Introduction to SLELTEC Proceedings

These are the proceedings of the Sri Lankan English Language Teacher Educator Conference (SLELTEC) which was held on 5 and 6 March 2020 in MAS Athena in Thulhiriya, Sri Lanka. This was ten days before the whole country went into lockdown because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The conference grew out of our work with teacher educators, both pre and in -service, in the state sector in Sri Lanka. From 2017 the Improving Teacher Education in Sri Lanka (iTESL) Project has been running. Materials were developed based on the needs of both sectors. Teacher educator courses were delivered to over 100 teacher educators in the National Colleges of Education, Teacher Training Colleges and Teacher Centres and mentoring and ELT methodology courses were delivered to over 200 in service advisors and senior teachers. A Community of Practice (COP) was initiated to assist these teacher educators to share best practices and to give them a forum to collaborate. One of the events that the COP were keen to run was a conference in Sri Lanka specifically for English language teacher educators. Although there have been many conferences run by the Sri Lankan English Language Teachers Association (SLELTA) for English language teachers, there has never been one for English teacher educators. The conference was the ideal venue for showcasing and sharing the work of both local pre and in service teacher educators and for providing a platform to showcase and share the work of other non-project teacher educators both in the country and in the region. The conference was jointly hosted and funded by the Ministry of Education and the British Council.

The overall theme was English language teacher education in the 21st Century. Papers, workshops and poster presentations were delivered on the four sub themes: digital trends; observation and feedback methods and techniques; empowering teachers to teach literature and the speaking and listening challenge. The sub themes, selected for their currency in the national and regional context, were sub divided into four areas:

1. The speaking and listening challenge

- Training English teachers in developing listening and speaking skills
- Developing the speaking and listening competencies

- Exploiting the coursebooks to develop speaking and listening
- Assessing speaking and listening skills

2. Empowering teachers to teach literature

- Training teachers to teach literature for the O and A level assessment
- Literary texts and how to exploit them for language and literature
- Drama in the language classroom
- Teaching songs and rhymes for the primary classroom

3. Digital trends

- Using technology to enhance language learning inside and outside the classroom
- The use of mobiles to enhance teacher education
- Using IWBs/ e-learning in the classroom
- Digital literacy

4. Observation and feedback methods and techniques

- Using web / mobile based tools for observing teachers
- Giving constructive feedback
- Oral and written feedback formats
- Monitoring / mentoring / coaching teachers

The conference had three objectives. Firstly to demonstrate and share best practice in teacher educator course delivery locally and regionally; secondly to showcase the best practice in lesson and session planning from the nationwide competition run the previous December and thirdly to compile a conference publication showcasing local and regional best practice. This volume fulfils the third of the conference objectives.

The sub themes were focused on in the keynote speech and in the plenary sessions. Dr Shashikala Assella, Senior Lecturer, Department of English, University of Kelaniya, delivered the keynote speech on Teaching Literature in Today's Classrooms. Plenary sessions were delivered by Karen Waterston, E-learning Consultant, British Council Edinburgh, on Current trends in digital with a practical application in Sri Lanka, Dr Bimali Indrarathne, Lecturer, University of York, UK on The speaking and listening challenge, and Psyche Kennett, Consultant in Education and English, UK, on Widening the scope of effective observation and feedback. A panel discussion on Current issues and future directions in

teacher education was chaired by Dr Lesley Dick, ELT Projects Manager, British Council, Colombo. Dr Bimali Indrarathne, Lecturer, University of York, UK; Dr Sreemali Herath, Senior Lecturer, Open University PGIE, Colombo; Hasantha Kuruppu, Assistant Commissioner Department of Examinations, Ministry of Education, and Mr Sanath Jayalath, Deputy Director, English and Foreign Languages Branch, Ministry of Education took part in the lively discussion. There were four parallel sessions on each morning and afternoon and there were impressive poster presentation of the sub themes.

In April 2020 the keynote speaker and the plenary speakers were invited to submit a paper based on their talk. The presenters were also asked to submit abstracts of their papers for inclusion in the proceedings. A panel of 6 people representing the British Council, the Ministry of Education, the National Institute of Education, the National Colleges of Education and the Teacher Centres evaluated the abstracts and selected twelve papers, 3 on each of the sub themes. The proceedings are organized by sub theme. First the plenary paper is presented. This is followed by three papers on the same sub-theme. A summary of all the papers included is given here in order to allow ease of access to specific areas of interest.

