

Teacher Talk

YOUR SPACE YOUR PLATFORM

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Language matters, it shapes thoughts!



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Language Learning

There are two distinct types of communication that are used by humans. The first involves body language and facial expressions, to show one's feelings. The other is language, defined as voice sounds and written symbols in combinations and patterns used by humans.

Language learning in school, is based on the behaviorism theory which involves providing linguistic inputs to students, in a well-structured environment, resulting in habit formation. Children are immersed in a world of literature and learn the language by association, leading to cognitive development. The focus in the classroom is on Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing tasks which can be performed individually or in pairs/groups. Most of the teaching is content led, be it print or digital.

Research shows that two important domains for language development are **vocabulary** and **narration** or storytelling.

The first provides a database of words for students and the other, practice in putting together the words to convey ideas and feelings. Emphasis on both is important when it comes to classroom teaching.

Although most 5-year-olds know enough vocabulary to communicate about everyday things, there are large individual differences among children in their vocabulary size, which is a key predictor of later literacy and success in school. Even if children with relatively small vocabularies are reading in class 1, by the beginning of class 3, they are likely to fall behind when reading comprehension begins to depend more and more on the breadth of a child's vocabulary. Selection of rich literary content with graded vocabulary for classroom teaching, goes a long way in vocabulary building. Crosswords, word mazes and glossaries encourage children to explore the meaning and usage of words.

Children's narrative skills are tied to the kinds of language opportunities that caregivers provide. If caregivers use an elaborative style, engage in lengthy discussions about children's experiences and ask questions to them, the children's narratives tend to be more adequate and informative. Encouraging peer talk and group discussions in the classroom gives students opportunities to use the language and develop confidence. Having role plays, debates, jam sessions once in a while, sets young minds thinking and generates enthusiastic conversation.

Most of the understanding in the world is formed through communication which rests largely on language. For peace and amity in the community and the world, we have to have clear communication amongst ourselves, so let us work towards better language development.



Because a picture speaks a thousand words!

We dream in pictures, we imagine in pictures and we learn in pictures!

Most of the time we recollect things not by the spellings of their names but, by the visuals stored in our brains. For example, if you hear the words 'big grey cat' most of us would picture a grey, furry animal and not the letters C-A-T. Well, this is so because we are visual creatures and we are programmed to draw more information from a picture than an audio input.

Abstract thoughts and concrete objects all convert into pictographs for clarity and better memory retention. This is why, ever since the evolution of language, humans have used visual symbols to represent their thoughts and ideas. From caves to ancient pyramids to our very own Indian ancient monuments all carry engravings and murals which convey more than words can ever capture. Very cleverly this fact is used as a premise to create attractive, easy-to-recall logos by commercial enterprises and thereby realize higher sales.

As Aristotle said: 'The soul does not think without a picture', a child learns best and assimilates knowledge far more effectively through use of images than with oral explanation in classroom teaching. As a teacher, it is important to know how pictures help in better comprehension and deeper understanding of concepts, so that one may utilize this tool for achieving desired learning outcomes.

Teachers can pick and choose from a variety of visual inputs ranging from photographs, videos, charts, story maps to simple facial expressions and gestures, etc. to scaffold what has been taught through print and oral delivery. Graphic organizers work well to streamline the tasks, schedule classroom activities and reinforce the learnt content. However, the adaptation of these inputs should be staged and not flooded into classroom interactions, to maintain balance.

Teaching through visuals always works well when it's planned properly. The efficacy depends on the quality and frequency of the visual inputs used, supported by pre and post verbal presentations of the content. A teacher has to prudently time the exposure so that the learners remain interested in the lesson and also comprehend well.

In fact, as a teacher when you pack your work bag, pictures are essentials and should never be left out. It is the most potent and the most engaging learning medium available. It is the magic potion which can add life to any routine classroom teaching, striking a chord with students of all age-groups, providing an apt talking-point for all, and creating those much dreamt about, vibrant classrooms with enthusiastic learners!



Emoticons - the first universal language?

An emoticon is a representation of a facial expression such as a smile or frown, formed by various combinations of keyboard characters and used in electronic communications to convey the writer's feelings or intended tone.

Just how did we arrive in the age of the emoticons/emoji?

Human-beings are social animals and their basic instinct to communicate is never lost. Our earliest examples of writing come from the pictographic-hieroglyphs and cuneiform inscriptions from Mesopotamia, around 5,000 years ago. It was only in 1,200 BC that the Phoenicians developed the first alphabetic writing system.

