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# ELTWeekly

India's first weekly ELT eNewsletter

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## PUBLISHERS



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# ELTWeekly

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## **ELTons 2010 Shortlists Announced**

The ELTons is the only international awards ceremony that rewards the wealth of innovative new English language teaching (ELT) resources that help English language learners and teachers achieve their goals. Find out who has been nominated for an ELTon in the following categories:

- The UK Award for Innovation
- The Cambridge ESOL International Award for Innovation
- The Macmillan Education Award for Innovative Writing

The ELTons are now in their eighth year and the nominees for 2010 have been announced in the following categories:

- The UK Award for Innovation
- The Cambridge ESOL International Award for Innovation
- The Macmillan Education Award for Innovative Writing

Take a look at the entries, nominated by a panel of expert judges, in each of the categories and find out who is in the running to win a prestigious ELTon award at the ceremony which takes place on 3 March 2010 in London.

Access the list of ELTons 2010 Nominees at <http://eltweekly.com/more/2010/01/45-resource-of-the-week-httpwww-britishcouncil-orglearning-teaching-htm/>

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## Christmas based ELT Lesson Plan

There are lots of Christmas activities on the British Council's site for young learners – LearnEnglish Kids – which you can use with your students during the festive season. You will find all the resources on one page on NEW LearnEnglish Kids:

<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/category/topics/christmas>

You can also find the resources on these pages:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-topics-christmas.htm>

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-topics-christmas-presents.htm>

On this page you will find tips and ideas for using and extending the activities in the classroom.

Story: Santa's little helper

<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/short-stories/santas-little-helper>

Read further at <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/teaching-kids/christmas>

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## **Article: 'Creative writing for language learners (and teachers)' by Alan Maley**

Creative writing normally refers to the production of texts which have an aesthetic rather than a purely informative, instrumental or pragmatic purpose. Most often, such texts take the form of poems or stories, though they are not confined to these genres. (Letters, journal entries, blogs, essays, travelogues, etc. can also be more or less creative.) In fact, the line between creative writing (CW) and expository writing (ER) is not carved in stone. In general, however CW texts draw more heavily on intuition, close observation, imagination, and personal memories than ER texts.

One of the chief distinguishing characteristics of CW texts is a playful engagement with language, stretching and testing its rules to the limit in a guilt-free atmosphere, where risk is encouraged. Such writing combines cognitive with affective modes of thinking. As the poet, R.S. Thomas once wrote, 'Poetry is that which arrives at the intellect by way of the heart.' The playful element in CW should not, however be confused with a lax and unregulated use of language. On the contrary, CW requires a willing submission on the part of the writer to the 'rules' of the sub-genre being undertaken. If you want to write a Limerick, then you have to follow the rules governing limericks. If not, what you produce will be something other than a limerick: obvious, perhaps, but important too. The interesting thing is that the very constraints which the rules impose seem to foster rather than restrict the creativity of the writer. This apparent paradox is explained partly by the deeper processing of thought and language which the rules require.

Read the rest of article at <http://eltweekly.com/more/2010/01/45-article-creative-writing-for-language-learners-and-teachers-by-alan-maley/>

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## **Free eBook: English as a Second Language in the United Kingdom**

This is, of course, as much a key topic in the UK as it was in 1985 when this book was originally published. The book aimed to cover 'English teaching to British residents' and addresses teaching children in the school sector; teaching adults in education and in the workplace; and teacher training, among others. One chapter asks 'Can ESL teaching be racist?'

Download 'English as a Second Language in the United Kingdom' Free eBook by visiting <http://eltweekly.com/more/2010/01/45-free-ebook-english-as-a-second-language-in-the-united-kingdom/>

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## Video 1: Seven Ways of Looking at Grammar

What is grammar, and how is it internalized in the mind? Is it made up of symbolic code or of neural connections? Is it a sedimented trace left by previous conversations or an innate human capacity? Our answers to these questions obviously shape the way we go about teaching second languages.

In this talk, Scott Thornbury reviews some of the main models of grammar—often couched as metaphors—and looks at their implications for classroom practice. Thornbury is a faculty member in The New School MA in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) program and an author whose work has been published by Oxford University Press.

