

Creative writing (Poetry): An Exercise in Pedagogy

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Abstract

The purpose of the present research is to sensitize the tertiary level learners to the varied semantic connotations of lexical items through exercises in creative writing. To achieve the intended objective a four- tier pedagogy has been developed: *Building lexical repertoire*, motivating the learners for *Creative* use of the given lexical items with discreet *Teacher Prompts* and *Finesse* through collaborative efforts of the learners. The hypothesis has been corroborated by the experiments carried out on three categories of students: Undergraduates, Post-Graduates and Research Scholars.

Key Words: Teacher Prompts , Cohesive, Logical linkers , Creative use

Introduction

It has been observed that students the tertiary level pay little attention to the creative use of language. They are not motivated to explore the full potential of lexical items (words). They seem to be content with acquiring reasonable level of competence in constructing grammatically correct sentences and thereby confine themselves to meeting the basic requirement of clearing examinations by preparing answers to the expected questions.

This exercise has been undertaken to make the learners aware of the varied connotative dimensions of language and sensitize them to the creative potential of language use as Chomsky says, "Language is a rule-governed creativity." Learners generally construct sentences and use words with socio- cultural context of their own situations. The paper is an attempt to draw the learners out of their familiar zone of grammaticality and plunge them into the ocean of creativity. Hence the exercises have been designed to encourage and pressure the learners to think of using words creatively. T.S. Eliot has aptly remarked that to squeeze poetry out of language / lexicon we have to bully, crack and coax words into meaning we intend to give them under the pressure of poetic process. Class experiments too have been desgned with this objective in mind.