While, the primitive man painted pictures on the cave walls using a piece of charcoal to convey messages and, share their feelings with one another today, we are more advanced and use smart phones instead. With time, even the subject of expressions have changed. In place of drawing mammoths, fire and people throwing spears, we now go for comic figures, airplanes and people holding hands.

Cute characters showing emotion called Emojis or Emoticons, were developed in Japan, in the year 1999, for mobile phones. In Japanese, the word 'emoji' means picture-writing-character. While emoji are more popular than ever, the idea behind them is actually quite old. They were developed due to the need for language compression, which resulted from the advent of electronic based communications. It not only reduced the amount of time between the exchanges of messages, but also compressed the content within. This kind of 'short speak' or 'text-talk' resulted in more exchange of the base language, making communication more visual, crisp and less formal. Our society has readily embraced many of these visual communication tradeoffs like the use of Red light / Green light instead of Stop and Go at the traffic signals, the Skull and Crossbones representation of poison on packaging and many more...

History of Emoticons

Emoticons were originally invented and have continued to be used as a way of signifying the tone of an online message. The selection of emojis was quite small when they were launched, but over time the variety of emotions and activities they express has expanded. These small, ubiquitous symbols are the modern-day hieroglyphics, consisting of yellow smileys, food, and cartoonish animals, describing our feelings in ways words cannot.

For someone who uses sarcasm nearly as much as oxygen, it sure doesn't translate without a cheeky little :P, tacked on the end. Excited for a night out with your friends? We have an emoji for that too-dark glasses on a smiling face, a dancing lady in a red dress, a pair of high heels. Message effectively conveyed!

Someone posts an adorable picture of a baby? Red heart, pink heart, blue heart, send. She'll feel the love on her post, no words required. Emojis are everywhere: in chat apps, such as Whatsapp, on social networks such as Facebook, and the virtually "old-skool" text message.

Research conducted recently suggests that we react to the 'expressions' of emojis in the same way as real faces. This means that not only do we see a smiley face and realize it's a smiley face, our brains instinctively respond to an emoji in the same way as when we see an actual person smiling.

'Emoji' was pronounced this year's top-trending word by The Global Language Monitor. They were meant to convey an emotion or attitude through digital images of things like faces, food, flags, hearts, weather, buildings, etc. According to the website - www.emojitracker.com, which uses Twitter to calculate emoji usage, people are averaging 250 to 350 emoji tweets a second. Faces are most prevalent, but there are more complicated sequences too. The emoji characters have blossomed into a cultural phenomenon. There are emoji art exhibits, emoji poetry books, emoji social networks, and emoji music videos.

Millions of Internet users communicate with emojis like smiley faces, hearts and little monsters, to avoid misunderstandings and save time typing. But are they causing the death of traditional language? Linguists do not see it as a threat to written language, but as an enrichment. The punctuation that we use to express emotion is rather limited. We've got the question mark and the exclamation point, which don't get you very far if you want to express things like sarcasm or irony in written form.

Will emojis finally look like the people who send them?

The tiny digital images we use to express emotions in smartphone text messages are now gaining some racial diversity, United Consortium which makes emojis is shortly releasing the more racially diverse emojis, with the first white and black one coming out next year. This will include not only the existing yellow, but five skin tones. The latest emoji count is 1,281 characters in Unicode 8.0.

Do emoticons enhance or hurt communication? Language is fluid and emoticons have evolved organically - whether we appreciate them or not they are here to stay

Dictionaries in the age of Internet

Dictionaries are, giant databases of words compiled by lexicographers who investigate word usages and meanings.

These days, however, Internet is our database of meaning. Want to know how to spell arduous? Type it incorrectly and Google will reply, in its kind-hearted way: "Did you mean: arduous"? Why yes, Google, I did.

Google then spits out a bunch of links to Web definitions for arduous. Without clicking on any of them, the two-sentence summaries below each link give me enough to get a sense of the word: "onerous" and "challenging."

With the advent of the online dictionaries the print versions have disappeared from the shelves and with good reason. No one today has the patience to look through pages of a thick book to understand the nuance of a word.