Watch this video at <http://eltweekly.com/more/2010/01/45-video-1-seven-ways-of-looking-at-grammar/>

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## **Video 2: Shaping the Way We Teach English: Introduction**

This video features some introductory materials are designed for English as a Foreign Language educators who share the following two goals:

1. Building an academic or “pedagogical” foundation; and,
2. Improving classroom practices.

If you have these same goals, then these materials are for you!

An innovative offering from the Office of English Language Programs, Shaping the Way We Teach English, is a 14-module teacher training video series developed and produced in cooperation with the University of Oregon.

<http://eltweekly.com/more/2010/01/45-video-2-shaping-the-way-we-teach-english-introduction/>

## Research Paper: 'Teaching Grammar Through Situational Approach' by Prashant Mishra

By **Prashant Mishra**, Professor and Head, Department of English, Government S.V.P.G. College, NEEMUCH(M.P.) 458 441

### Introduction:

Learning of mother tongue is an unconscious process. People learn their mother tongues from the socio-cultural surroundings. They do not learn the grammar of their mother tongues consciously and deliberately. But learning of a second language proves to be a difficult and complex exercise. In spite of making extra efforts, non-native learners find it difficult to acquire proficiency in the use of a second language. An L2 learner comes across two main obstacles in the learning of a second language. One is to acquire linguistic competence and second is to extend linguistic competence to communicative competence i.e. to use grammatical items appropriately in various real-life situations while communicating with the people. Most of the teachers are accustomed to teach grammar rules in isolation. They follow prescriptive approach by first acquainting the students with the grammatical rules and then providing practice to them in their uses and applications. Even teachers who follow descriptive approach too divorce the teaching of grammatical items from the real life situations. Therefore, it becomes necessary for a grammar pedagogue to associate teaching of grammatical rules with their uses in real life situations. Here a teacher has to adopt a strategy to create such situations in the class room which provide ample opportunities to the students to use grammatical items meaningfully in different types of real life situations. As class rooms are divorced from the lives of the students due to imposition of curricula, examination pattern and time constraints, it becomes difficult for a teacher to match the class room situations with the real life situations they encounter outside the class rooms. But a resourceful teacher can easily maneuver class room situations to extend teaching of rules to their appropriate uses in various socio-cultural situations.

## **Earlier Approaches to the Teaching of Grammar:**

Earlier ‘Grammar Translation’ method was used in the class room. This method emphasizes on teaching of rules of language through translation from mother tongue to a target language and vice-versa. Practice to use a language was provided through translation and explanation of the rules of grammatical items needed for translation. As teaching of classical languages was the main and not fluency, so this method employed bilingualism. Contrary to Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Method abolished the use of mother tongue altogether from the English Language Teaching class-rooms. It also banished teaching of grammar rules in isolation which seems pedantic and does not lead to fluency in the use of language. Structural Linguistics that came into vogue in the first half of the 20th century made some modifications in the Direct Method. It regards language as a highly structured system in which language items are arranged in a hierarchy. It advocates teaching of language items in a graded manner through drilling in meaningful situations. The Oral Approach or Situational Language Teaching which was developed between 1930 to 1960 by British Linguists Harold Palmer and A.S. Hornby necessitates the presentation of all language items in ‘situations’. It requires contextualization of the language items and their practice. Further modifications in this approach paved the way for communicative language teaching. Transformation Generative Linguistics that came into existence in the second half of the 20th century rejected Structuralist’s premise of language learning as repetition and drilling. It regards (Chomsky 1957) language learning as a cognitive activity. When children are exposed to language, they internalize the rules of language and develop intuitive knowledge which enables them to create infinite number of sentences. All the aforementioned approaches confined themselves to the teaching of rules or rules of usage directly or indirectly. Hymes (1972) discovered this fallacy in Chomsky and regards language learning as an ability to use language appropriately in various communicative situations to convey meanings. Hymes’ criticism of Chomsky initiated the movement of communicative language teaching that regards communicative competence as the aim of language teaching than the earlier approaches which stopped at structural or grammatical competence. The present paper is an attempt to explore the application and viability of the situational approach in teaching of grammar.

