students.

3.1.4 Education and Occupation of the Parents:

The study explored the home environment of the learners and engagement of parents in the education of their children. Education profile of the parents was also studied and it was found that mothers of 58% of the private school students were Graduates and above and fathers of 69% of the students were Graduates and above. However, 58% of the mothers were homemakers. With respect to the education profile of the parents of the government aided school, the mothers of 47% of the students had completed High school, while 38% did not complete High school, and 1% did not even go to school. On the other hand, Fathers of 42% students had finished High school, 37% did not complete High school, 20% were Graduates and above. There were 3% students whose father did not go to school. Parents of majority students were high school graduates, which compared vastly to parents of private school students who were mostly Graduates or above. With respect to occupation of the parents, 43% of the mothers were homemakers and 68% of the fathers were engaged in Semi-skilled professions like factory workers, fruit sellers, auto drivers, bus drivers, and security guards.

3.1.5 Parents' Involvement:

When asked about the engagement of parents in their school work, 47% of the private school students agreed that their father regularly helped them in their school work, and 58% agreed that their mother regularly helped them with their homework. It goes to show that mothers are mostly involved in the homework of their children. Overall half of the students agreed that their parents were involved in their studies. The investment of the parents in their child's education was high. A 100% of the students also agreed that their parents regularly consulted their English teacher to know about their progress at school.

In the government aided school, 54% students agreed that their father regularly helped them in their school work, 23% neither agreed nor disagreed to it while remaining 23% disagreed. With regard to their mother, 73% agreed that their mother regularly helped them with their homework, 12% disagreed and remaining 15% neither agreed nor disagreed. This goes to show that mothers are mostly involved in the homework of their children. With respect to overall investment of the parents in their child's education, 53% of the students agreed that their parents regularly consulted their English teacher to know about their progress at school while 34% disagreed to it.

3.1.6 Exposure to English outside School:

Among the private school students, 42% agreed that their parents spoke mostly in English at home. When asked about English resources available to them outside of school, 74% agreed that they had everyday access to several English resources like newspapers, books, magazines etc. 73% of the total students also agreed that they watched movies, tv series and drama in English. This indicates that majority of the students had abundant opportunities of exposure to English language outside of the school and classroom.

In the government aided school, it was found that for 58% of the total students, English was not used by parents at home for communication. Primarily, mother tongue was being used for communication at home. The students of this school mostly interacted with the teacher and among themselves also in Kannada. In terms of access to English resources, 38% agreed that they had everyday access to several English resources like newspapers, books, magazines etc. This indicates that majority of the students had little or no exposure to English language outside of the school and classroom.

3.1.7 Personal Aspirations:

Majority of the private school students expressed desire to have a career in Science, with many aspiring to become scientists, engineers and doctors. There were a few who desired a career in art, sports (mostly cricket) and acting. Their aspirations were inspired by their parents, friends and relatives, who were engaged in high skilled professions. All 100% of the class had plans of studying after high school. In the government aided school, 99% of the students wanted to study after high school and majority expressed desire to have a career in Science, with many aspiring to become engineers and doctors. There were a few who desired a career to become IAS, IPS, teachers, pilots and join army.

3.2 Objective 3: To observe the discourse used by the teachers in:

- transacting the content
- asking questions and taking feedback

Classrooms of both the schools were studied to understand the discourses at play. It was found that in the private school, Student talk was more prevalent in the classroom, where the ratio of student and teacher talk seemed to be 75:25 or 50:50 in some places. Students were given more chance to construct the knowledge in the classroom either through interaction with the teacher or with their peers. The teacher led the class and continued the momentum of interaction through questions, feedback and summarization of answers, while the students came up with answers, explanations and supported each other in coming up with answers. In the government aided school, by and large, the data showed that the classroom was teacher dominated, where the teacher often resorted to code-switching. The teacher controlled the

talk more than 50% of the time, often going up to 75% of the time. More than half of the class interaction time was taken up by the teacher. Teacher talk mostly comprised introduction to lesson, summary of the lesson, questioning, giving instructions, providing feedback, supporting and assisting in sentence formation by students.

The classroom in the private school was teacher led but dominated by student talk, whereas in the government aided school, the classroom was teacher led and dominated by teacher talk. In order for meaningful interaction to take place, a teacher must create opportunities for students to speak in class and support their learning. This is also crucial for contextual learning to take place. These components were missing in the classroom of the government aided school. Moreover, frequent code switching led to further interference in learning of the target language. Various studies have argued on the use of mother tongue while teaching of a new language. In India, classrooms mostly comprise of multilingual learners. Though switching language code can be beneficial in some cases but too much of the mother tongue hinders the second language learning.