The speaking and listening challenge

Plenary
The listening and speaking challenge by Dr Bimali Indrarathne initiates the sub theme of listening and speaking. She argues that teaching listening and speaking has been an important topic in the English Language Teaching (ELT) field in Sri Lanka recently because there has been criticism on not giving the necessary emphasis to teaching listening and speaking in school. Recently, steps have been taken to introduce listening and speaking assessment in the Sri Lankan schools. Thus, this topic received emphasis as one of the conference themes. She sees teaching listening and speaking in Sri Lanka as a challenge. It is questionable if the teachers have had necessary training on teaching and assessing listening and speaking, if necessary physical resources (e.g. recording devices, players etc.) are widely available in schools and if modern teaching materials are available. However, this is also the best time to consider the content of listening and speaking instruction. In this paper, she discusses the current global trends on teaching pronunciation, listening and speaking which can be considered when planning the content of school curriculum in the new initiative to introduce listening and speaking assessment in Sri Lanka.

Papers

In *The Significance of Building Confidence to Speak English as a Teaching Methodology*, Dr Asantha U Attanayake provides evidence of learners' lack of confidence in speaking English in the region. Despite having studied English as a compulsory subject for over a decade during their schooling, she argues that a large majority of Sri Lankan, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi learners are unable to make a meaningful utterance in English. She attributes this to teachers ignoring the context-specific needs of learners in developing teaching methodologies. She sees a psychological barrier created by societal attitudes that manifests in learners with a low proficiency in English resulting in a lack of confidence to speak English. Language attitudes in society affect English language learners in post-colonial South Asia, which results in them suffering from Language Attitude Anxiety (LAA). In order to eliminate this special type of anxiety, LAA, she argues for context-specific teaching methodologies aimed at building confidence to speak English as a central concern in English language education. Her course, "Building Confidence to Speak English" using a novel approach incorporating principles of habituation at the core of the teaching methodology is one solution to the current problem.

In *Your Guide But Not Your Master*, Anya Shaw and Shamali Jayarathne show how to analyse the textbook in order to increase learning and motivation in students in the area of speaking and listening skills. Textbooks are a key resource that all teachers have access to and are provided to all learners island-wide in Sri Lanka. They warn against blindly following any textbook because it prevents teachers from responding to individual or group needs. They argue that the textbook becomes the master. Instead it should be seen as a collection of activities or resources that can be exploited by the teacher to enhance learning and help learners to achieve the learning outcomes of competency levels in the syllabus. They ask how can teachers exploit textbooks with realistic, achievable adaptations that will have maximum impact on learning and motivation? How can teachers ensure a balance of skills? If we want our learners to succeed in today's world of work, education and communication, they will need to be competent speakers and listeners so how can teachers integrate more speaking and listening practice into their classes and help learners to develop these skills? The numerous texts contained within school textbooks can be used for comprehension and to carry meaning, to present language in context and also to get learners responding on a given topic so the tasks may need to be adapted depending on the aim of the activity. Some activities in textbooks simply assess learners whereas the focus should be on learning and skills development. This paper explores different approaches to exploiting

textbook materials, in particular texts, to support learners' understanding, production and engagement with tasks that are transferable to any grade.

In *Language Assessment Literacy of Teachers of English: Implications for assessing Listening and Speaking skills of students in the classroom*, Hasantha Kuruppu Munasinghe explores the current topic of speaking and listening assessment in the classroom. She argues that Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) is essential for a teacher of English to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses, to ensure that they are progressing while learning and also to see that the students show fair levels of achievement at the term end examination. Teaching, learning and assessing listening and speaking skills of students is carried out inadequately in the Sri Lankan classrooms due to gaps of LAL among teachers. A quick intervention is needed to address this matter at policy level in order to produce teachers of English equipped with LAL through both pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. In addition she argues that implementation of formative classroom assessment methods is a great need at present to help students acquire necessary language skills. Classroom assessment must take place as an ongoing process which is ideal to assess listening and speaking skills of students as they cannot be assessed through national level summative paper pencil test. Also, the teachers must have a precise understanding of the sub-skills of speaking and listening and how to teach and assess those sub skills. Effective feedback provided to students on their performances will support their ongoing learning process to master the skills of listening and speaking. An efficient monitoring mechanism is also needed for quality assurance in the proposed ongoing classroom assessment process.