## **Teaching of Grammar in Indian Class Rooms and the Need of the Situational Approach:**

In India English is taught as a second language and not the mother-tongue of the students. Three different types of programmes are taught in India: (i) General English or English Language (ii) English Literature or Special English course which is optional at the undergraduate level in Indian Universities and can be opted along with two other subjects. It aims to develop literary and aesthetic sensibility among the students. (iii) Functional English which is introduced at the graduate level as a three years job-oriented programme aims at training young boys and girls to use English proficiently in real life situations. However, Functional English and Special English programmes are offered by only few selected students. Majority of the students study English Language or General English as a compulsory subject under either Language component at the school level or under Foundation course component at the undergraduate level. The General English course comprises of a prescribed textbook containing some lessons followed by comprehension questions, vocabulary items and exercises in grammar and composition. The exercises consist of 'fill in the blanks' with suitable articles/prepositions/pronouns/modals or change of voice/narration or combine the sentences. Examples given in the exercises do not have any correspondence with the communicative situations which students come across in their daily lives. The result is that even after learning rules of grammar for so many years, our students fail miserably in acquiring fluency in the use of language. It has therefore become necessary to rethink and to reorient the material and methodology of grammar teaching in order to equip our students to use the language items not only correctly but also appropriately in different real life situations.

### **Creating different communicative situations in the class rooms for teaching grammar:**

Due to prescription of text-books and curriculum, teachers are restrained to confine themselves to the completion of the curricula and to follow the methodology accordingly. The text, curricula and the examination pattern dictates them to aim at assisting the learners in scoring good marks in the examination rather than facilitating them to gain fluency in the use of language. They follow prescriptive approach and emphasize more on teaching of rules than their use in different communicative situations. This results in limited exposure and makes the class room closed-ended for communicative activities. The main challenge before a grammar pedagogue is to make the class room open-ended by creating enough scope in the class room for the students to participate in the communicative activities. A grammar teacher should create such types of learner-centered communicative situations in the class room which enable a learner to repeatedly use different frequently occurring grammatical

items in various life-like situations. This language exercise will not only aid the learners in developing grammatical competence but also contribute to the achievement of communicative competence.

A resourceful teacher can explore creation of different types of situations in the class room. Although a few types of situations are mentioned in this paper, a competent teacher can create situations spontaneously depending on the level of the students, the grammatical item he is teaching, and the topic. A teacher can create personal as well impersonal situations. Personal situations may be related to the personal lives, likes and dislikes and family background of the students and the teachers. Impersonal situations may be related to any area and theme currently in debate and discussion in the media and the society. Apart from personal and impersonal situations even imaginary situations may also be created by a teacher for communicative purposes. Even while teaching the prescribed text for the purpose of reading comprehension, a teacher can select some interesting passages from the text and can create some communicative situations based on them for teaching and providing practice in the use of a grammatical item.

### **Creating personal situations:**

Grammar pedagogy in the traditional methodology and class rooms was confined to mere prescription of rules. The priority of a grammar teacher was to prescribe rules and to ask the students to first memorize them and then to apply the rules on the sentences given to them for practice. Even Structuralists who found the traditionalists guilty of prescriptivism and who advocated descriptive approach have made the teaching of grammar mechanical by following analytical methods of breaking language items into small isolated units. The result is that both the traditionalists and structuralists failed in creating communicative activities in the class room. To encourage communicative activities in the class room and to integrate grammatical rules with their uses, it becomes necessary for pedagogues to create some interesting situations in the class room to facilitate the learners to use the grammatical items in them. A teacher can create various types of situations – student-centered as well as teacher-centered on different subjects like ones hobbies, likes and dislikes, routine activities, habits, friends, relatives, family professions, health etc. to provide sufficient opportunities and time to the students to participate in the meaningful situational dialogues. For example, while teaching simple present tense, a teacher can initiate discussion in the class room by asking some questions about the daily routine of the students:

Teacher: What do you do at night, Mohan?

Mohan: I study at night. Sometimes I also watch movies.

Teacher: At what time do you study at night?

Mohan: Sir, I study from 9 to 11.30 at night.

Teacher: And when do you go to sleep?

Mohan: I go to sleep at 12.

Teacher: When do you wake up in the morning?

Mohan: I wake up at 5'O clock in the morning.

Teacher: Then what do you do in the morning?