It's time for a new model for dictionaries. After all, we are all professional writers in this era of texting, blogging and tweeting. We need a dictionary that is as dynamic as our use of the language; a dictionary that knows that the word 'dynamics' has moved beyond just science to have a role in politics.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L37Pobne4tU>

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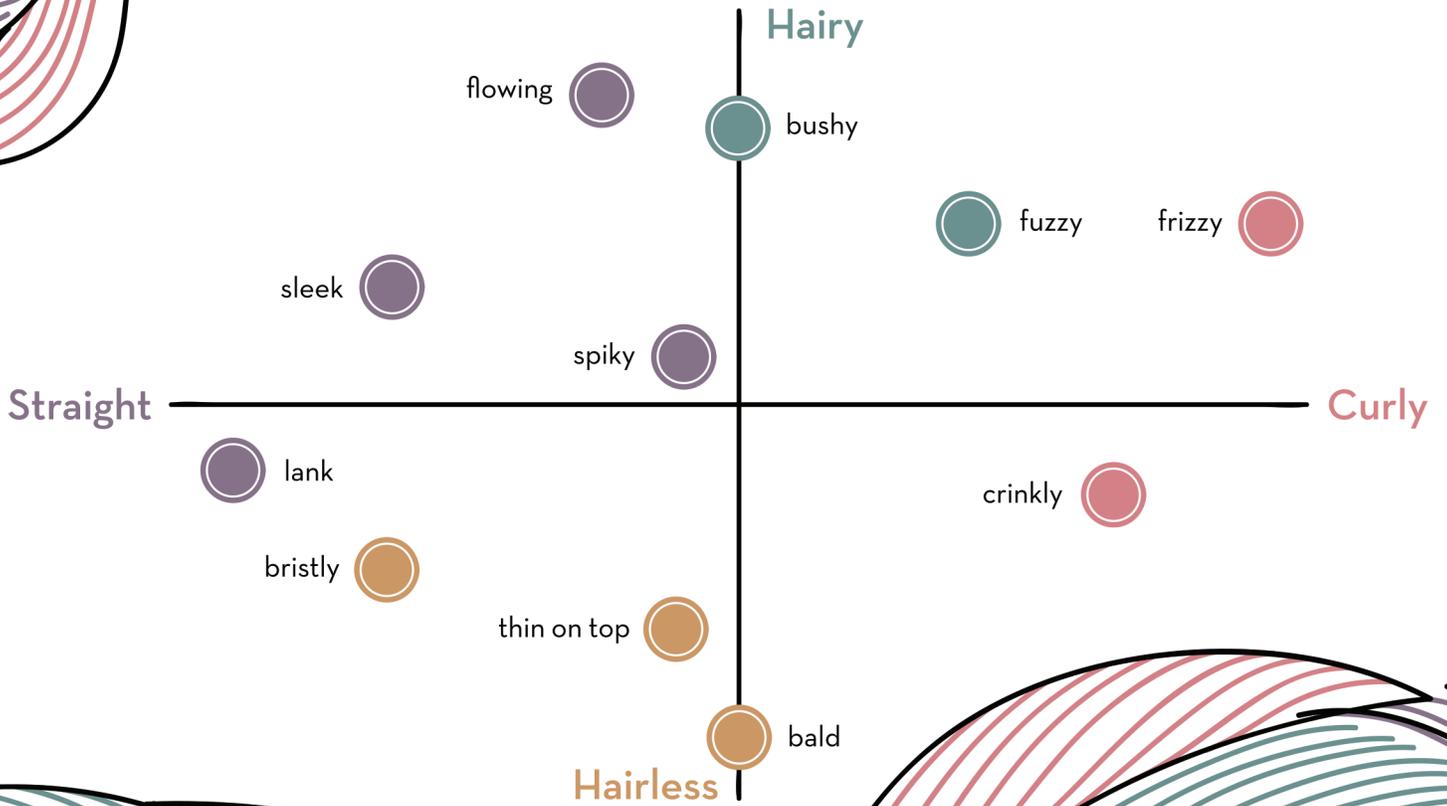
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HAIR-Y OR HAIR-LESS



bald
with little or no hair on your head



bristly
bristly hair is short and rough



bushy
bushy hair is very thick



crinkly
crinkly hair is rough and curly



curly
with a lot of curls



flowing
flowing clothes or hair hang attractively



frizzy
frizzy hair has small tight stiff curls



fuzzy
covered with short soft hairs



hairy
with a lot of hair



lank
lank hair is thin and straight



sleek
sleek hair is smooth and shiny



spiky
spiky hair sticks up



straight
straight hair has no curls or waves



thin on top
losing your hair

punctuation social personalities

by CarrieJKeplinger

•

never starts an argument
but always finishes it

,

pauses often while
speaking

-

interrupts others with own
thoughts

!

makes himself heard no
matter what

?

asks uncomfortable
questions

;

loves bringing similar
people together

...

often trails off on a
tangent

:

likes to introduce groups
of people

“ ”

tells you what everyone
else says

()

pulls you away from the
conversation

which one are you?

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