Empowering teachers to teach literature

Keynote
In *New Avenues and Challenges in Today's Classrooms – Teaching Literature in a digital age* Dr Shashikala Assella unpacks and understands the challenges faced in teaching literature to today's digitally advanced students and the new avenues that can be explored to make teaching literature more compatible with the demands and the needs of our present time. The traditions that can be interspersed with the modern when thinking about teaching literature to a globally aware digitally advanced learners is a joy as well as a challenge in a traditional classroom with limited resources. The paper discusses the changing demands in teaching English Literature in a Sri Lankan setting and the possible avenues to explore in an effort to use more 'digital 'friendly.

Papers

In *Literature in ELT – A Two way Process,* Azra Mohamed highlights her concern for the low language proficiency among the English trainees at the National Colleges of Education (NCoE). This situation, she argues, creates a challenge to the trainees' academic activities, and becomes crucial in deciding the quality of English teachers. Handling both literature and language skills provided the perfect platform for the author to integrate literary texts in ELT. The process done as experiential teaching, succeeded into experiential learning and to the discovery of innumerable benefits. This paper discusses the significance of exploiting literary texts in ELT and demonstrates how it empowers teaching literature. The necessity to select suitable methodologies, techniques and text types to match the learners will also be discussed, while concluding with the findings, suggestions and recommendations to standardize ELT and literature at NCoE's. The evidence is drawn from the writer's experimental teaching, interviews with teacher educators and a survey of literature.

In *Three Approaches to Adapting Literary Texts for the Classroom* Ian Smith suggests three approaches for teachers and materials designers to use when they adapt literary texts for the language classroom and make them the basis for questions that the learners have to discuss or activities that the learners have to complete. The approaches – 'tools' for adapting a literary text successfully – are exploiting it on a linguistic level, a cultural level and a personal level. These three approaches are demonstrated with reference to a short story, On the Western Circuit (Hardy 1894) by the late 19th century/early 20th century English author Thomas Hardy. An extract from the story indicates how certain linguistic features of it can be identified, focused on and practised to make learners more aware of them. A synopsis of the story as a whole indicates how it can be used for cultural activities, for example, comparing aspects of the story's 19th century setting with aspects of life today, and for activities where students develop such personal skills as empathy, reflection and moral judgement.

In *Students don't write, right?* Shamalee Jayarathne and Anya Shaw focus on how motivating students to write can be a challenge. Topics might not be relevant or interesting, tasks can be very traditional, writing can lead to a static classroom dynamic, tasks might not be authentic or give students a reason to write, and different groups and individuals may need help with different areas to develop their writing. So what can be done? How can teachers help students develop their writing skills with tasks that enthuse and how can teacher educators support teachers in this endeavour? In this paper the authors present a true story, a success story of how one

stressed out teacher's question in the teachers' room ended up motivating an entire school to write. The key was micro writings, or small, bite-sized writing tasks. These can play a key role in helping students to learn to write and develop writing subskills. Micro writing tasks can also be tailored to the needs of any class. Alongside this, a writing competition was born and the response from students was unprecedented. Taking ideas from the process, product and genre approaches to writing, in this paper the authors look at how writing competitions and public display can help boost students' motivation to write and develop vital writing subskills.

Digital Trends

Plenary

In *All Things Digital*, Karen Waterston, argues that there are a number of challenges in face to face teaching and training which can prompt the move to online teaching and training. These challenges are prevalent in this region. She explores the many benefits of online teaching and training as well as highlighting some of the challenges, not least the technology. She further explores the different models of delivery of online training and compares synchronous to asynchronous modes of delivery. By providing examples of successful online projects from British Council projects, she demonstrates what is possible. She describes the British Council teacher educator community of practice which supports teacher educators globally and is a font of information, resources and activities for teacher educators. She also looks as some other technologies useful to online teaching such as the use of Survey Monkey as a useful tool for instantly collecting data where results are available without the need for paper or staffing hours ends with some top tips to consider when moving online.