Mohan: I go for a walk in the morning.

Teacher: Where do you walk in the morning?

Mohan: I walk on the Park Road.

Similarly a teacher can also create situations related to himself. For example while teaching Present Continuous Tense, a teacher can initiate a conversation in the class by putting some questions to the students about the activities in which he is presently engaged:

Teacher: What am I doing, Mohan?

Mohan: Sir, you're teaching tenses.

Teacher: Which tense am I teaching, Sohan?

Sohan: Sir, you're teaching present continuous.

Teacher: And what else am I doing?

Shyam: You're also walking.

Teacher(Sits down): And what am I doing now?

Ram: And now you are sitting, Sir.

Teacher: (Starts writing on the blackboard): And what am I doing now?

Dinesh: Sir, you are writing on the blackboard.

### **Creating impersonal situations:**

It is not necessary that a teacher always creates personal situations to initiate conversational exchanges in the class room. Apart from personal situations, creation of impersonal situations can also be explored for communicative purposes. Impersonal situations that cover topics related to politics, sports, cinema, theatre, fashion, books, celebrities, finance, transport, vehicles and any other topic in which students have some background knowledge and information should be explored for creating communicative situations in the class room. For example, a teacher can make use of impersonal situations for communicative purposes while teaching clauses:

Teacher: Oh! Boys. I'm so sorry that India lost the series against Australia. It's very unfortunate.

Students: What is very unfortunate sir?

Teacher: It's very unfortunate that India lost the series against Australia by a very narrow margin.

Or

What's very unfortunate is that India lost the series against Australia by a very narrow margin.

Teacher: What's the main reason for India's defeat?

Students: We've not bowled and fielded well.

Teacher: Do you all agree that our weak bowling and batting is the reason behind India's defeat.

Students: No, sir. I don't think so.

Teacher: Then what do you think Mohan?

Mohan: I think that our batsmen failed in scoring big totals.

### **Text-centered communicative situations:**

There is also a scope for creating interesting situations in the class room for providing practice in the use of some grammatical items from the text taught for the purpose of reading comprehension. From the primary to under graduate level, for all the classes a text book is prescribed. The text contains some lessons – essays and poems for reading comprehension. Contents from the lessons from the text may also be used for creating situations and activities in order to provide practice in the use of grammatical items. However, the situations created from the content given in the text should not be directly copied from the prescribed text but should be modified to create communicative activities in the class room. For example, Nissim Ezekiel's poem 'Night of the Scorpion' (prescribed for B.A. III rd Semester students in M.P.) can be fruitfully used for teaching 'May' as a Modal Auxiliary. Ezekiel in the poem has repeatedly used 'may' to express desire or wish. Through the repeated use of 'May' in the poem, the villagers express their wish and pray for the recovery of the mother who was suffering from Scorpion's bite. The teacher may create the same type of situation by depicting one of the student suffering from some ailment or problem and asking the rest of the students to wish and pray for his recovery by using 'may' as used by the peasants in the "Night of the Scorpion".

Teacher: What happened to you Mohan? It seems you are not well today and feel very nervous.

Mohan: Sir, for the last few days I've been suffering from malaria. I also couldn't complete my assignments.

Teacher: May you recover soon! May you soon complete your assignments and score good grades!

Mohan: Thanks for your kindness, sir. May you live long!

Sohan: May all the germs of Malaria be killed altogether!

Shyam: Don't worry Mohan. May the best doctors attend you!

Ram: May the malarial parasites go to dogs!

### **Creating Information based situations:**

“Since second language teaching should help learners achieve some kind of communicative skills in the second language, all situations in which real communication occurs naturally have to be taken advantage of and many more suitable ones have to be created”(Klippel1995:4). A teacher can create communicative situations in the class room to initiate students to participate in the discussion on some current and familiar topic relating to some festival, current problems prevailing in the college, town and the country, some important sports event currently taking place, some debatable policy of the government, T.V. serials, fashion shows and famous celebrities and personalities by inviting them to share their views and exchange information on the topic. For example adjectives and degrees of

comparison can be used for creating situations in the class room to describe some objects, persons, places and things and to make comparison between the same.

Teacher: Who do you think are the three great cricketers of India.