With respect to the subject knowledge of the teacher, the private school teacher possessed fluency and accuracy in the language and spoke only in English throughout the class. She made content related errors 33% of the times, however, these errors were mostly related to pronunciation of words. This error can be contributed to what the linguists call, the interference of mother tongue. The teacher from the government aided school was also fluent in the language but could be observed making errors related to grammar, sentence formation, spelling and pronunciation of words.

In the private school, the key features of the methodology adopted by the teacher were – summarization of the story, invitation for participation of the students in the class by asking them to read the text or by asking comprehension questions based on the text. Whereas the key features of the methodology adopted by the government aided school teacher were – chalk and talk method, where the teacher controlled most of the talk. The flow of the lesson would be to start with the introduction of the chapter, ask students to open the textbooks, read aloud of the lesson by the teacher, questions in between the lesson to check the comprehension of the students and finally summarization of the story. The classes were teacher lead most of the times and the students spoke in class only when spoken to. The students would respond to the question and get feedback from the teacher. The interaction between the students mostly took place in fragments. In almost all the classes, the teacher did most of the talk and controlled the topic. In this way, the students were passive and they answered questions and got information passively from the teacher.

In the private school the teacher tried to involve the entire class during every interaction. She appreciated and encouraged all the students to participate in class. 90% of the time the teacher asked questions and took responses from the learners for checking their understanding. The questions asked would be leading in nature and encouraged discussion in class. In the government aided school, however, though the teacher asked questions and took responses from the learners for checking their understanding, the questions were largely direct in nature. The students responded in single words or small sentences and did not require high level engagement or in-depth understanding from the learners. The questions were directed towards a few students and no effort was made to engage all the learners.

The students from the private school were found to be engaged in the lesson 60% of the time. The teacher would draw students' attention by engaging them in meaningful activities like role playing, story enactment, competing for finding meaning of words and so on. The entire class was divided into groups and the students sat in three rows. Each row represented one group. A healthy competition was maintained between the groups and all three groups aimed at winning points from the teacher on every interaction/participation and correct answer. Over 60% of the time the private school teacher also tried to interact with learners who were otherwise excluded and learners who would not involve in the class very easily.

However, the classroom processes of the government aided school mostly involved textbook related teaching and chalk and talk method. 56% of the times it was from direct textbook where students were mostly listening or repeating after the teacher and 44% of the times, the textbook teaching was at the most supplemented by charts. Most of the times, the students were simply listening to the teacher or copying from blackboard or repeating after the teacher in chorus. The students could also be observed doing some other task in class or dozing off during the lesson. The teacher of the government aided school interacted with a select few students 70% of the time. The teacher would, at first, open a question to the entire class but faced with the issue of lack of response from the class, she would direct the question to a particular student she was sure would answer correctly. The classroom discussion, in this sense, was restricted to a few. Students who were more fluent in the target language were encouraged and given more chances to speak, while no strategies were adopted to encourage participation by non-performers.

In the government aided school, the teacher's action zone was mostly the first three rows of the class; with more attention to the rows where boys were seated. The classroom was not as vibrant, and the students sat silently in complete discipline. The teacher used a language other than English in classroom more than half of the time for teaching. The teacher also frequently resorted to code switching for teaching. Kannada was used for explanation of concepts, giving commands and instructions to students.

The private school teacher, on the other hand, never used any language, other than English for teaching in classroom. There was ease of use of language among the learners as well as the teacher. The students were fairly comfortable in conversing in the language. They spoke in English with each other during the classroom activities and outside of the class as well. With respect to the use of teaching aids, the private school teacher made use of charts/flash cards (30%), locally created resources (20%) and learning aids like skits, mime, debate (20%). However, the government school teacher mostly used textbook and blackboard as teaching aids in the classroom. There were no additional resources used, with an exception of charts a few times.

The private school teacher did not use angry tone very often for addressing the students. She did not humiliate them for asking questions or for not being able to answer properly. She managed to create a non-threatening environment of learning and 93% of the times the teacher used a positive tone with students. The teacher in the government aided school, however, used methods like raising voice, banging duster, using angry or rude tone with the students 60% of the time. Very rarely she used a positive tone or child-friendly ways of managing disruption in class. She mostly stayed at the front of the class while teaching and there was no movement recorded during the lesson.