Papers

In "*Google classroom*" *mobile application as a learning tool in English Language teaching for pre-service teachers*, Jayani Pearl Gurunada points out that the smart phone has become an ubiquitously used item among the young student teachers today. As T. Hassan (2016) states Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has emerged as a potential tool in the instruction of English as a foreign language (EFL). The use of mobile applications has become a learning tool which makes teaching process efficient and easy. She argues that out of all mobile applications " Google Classroom" provides much room to enrich teaching and learning process through a great involvement of both the lecturer and the student teachers. This paved the way for student teachers to improve their writing skills through error correction activities and film reviews. Her research examines the effectiveness of using a mobile application to improve the

student teachers' writing skills. For this experimental study sixty English student teachers were selected and they were equally divided into the experimental group and the controlled group, pre-test and a post-test were used and the mobile phone was used for the intervention process. The experimental group was given a number of activities through "Google Classroom App" such as, error correction activities, film reviews, appreciation of poems, and commented on others' ideas for six months both inside and outside the classroom. The controlled group was taught using the paper and pen approach. At the end of the six months they were given a post test. A comparative analysis of the results of both tests revealed that the experimental group outperformed the controlled group. This showed "Google Classroom" mobile app as a useful and effective tool in the English Language teaching process.

In *Improving Writing Skills through e-Portfolio*, Shiromi Upulaneththa reports on research exploring a simple approach to improve English writing skills of pre-service teacher trainees through "e-portfolios". A pre-test conducted using a group of 30 trainee teachers of English, revealed that their writing skills were not up to the standard. This was addressed through a simple platform available in every mobile phone. First a WhatsApp group was created and students asked to create a cover page with their profile. The intervention was done in two phases. In the first phase they had to upload a variety of writing activities starting with simple write ups such as paragraph writing, picture description, guided writing, autobiographies. Everyone uploaded their write-ups to the group and subsequently each write-up was edited by a peer adding his or her comments, suggestions and ideas. The second phase focused on academic writing through editing sample essays, writing reports and interpreting graphs. The same approach was implemented through the WhatsApp platform. During this period the trainees were observed to be enthusiastic and motivated. After three months everyone submitted the final editing to the WhatsApp group. Additionally, the trainees produced hardcopies. She reports that the trainees' feedback on this assignment indicates that the assignment was interesting and helpful in improving their writing skills. Furthermore, the post-test showed that there was a significant improvement in their writing skills. She recommends that these findings and implications are replicated in other institutions in the future.

In *Using interactive whiteboards and WebQuests effectively in class*, Anna Wierstra, reports that more and more schools are able to provide technology in the classroom through interactive whiteboards and tablets for example. Students like using IT, but is it always effective? Teacher educators need to be aware of the options available but, more importantly, of how to use technology in the classroom effectively. This paper looks at

two aspects of technology in the classroom: the use of interactive whiteboards (IWBs) and WebQuests. Interactive whiteboards are a great tool, but teachers need to be made aware of the risk of a classroom becoming IWB-centred instead of student-centred despite the teacher not speaking at all! What is more, after a while the novelty of an IWB and all its bells and whistles might wear off which means teachers always need to be able to motivate their students and the IWB is simply one of the tools, not the only one. Similarly, using the internet and asking students to do WebQuests for example seems fairly straightforward: give the students some questions, a link, a device to access the link and Bob's your uncle! It might seem it is light on preparation, but the opposite is true. For an effective WebQuest, it is important to stage this lesson like for any other lesson, with a warmer, preparation, the task itself, presenting to the class, and evaluation. This allows students to not only do better searches online but also use the information they found which mimics real life.

Observation and Feedback Methods and Techniques

Plenary

In *Widening the scope of effective observation and feedback*, Psyche Kennett explores observation and feedback from a number of points of view. She examines it as an individual developmental tool and describes the sandwich' feedback approach, exploring its benefits and highlighting the disadvantages of less constructive methods of feedback. She also looks at it as a tool to improve teacher education more generally. She asks, 'Are there observable patterns of teaching and learning that can be used to improve teaching standards in schools and colleges and improve training courses and materials development?' This paper explores not just the different ways to observe but the different purposes for observing in the first place, including for needs analyses, research and monitoring and evaluation at cohort, programme or institutional level. She argues that it is important to categorise observation and feedback into qualitative and quantitative teaching skills, to find ways of 'quantifying' the qualitative, and ways of analysing the results. She demonstrates how to do this using interpersonal skills as one example and breaking this down into measurable components and the behaviours teachers should be striving for. She argues that by giving teachers these detailed criteria we are giving them a structured set of options for their professional improvement. We are also ensuring that observers assess teachers in a transparent and evidence-based way. These criteria not only make qualitative judgements more objective; they create a means of quantifying the qualitative. She illustrates her paper with a concrete example of how this was done in a previous teacher education project.