Mohan: Sachin, Anil Kumble and Yuvi.

Teacher: Do you agree with him, Sohan?

Sohan: I do agree on Sachin and Anil. But I have some reservations for Yuvi.

Teacher: What do you say Ram?

Ram: Sachin is the greatest batsman. He scored the highest runs in both Test and ODI.

Teacher: Who do you think is a better baller , Anil or Harbajan?

Shyam: Anil is better than Bhajji. He took the highest wickets in ODI.

Teacher: Who do you think is a better hitter Dhoni or Yuvi?

Ashok: I prefer Yuvi. He is a better hitter than Dhoni.

## **Conclusion:**

Students, thus, can be exposed to various grammatical items through their contextualization in various real life situations. As discussed above a teacher can create situations of different sorts to provide practice and exposure to the students in learning grammatical rules in order to achieve communicative competence. Hymes, Searle, Austin, Halliday and Leech who are the exponents of Functional Approaches in one or the other way stressed the situational use of language. Critics of the situational Approach who criticize the situations created in the class room as mechanical situations and not the real life situations, forget that even if the class room situations are divorced from the spontaneously and naturally created real life situations, they have enough potential to provide exposure needed for learning a language. According to Professor Krishnaswamy, “Learners know what to say in the mother tongue in a given situation; they do it everyday.....In order to do similar things in English, what they need is words in English, and understanding of how the words in English are put together to form larger units, and meaningful practice in contexts in which English is required to be used in India” (Krishnaswamy1995:33).

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## **About the author:**

**Dr. Prashant Mishra** did his Masters in English and Ph.D. in criticism on “John Keats as a Critic: His Theory and Practice” from Vikram University Ujjain(M.P.). He also had his education at CIEFL Hyderabad from where he did Post Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of English, Post Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of English and M. Phil. in Linguistics and Phonetics.

Presently, he is a Professor and Head in the Department of English, Government P.G.College NEEMUCH(M.P.). He specializes in Linguistics, Criticism, Postmodern Theories and Pedagogical Issues. His publications include 35 research papers published in scholarly journals and anthologies. He also edited 5 anthologies of English Literature published by M.P. Hindi Granth Academy Bhopal(M.P.).He participated in 21 national seminars organized by different institutions and academic bodies in India and also acted as a resource person in some of them. He has also delivered talks on Linguistics, Stylistics, Grammar, Human Rights in various colleges of M.P. and Rajasthan. He is on the editorial board of 'Reflection' a prestigious journal published from Bhagalpur (Bihar) and also an executive member of Rajasthan Association of English Studies.

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## GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

- 1. Papers / Articles:** All articles should be computerized using double-spacing, including tables, references and footnotes. Submission of manuscripts should be done in electronic form only. Electronic version of the article/research paper should be e-mailed to the Editor, ELTWeekly at [info@eltweekly.com](mailto:info@eltweekly.com).
- 2. Abstracts:** An abstract in approximately 200 words should assist the article.
- 3. Abbreviations:** No stops are needed between capitals e.g. ELT, IELTS.
- 4. Figures and Tables:** Tables should be numbered sequentially with Arabic numerals.
- 5. Notes:** Notes should be consecutively numbered and presented at the foot of the page.
- 6. References:** References in the text should follow the author-date system. The complete reference list should be given at the end of the article. They should be in alphabetical order.
- 7. Book Reviews:** Book reviews must contain the name of the author and title / subtitle of the book reviewed, place of publication and publisher and date of publication.
- 8. For Event Submissions:** Please submit your event details at least 30 days prior to the event.
- 9.** For a **more detailed stylesheet**, please write to The Editor, ELTWeekly at [info@eltweekly.com](mailto:info@eltweekly.com).

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## This is what our readers say:

Hello, Mr. Tarun patel, I have received ur recent work which is praiseworthy and utilitarian .Thanks a lot !All issues r very much interesting for language learners and teachers .God bless U and ur team ! – **neeharika rawat**

Its really a wonderful vision. Its very useful to the teachers' community. Thnkn you very much. – **G. NAGESWARARAO**

Dear Tarun and the team

thank you for being so prompt in sending us the new issues. It is great to learn about teachit & english Next.

regards - **Dr. Ravi Bhushan**

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