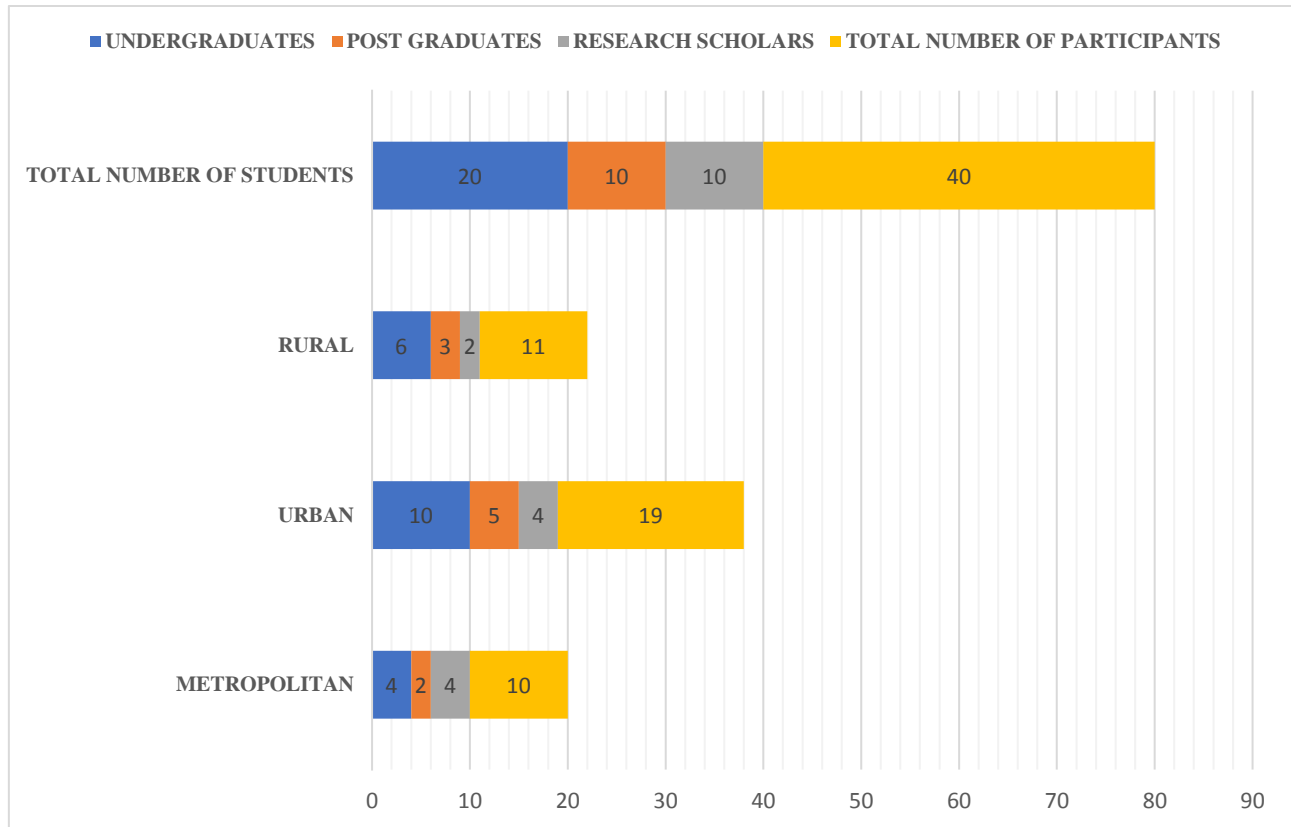
Experiments

The experiments were carried out in three groups of different academic levels.

- i. Undergraduates
- ii. Postgraduates
- iii. Research Scholars

The pedagogy and steps of the experiments were kept same in all three groups. The candidates in the experiments were selected from various socio-economic and educational background.

| | UNDERGRADUATES | POST GRADUATES | RESEARCH SCHOLARS | TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| METROPOLITAN | 4 | 2 | 4 | 10 |
| URBAN | 10 | 5 | 4 | 19 |
| RURAL | 6 | 3 | 2 | 11 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS | 20 | 10 | 10 | 40 |



The samples of the experiments are added as an annexure to the paper. Six samples of undergraduates, four of post graduates and five samples of research scholars are provided.

Pedagogy

The experiment was carried out in four stages:

Building lexical repertoire: The participants were asked to give five words of their own choice . Each participant is invited to give five words of their own emanating from their own personal experiences. This freedom to choose words gives them a sense to participation in the creative venture. The students in the later half of this stage are asked to borrow any **three** words from co-participants and retain two of their own. By the end of this process, each participant has five words with them.

1. **Creative usage:** The participants are now required to create their own poetic composition by using the available stock of words.
2. **Teacher Prompts:** The teacher provides five more words, mainly linking words to help the participants restructure their composition more orderly.
3. **Finesse:** The participants are now divided into groups and their individual compositions are edited and refined by the group members. The co-participants are allowed to make minor changes in the structure or diction to make it more elegant , but without much affecting the core compositions. .

Observations and Findings:

The Experiment led to the following outcomes:

| | Total Number of Students | Students Successfully Submitted | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| | | Metropolitan | | Urban | | Rural | |
| Educational Medium of secondary/ Senior Secondary | | Hindi | English | Hindi | English | Hindi | English |
| Undergraduates | 20 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Postgraduates | 10 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Research Scholars | 10 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL NO.OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATED | 40 | 0 | 10 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 7 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------|----|
| Total number of participated students | 40 | Students Successfully Submitted | 36 | Use of poetic devices | 30 |
| | | | | Grammatically Correct | 34 |
| | | | | Metaphors/conciets | 10 |

The word is like a pebble which ,when thrown into ocean , creates ripples. Words have multiple layers of usage depending upon the socio-cultural context in which they are used. This exercise is precisely to facilitate them to look at the words beyond their lexicon or dictionary meanings. When pressured to put words and sentences in creative use , they start making use of several poetic devices like metaphor , similes etc without being conscious of their poetic

status. The words given to them create a semantic universe and the learners make use of the words for creating their own imaginative world.

Conclusion

The analysis of the experiments demonstrates attainment of increased level of learners' sensitivity to the language use. It also showed their interest and inclination in using words apart from their dictionary meanings. The given set of words made them explore both denotative and connotative layers of words and situate them in a creative context.