In *English Pre-service teachers using reflection for bridging the gap between learnt theory and classroom application in their practicum*, Mayuri Sooriyampola points out that, unlike other countries, reflective practice is not a compulsory component in teacher education in Sri Lanka. Pre-service teachers exhibit a gap between their learnt theoretical information in ELT and what they practice in classrooms at their practicum. She describes research undertaken to look in to the possibility of bridging this gap using reflective practice with the help of teacher educators. 15 English pre-service teachers, in their final block teaching spell at two different schools were used as controlled and experimental groups as the sample of this study. A reflective tool prepared by the author was used in assisting pre-service teachers to involve in reflection after each lesson. This was essential as pre-service teachers' knowledge of what and how to reflect needed guidance. Pre, while, post reflective guidance was provided by the teacher educator in way of discussion groups, for the experimental group. Controlled group was only given the reflective tool. The findings showed the experimental group was able to involve in effective reflection both orally and written with the assistance of the teacher educator and this supported them to bridge the gap between their learnt theoretical information and classroom practice. This was evident in the reflective notes they wrote, their discussions with the teacher educator as their classroom practice showed a marked development.

In *Reflective Journey of Mentoring Exploratory Action Research*, Lok Bahadur Khatri explores how classroom based research, commonly perceived as action research in Nepal, is a mandatory task to be carried out to complete a teacher's Professional Development training. As teachers complete their action research, they need to submit a report. Teachers who are receiving British Council Connecting Classroom through Global Learning training carry out and share action plans. Likewise, some teachers are also carrying out classroom-based research under the technical assistance of British Council Action Research Mentoring Scheme (BC-ARMS). In research contexts, mentoring includes any support for the individual to develop and maintain their research profile and activities. In Nepalese context, face to face trainings seem to be effective. Action research, which is mandatory task, is assigned to be carried out while teaching in school and supposed to be completed in eight weeks. But, there is rare mentoring support because of which action research is not completed or copy-paste reports are submitted. This paper will mainly reflect the presenter's reflective journey of becoming a mentor while mentoring ten teachers carrying out their exploratory action researches, who completed their action researches, in Surkhet under BC-

ARMS project. This paper will also embed the reflective experience of the presenter as a roster trainer at Human Resource Development Center (HRDC), Karnali Province assigning action research tasks to trainee teachers. The whole paper will focus on his experience of mentoring teachers along with being mentored himself. The process and positive impact of close observation and feedback with mentoring and research output will be analysed and explained in this paper.

Papers

In *Observation as key development, assessment and evaluation tool on the Improving Teacher Education in Sri Lanka Project*, Lesley Dick argues that observation of teachers and trainers is a key method in both developing and assessing their skills; it is also key to evaluating the impact of training input. Improving Teacher Education in Sri Lanka (iTESL), an English language teacher education project running in Sri Lanka from 2017 to the present day, makes full use of observation. The project works in both pre-service and in-service teacher education sectors. In pre-service, the target group is the teacher educators of the National Colleges of Education (NCoEs); in in-service, the target group is provincial In-Service Advisors (ISAs) and the teacher educators of the Teacher Training Colleges, Teacher Centres (TCs) and Regional English Support Centres (RESCs). The paper argues that observation is one factor contributing to the project's success. As a teacher educator project, observation and feedback methods and techniques firstly is one of the training modules; secondly the teacher educators experience continual observation and feedback on their own training, therefore experiencing a model for their own behaviour, and given the opportunity to practice during and post course; thirdly, in the cascade Continuous Professional Learning and Development for Teachers (CPLDT), ISAs conducted observations of teachers to demonstrate and evaluate the training impact. Observation results at all levels of the cascade were collected and used as M and E data. This paper explores the use of observation in ITESL, arguing that it is both a key tool in teacher and trainer development and assessment and a key monitoring and evaluation tool in any teacher educator project.

Posters

There were four poster presentations at the conference. These were displayed throughout the conference and were impressive in size and coverage.