The private school teacher gave the onus of learning to the learners. They were encouraged to ask questions, prepare for the lesson in advance and come up with answers on their own. Leading questions were asked, inputs were taken from the students and the answers were corrected and summary presented. The teacher made use of positive tone and child-friendly ways 56% of the time to address the issues of disengagement of learners from the lesson. At other times, there was either no disruption or if there was, the teacher used an angry tone to handle it. Almost no time was spent by the teacher in dealing with these disruptions.

3.3 Objective 4: To study how discourses affect the learners' performance in language classroom

3.3.1 Gender in Class:

It is apparent that there was a gender bias existing in the classroom of the private school as 100% of the times the boys were given more chance to speak in the class. The teacher openly criticized the behaviour of the girls most of the times (90%) and the frequency of this was more than that of the boys, who sometimes (60%) faced open criticism from the teacher. Leadership roles in class were assigned to boys more often than they were assigned to girls. The teacher reinforced the gender roles in class 95% of the times. The boys participated more in the class as compared to girls; they were more active during discussions and spoke freely and fluently. The teacher gave them more opportunity to speak in class by directing questions at them.

Some amount of bias did exist in the government aided school classroom as well. The boys participated more in class. The frequency of openly criticizing the behaviour of the girls was more than that of boys and the leadership tasks were assigned to boys more often than they were assigned to girls. This, however, seemed to be incidental as there were no apparent prejudices seen in the behaviour of the teacher. She was stern or strict with the entire class. The girls would sit quietly in class and there would be no special effort made by the teacher to involve them. Boys took lead naturally and participated more in class. Thus, the teacher paid more attention to them. Since boys were more active, they were given more leadership related tasks. The teacher did not create strategies to push the students out of their comfort zones and participate. Majority of the girls looked subdued and submissive. Even when all the boys shouted out answers collectively, the girls stayed silent. The ratio of boys and girls in class was 50:50. It was a big class with 80 students, out of which 41 were girls and 39 were boys. They sat in separate rows. Despite the ratio, the boys were more active than girls. They would speak more freely to the teacher and among themselves and spoke with more confidence.

There was a clear segregation of the two sexes in the classrooms of both the schools. Boys and girls sat separately. When the teachers were asked about it, they said it was due to their age and background. The parents probably tell their daughters to interact less with boys. Secondly, since their bodies are going through changes, they themselves become conscious and prefer to keep to their own gender. There was hardly any interaction between boys and girls, both inside and outside of the classroom. The teachers also did not make any attempts to increase the interaction between the two.

3.3.2 Performance of students in English test:

In the private school, 72% girls scored 75% and above in the English test; 28% scored between 50 and 74%. Despite lesser opportunities of interaction available to girls to engage in learning activities in classroom, they seem to be performing equivalent, if not better than the boys. In the government aided school, even though girls spoke less in class, they were found to be doing better in the tests. When the marks of the two groups – boys and girls, were examined and compared, the girls came out to be performing better than boys. 90% girls scored 75% and above in the English; 10% scored between 50 and 74%.

In both the cases of the private and government school, the performance of girls (equivalent in case of private and better in case of the government aided) can be attributed to investment from the parents in their learning. The girl students from the private school said that their parents regularly helped them in their homework; 54% of the times it was their father and 90% of the time, their mother helped them in their homework regularly. For the government aided school, 57% girls agreed that their fathers regularly helped them in their homework, while only 41% boys agreed to this. Similarly, 86% girls agreed as compared to 42% boys, that their mother regularly helped them with their homework. It goes on to show that parents of the girl students engaged more with the education of their child.

3.3.3. Socio-economic Status (SES) of Students:

In the private school, 29% of the girls belonged to Upper class, while 25% of boys came from the same category of class. 58% of boys and 43% of girls were from the Upper Middle class. 29% girls belonged to Upper Lower and 17% of boys to Lower Middle class. No students were from Lower class. This was the overall demography of the class. 72% of the total number of girls were from Upper and Upper Middle category, with parents either working as professionals or having their own line of business. Rest of the girls were from Upper Lower category. They all however, came from Upper class category. Majority of the boys were also from Upper and Upper Middle category, with only 17% from Lower Middle.

In the Government Aided school, 44% of the total students were from Upper Lower, 42% were from Lower Middle, 13% from Upper Middle and 1% was from Lower. This indicates that the majority of the government aided school students belonged to Upper Lower and Lower Middle class and only a handful came from Upper Middle class. No student belonged to Upper class.

With regard to overall participation in the private school classroom, students from Upper, Upper Middle and Lower Upper SES participated more in the class. It can therefore be said that in case of both boys and girls, SES of the learners had significant impact on their performance in the subject. Among both boys and girls, the students who participated more in class fared better in the tests as well. Overall, students from the Lower Middle SES participated less in class. There was no bias observed in the attitude of the teacher with regard to the socio-economic background of the students.