The proposed pedagogical model serves twin-purpose. One, it helps in enhancing learners' sensitivity to language use and secondly it induces an environment of critical and creative reflections. Unconsciously the learners use cohesive devices which gets grammatically constructed.

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Annexure I

Group I- Under Graduates

COLLECTION OF WORDS FROM THE LEARNERS

Wedding, war, Duster, Switch, Cat, Saturn, Door, Notebook, Prince, Man, Game, Messi, Page, Bugatti, Superb, Box, Torch, Death, Bottle, Rounak, Socks, Football, Board, Coffee, Cool, Sky, Horse.

IDENTIFICATION OF SOME SIGNIFICANT WORDS BY THE FACILITATORS

Today, Now, Yet, Although, Tomorrow

Samples of creative writing

1. Today, Devender had a jar
Although it caused a war
Now, the war has come to an end
Yet, they all became friends

Suddenly Mohit quotes Ghalib

Because tomorrow is the wedding of Sahib.

2. Sitting under the vast blue sky of today,
With cool breeze blowing around,
Now and then brushing past me.
Yet I gazed at the beautiful horses grazing in the meadow;
Sipping at the hot coffee,
Although I admired the beauty, but still;
I sketched it on the blank board, I possessed,
As a memory for tomorrow and ever after.

3. Today Rounak and I are standing in a football ground
Now with my shoes and socks all on
And yet there go the stairs to death
Although I know there will be no tomorrow.

4. Although the letter was written on the page
When I saw that letter today with the help of the torch
Now I sit in my car Bugatti
Take that letter tomorrow to my mother
And she said, it is old yet memorable and superb.

5. Today, erase the negative thoughts
From your mind
Like duster does to a board
And tomorrow it switches
To the door of knowledge.
Now let the positivity revolve around you
Like the rings of Saturn
And play with thoughts
Like cat plays with a ball.
Although, these are merely thoughts
Yet I'm thinking.

6. Now I write in my notebook,
About the games I will play tomorrow,
about people I thought of today i.e. Messi,

About my meeting with my friend Prince who is a man of brilliance.
Yet I feel I am leaving something unwritten
and I will think until you remember although I'm tired.

Annexure II
Group II- Post Graduate Students

COLLECTION OF WORDS FROM THE LEARNERS

Eat, Sleep, Repeat, Listening, Watching

IDENTIFICATION OF SOME SIGNIFICANT WORDS BY THE FACILITATORS

Those, Together, Memories, Happy, Today

Samples of creative writing

1. Waking up in those early mornings,
Listening to the chattering of birds
Recollecting the memories I had,
And then decided to go with the flow
Following the trend of the day
Oh! What a host was he!
And what a wonderful day it was!

2. My friend sleeps with calm and peace, looking innocent
Trying to understand how he gets that in this beep-beep
Those memories of past used to be so happy
And there was silence in the Jaipur city
As I have now in this state of tranquility

3. I eat and wanted to repeat.
In in this cool world
We were together.
Collecting memories happy and curious
To know about our future,
And our deep feelings,
And trust which we have today.

4. Those day I remember when
We were holding hand in hand
Where the sweetest memories of,
Those earlier times filled us
With more love and joy till today.
It feels like happening right in front of,
Our eyes and here we are resembling
This can be more beautiful.

Annexure III
Group III- Research Scholars

COLLECTION OF WORDS FROM THE LEARNERS

Mind, heart, soul, destiny, world, fate, find strong, sequence, love, hate, innocence

IDENTIFICATION OF SOME SIGNIFICANT WORDS BY THE FACILITATORS

Charm, Space, Mind, Innocence, Strong/Indomitable

Samples of creative writing

1. I wish I had the charm
To use my mind without a qualm
And be given the space
Keep my innocence but
Still show my indomitable courage.
2. Strong is the mind who is able to find
The distance and space which grind
The charm and innocence of a child.
3. The strong mind finds it difficult
To give space to innocence
The charm of innocence is strong than mind.

4. Your innocence beautifies my space
I always grab in your charm
That swings my strong mind.

5. Your innocence is that charm
That makes my mind strong
And gives me space
Even to engulf the wrong.

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