In *Using technology to enhance language learning inside and outside the classroom*, Malka Wickramasinghe, explores how the use of technology in teacher education has reportedly increased participation among

teacher trainees in the learning process. The use of smartphones and interactive white boards (IWBs) and the Edmodo learning platform has caused this change in the learning atmosphere. Most trainees are constant users of smartphones and these are employed first to surf the internet to watch videos and search Google for information on authors, subject content and definitions of terms. This simple starting point provides initiative for the next steps towards success. The teacher trainees set up learning support groups via famous social media platforms like WhatsApp and Viber. The trainers upload documents and assignment tasks via this media, where the trainees can view them during lessons for reference. This saves time and energy, with the trainees referring to multiple materials simultaneously without having to make printed copies of them. Furthermore, they can post questions to the group and seek the trainers' advice on certain issues that come up in the process of self-learning. Consequently, new authorities have begun to emerge in this virtual world who promote discussions on complicated subject matter and promote peer-learning. IWBs provide another dimension to face-to-face learning in the classroom. The potential of IWBs as interactive learning tools is in promoting the learners' engagement in a subject-area otherwise dominated by less interactive modes of delivery. Edmodo is free software that promotes learning allowing trainers and learners to engage in a virtual space. The trainer can create learner profiles and add them to a group that shares subject matter. Most importantly, the use of technology provides an opportunity to meet learners in a virtual space and enable learners to engage in self-learning which promotes deeper learning skills.

In *The cascade effect of the journey which enwraps the school and community project facilitated by the National College of Education* Mrs W. M. M. R. Wewegama and Mrs S. A. W. M. M. E. Sooriyampola display a digital poster presentation done in the form of a diagram and dialogue by two master trainers on the iTESL project carried out in Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and British Council Sri Lanka. The diagram is placed in a waterfall to symbolise the cascading effect of iTESL, which also impacts on the school and community project done by the National College of Education. Each stage of the diagram has photographs as evidence of what is described orally by the two presenters, who work as English teacher educators at Mahaweli National College of Education, Polgolla.

In *Improving Reading and Writing through creating newspapers*, Shiromi Upulaneththa presents her mini-project, which she has implemented for the past five years with her teacher trainees in the pre-service course,

which has helped the trainees to improve reading and writing skills in English. Also, it improved their core skills, which are essential in the modern teaching learning process. When she was teaching the passive voice as grammar, she asked trainees to go through the weekend newspapers and note down the language used in and the key features of the passive. Then she put them into small groups. She gave each group five A4 papers and asked them to think about a model of a newspaper. They folded the A4 papers and made them into ten pages. Then she asked them to appoint two teammates who could take responsibility for preparing each page in the newspaper. They created different names for their papers. Then she gave them the ground rules: "Duration: one month. Materials to use: eco-friendly stuff. Handwritten and drawn on paper." Content, language, organisation and overall presentation were the criteria for the final evaluation. Her main objective was to improve their writing skills in English. It was a good way of making them understand the form and the function of passive constructions. Hence, the work was not rigid or boring, so it was not a stressful form of learning at all. In fact, it helped them to become more autonomous learners who also had a team spirit. She monitored their work and assisted them in correcting their write-ups. After a month, in the morning assembly, they held the great event: The Newspaper Launch Ceremony. All the newspapers, about 15 of them, were displayed in the main hall. Then the exhibition opened with a panel of adjudicators to select the best five newspapers. This project helped to improve their reading and writing skills.

In *The impact of integrating language skills on achieving objectives*, Amarajeewa Jayalath Basnagoda presents in poster format his belief that integrating language skills in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class can contribute a great deal to the success of the teaching and learning process. This poster presentation shows how well language skills can be integrated with a view to achieving the set objectives. This presentation is based on a study done on teaching prepositions to 30 non-English teacher trainees at a National College of Education. Observations were made, discussions held, and documentary analysis revealed the areas of difficulty. The segregation of language skills and teaching them separately have resulted in an inability to use the target language for effective communication. The reluctance to use the language and the irrational fear of committing mistakes generally prevent second language learners from using the language. This study aimed to overcome the above barriers and create a learner-friendly environment, reflecting views shared by Harmer (2007) who states that productive skills and receptive skills are like two sides of a coin which can never be separated. In this

study, a picture-story was used to teach eleven prepositions. The picture-story was displayed on the board, only the prepositions were introduced, and the story was first related by the teacher while the trainees listened. Next, they were encouraged to relate the story through activities like ladder chats, onion circles, running dictations and so on. Motivation, exposure to the target language and maximum participation were clearly observed. The trainees were encouraged to write the story and do peer correction afterwards, which they did with increased interest. Thus, other than using traditional pedagogy, if a teacher can integrate language skills to create a learner-friendly environment, achieving the set objectives will not be a big challenge.