The bias existed with regard to gender as boys were encouraged more and given more opportunities in the class to speak and it existed with regard to the good performers in the class. Students who spoke fairly fluently in the target language were encouraged more to speak in class. The teacher did try to implement strategies that would encourage participation by the entire class, but this was restricted to a smaller number of times.

No students in the government aided school came from Upper SES. 8% boys and 20% girls were from the Upper Middle class. 44% boys and girls were from Upper Lower; 34% girls and 49% boys were from Lower Middle SES. Mere 2% girls belonged to Lower SES. Majority of the girls (64%) were from Upper Middle and Upper Lower category with parents either working as professionals or having their own line of business. Rest of the girls (36%) were from Lower Middle and Lower category. The breakup of boys between Upper and Lower category was that of a 50-50. This means that majority of the girls were from a better socio-economic background when compared to boys.

With regard to overall participation, students from Upper Middle and Upper Lower SES participated more in the class. It can be said that in case of both boys and girls, SES of the learners had an impact on their performance in the subject. Among the girls, the students who participated more in class fared well in the tests as well. The same trend was seen among boys. Overall, there was a trend observed that the students from Lower Middle scored average in test. There was no bias observed in the attitude of the teacher with regard to the socio-economic background of the students. The bias existed with regard to the good performers in the class.

In the government aided school, independent learning took place 100% of the time. Majority of the times (81%) the group/peer learning did not take place and the reason for this was that the teacher did not create many such opportunities in class. In case of the private school, group/peer learning took place in classroom 40% of the time. The teacher conducted a lot of activities in the class, where the students were made to work in pairs or groups. Students worked in pairs and groups when asked to find meaning of difficult words. They were provided time after every reading in the class to underline five difficult words each as a group and find their meaning as well. They would then be asked to walk up to the board and write down the word-meanings. The group work or pair work took place between the students of same gender.

In both the classes, the students supported each other's learning most of the time. At other times, they would either sit quietly or make fun of other student's mistakes. Interaction between the opposite gender was limited but same sex interaction happened freely during the classes. Since three students would be seated together in one row, while doing any task in class, the students would discuss points with their partners and a sort of camaraderie was seen between them.

3.4 Objective 2: To study the school environment and

Objective 5: To compare the discourses existent in the two schools selected

The resources available in the two schools like school premises, playground, number of classrooms, number of rooms for other purposes, electricity supply, toilets and drinking water facilities were almost the same in both the schools. Both the schools had adequate space and facilities available. The only difference lay in library space, laboratories (like Image Minds lab, AV room) and computer room; wherein, the private school had these facilities but the Government Aided school did not. Overall, students of both the schools had access to quality school infrastructure.

Student teacher ratio was better in the private school where the classes were small. The number of students in one classroom did not ever cross 25 students. In the government aided school, the students outnumbered the teacher by 80:1.

Private school catered to Upper and Middle SES families and was located in a posh urban neighbourhood. The government aided school catered to Middle and Lower SES families and was located in the semi-urban outskirts of the city of Bangalore.

Parent teacher meetings took place regularly and the parents were appraised of their wards' progress. In the private school, the frequency of this was more. Test or assessment also took place in the school on a weekly basis. They were slightly better connected with the parents as the private school management shared a daily attendance report with parents. Regular updates were shared with parents through sms, whatsapp and email.

Teacher professional development was part of the mandate in both the schools. Teachers were required to participate in these programmes and contribute to the school and student progress. Monitoring of performance of teachers was done in a more robust way in the private school as compared to the other school. In the private school, special orientation programme was done for new teachers and annual once, a refresher course was organised for existing teachers. Performance of all the teachers was regularly monitored by the Vice Principal of the school, who would observe classes on a regular basis.

In terms of co-scholastic activities, the private school students engaged with several activities like theatre, art and craft, digital learning, taekwondo classes, music, yoga, sports and community-based initiatives like, cleanliness drives, girl child education campaign in the community and so on. These activities improved the confidence of the learners. There was also a student parliament in the school, and student leaders who led several clubs. Every Saturday was dedicated to co-scholastic activities as the management strongly believed in all-round improvement of the students. In comparison, the government aided school conducted sport related activities. The programmes, however were not as robust and engaging as that in the private school.

In the private school, additional practices like physical training in morning assembly, thought of the day, word of the day, awareness on civic issues, prize distribution and 'star of the week' where every week one student was given the podium to speak about a topic of her/his interest and introduce self to the school were put in place. These activities were certainly an additional boost to the students and there was a great excitement that could be seen among the students for morning assemblies. These activities contribute indirectly to English language learning as well. The learning becomes contextualized and improves confidence of the students. Morning assemblies were a part of start of

the day for government aided school as well. However, the activities were limited to newspaper reading, singing of anthems and sharing of thought of the day.

With respect to celebration of major festivals, both schools celebrated all the important festivals with equal zeal. There was a culture of inclusion and knowledge sharing. Exposure visits were also done in both the schools once in a year, for all senior classes.

In the private school, more importance was given to health and safety of the students. Provisions like CCTV cameras on campus, security guard, police verification of employees, identity cards for all students and their parents, child protection and child rights workshops with all stakeholders, complaint box for students, committee for child welfare, first aid and fire safety measures, regular fire drills, display of helpline numbers for students and so on, were available in school.

As per Right to Education Act, both the schools had functional School Development and Management Committees (SDMCs) comprising members from school management, parents, teachers and community members. The purpose of the committee is to envision the direction the school and monitor its progress. SDMCs of both the schools were operational and functioned equally effectively.

IV. CONCLUSION

A classroom is a place where the prime elements of education - ideas and ideologies, policies and plans, materials and methods, teachers and the taught- all mix together to produce exclusive and at times explosive environments that might help or hinder the creation and utilization of learning opportunities. What actually happens there largely determines the degree to which desired learning outcomes are realized.

Discourse *constitutes* the social and for discourse analysts, context is of primary importance. The present study aimed at understanding the teaching-learning processes and classroom activities in an ESL classroom through the lens of discourse. “Second language learning is a highly interactive process” (Richard and Lockhart, 1996) and “the quality of this interaction is thought to have a considerable influence on learning” (Ellis, 1985).

A teacher’s primary role is not only to enable the students to understand what she/he is intending to say or teach. Teaching-learning process is just like making sound by clapping - without two hands we cannot clap. In the same way, without a right teacher and the students, the teaching learning process is meaningless. The teachers, in the present study, were not able to entirely mobilize their resources and reach to the needs of all the students of their respective classes. The participation of only a few students in the class is a proof of that. They did not adopt any strategy in their classes to motivate and encourage the non-performers of the class. Though the private school teacher fared better in this regard, she still fell short in engaging the entire class in the process of teaching learning.

In case of the government aided school, even though the teacher tried to support students to speak in the target language, the students were not able to converse in it. This could be so because she herself resorted to code switching most of the time while teaching in class, which meant students had limited exposure to the target language. Too much of interference of the mother tongue contributed to their incompetence in the target language.

Interestingly, in the present study, it was found that students who were participating less in class were still able to perform well in the written tests. This raises an intriguing question on our understanding of language learning. In terms of learning of the five skills of language – Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing and Thinking, the students were performing better at writing than at speaking in the target language.

Another interesting finding of the present study relates to elitist nature attributed to the use of English in India. In major parts of our country, English is often seen as the language of the classes and not the masses. This statement does not stand entirely true for the southern part of the country. In Karnataka, and in case of the present study in Bangalore, the policy of the State dictates and gives preference to the mother tongue, Kannada. There is a lot of pride associated with the use of mother tongue and knowledge in mother tongue is looked at as being supreme. The citizens of the State desire preservation of their heritage and culture and language is seen as key for it to take place. Kannada is used as the primary means of communication and there is no sense of shame associated with it. The State also has a rich literary culture which is greatly celebrated by the people.

English as a language is seen from a utilitarian point of view and acts as a unifier between the local population and the migrant population. It is taught in schools as second language and the medium of instruction for majority of the government schools is Kannada. There are very few government schools where the medium of instruction is English, and in this case as well, there is only one section of the school that is English medium, rest of the classes are held in vernacular language. As a policy, Kannada is given more importance and respect and speaking in local language or not speaking fluently in English is not looked down upon. There is no elitist attitude attached to English and its use. However, majority of the population in the city can understand and use basic English, which has a local flavor to it. It is Hindi that people do not understand or speak, which is taught as third language in the State.

In this sense, learning or becoming proficient in English is not seen as a pre-condition for success. The burden of learning is also reduced and there is a sense of ease in the use of the target language. Lack of proficiency in the language is not looked down upon. Mistakes in the use of English language is not associated with humiliation, thus, giving more chance to learners to make mistakes and learn from them. This is not to deny that English still stays a language of Middle SES and Upper SES groups. Use of Kannada for communication is more prevalent among people from Lower SES and it is among this group that the challenges related to learning English as second language imply.

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