

Morality and Values through EFL/ESL Teaching among Learners

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Abstract

Innumerable books, articles and research papers have been created on the techniques and methodologies of teaching English language as a second or foreign language. The aim of all these techniques is to make the learners competent in communication. Following these methods teachers will be able to teach and the learners will be able to learn a language which they will use for various purposes, namely social dealings, business transaction and international communication. Thus this language would become a part of their lives. On the other hand if morality accompanies these social dealings, business transaction and international communication a man is bound to be an honest man for all those who might come in contact with him. This morality has to be inserted in the mind of the language learner. There are various Islamic teachings which provide this morality. This article deals with two prominent English language teaching methodologies/approaches and tries to show how morality based Islamic teachings can be juxtaposed with the activities of language teaching methodologies in order to inculcate morality in the minds of the language learners.

Keywords : Morality, EFL, ESL, GTM & CLT.

Introduction

Since the dawn of civilization man has felt the necessity of learning language, not only the language of his own community and country, but also the language of other nations. This is because man has always tried to establish relationship with other societies. Because of this interest of man in learning other languages, many languages of the world have got global appeal. English is one of those global languages, which attracted the attention of the people of many countries all over the world. Many researches have been conducted and many books and articles have been written to provide the learners easy ways of absorbing English as L₂

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(second language) or FL (foreign language). By following these methods and ways the learners not only learn English but also know about the culture of native speakers, imbibe the aesthetic beauty of their literature and know about their history. But we need to think whether knowing about various aspects of the lives of native speakers is the only objective of learning a language. The answer is clearly 'no'. It may be one of the purposes, not the only purpose. There may be other purposes as well, such as, introducing the learner's own culture to native speakers through this language, thriving in business and exchanging mutual cooperation and so on by using the language for communication. So while learning English as FL/SL we should not forget our own identity. We should not think that the culture of native speakers is our own culture. But it is really difficult to remain aloof from it, because while learning a language the subconscious mind of the learner unintentionally imbibes the culture associated with the language as culture is an integral part of language learning (Freeman 2000, 101).

Islamic concepts about better ideas of life, morality, teachings about human traits, man's duties towards his fellow beings, his society and community can be inserted in the subconscious minds of the learners through the activities and materials of teaching English. Morality and Islamic values can be taught in the class room in two ways; explicitly and implicitly. The explicit way is teaching these ideas through teaching Quran, Hadith and Islamic studies courses. The implicit way is teaching them through other subjects like history, geography and language. Teaching morality through TESL/TEFL (teaching English as second language or foreign language) is such an implicit way.

As culture is a part and parcel of language, a language learner gets introduced with the culture of native speakers of English language side by side learning this language. This proves that language learning is associated with the learning of many other things. Probably this led the thinkers to the development of English for Special Purpose (ESP). Since language learning can be associated with ideas about geography, history, economics, politics, religion and so on, the author of this article thinks that language learning can also be associated with learning of morality. It means that morality and Islamic values can be conveyed to the conscience of the learners through English language teaching and learning materials. Therefore, this article tries to explore the possibility

as well as the way of imparting Islamic education and morality to the learners through ESL/EFL teaching.

English as Second Language (SL) or Foreign Language (FL)

English as a second language (ESL), English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English as an additional language (EAL), and English as a foreign language (EFL) all refer to the use or study of English by speakers with different native languages. These terms are most commonly used in relation to teaching and learning English. Teaching English as a second language (TESL), teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) and teaching English as foreign language (TEFL) are also used in this context. English is a language which has great reach and influence. It is taught all over the world under many different circumstances as second or foreign language. Thus TESL/TEFL indicates the study of English in a non-English-speaking region. Study can occur either in the student's home country, as part of the normal school curriculum or otherwise. In this article teaching English as SL/FL refers to teaching English as a part of curriculum in educational institutes of Bangladesh, such as madrasahs, schools, colleges and universities.

Morality and Islamic Values in Human Life

Morality (from the Latin *moralitas* “manner, character, proper behavior”) is the differentiation of intentions, decisions, and actions between those that are good (or right) and those that are bad (or wrong). A *moral code* is a system of morality (according to a particular philosophy, religion, culture, etc.) The adjective *moral* is synonymous with “good” or “right.” *Immorality* is the active opposition to morality (i.e. good or right). An example of a moral code is the Golden Rule which states that, “One should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself.” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morality>). Islamic values are the teachings of Islam which are revealed to human beings in the holy Quran and are shown practically by our Prophet (pbuh). We human beings are the best of all creations in the world. We, therefore, need to develop morality in our character by practicing all those qualities which are good and right and keeping ourselves aloof from all those activities and habits which are considered wrong. If we practise Islamic teachings we are bound to develop morality in our character.

Juxtaposition of English Language Teaching and Inculcating Morality

English Language teaching and inculcating moralities are two apparently different branches of education. If we analyze the subjects and courses of educational institutions we find that usually morality is taught in educational institutes through such subjects as Islamic Studies, Quran, Hadith, Tafsir etc. Whereas in madrasah education the number of subjects conveying the moral teaching are considerably sufficient, in general education it is less than 10% of the total subjects. The students of general education are therefore considerably deprived of the touch of moral education. If knowledge can be Islamized, i.e., Islamic knowledge can be conveyed to the brains of the learners through other subjects, the gap will be filled up to a large extent. Teaching of English language as a part of curriculum in schools, colleges and universities can also be utilized for teaching the morality by juxtaposing each of these two trends of education with the other. This study shows how different activities of English language teaching can be used for teaching morality implicitly.

Achieving Morality and Islamic Values

Through Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

This article examines the activities of two established methods/approaches of English language teaching; GTM and CLT with a view to finding ways of imparting Islamic knowledge through these activities. The purpose is not to show which method is better, but to show that whatever method/approach the teacher uses, he/she can impart some Islamic thoughts and teachings in the subconscious minds of the learners through his/her teaching. The article also analyses a lesson from CLT based *Dakhil English for Today* to show the possibility of inculcating Islamic thoughts through English language teaching.

Through Reading Texts in Grammar Translation Method (GTM)

One of the two methods/approaches to be delineated by this article is the GTM. It is an old method, which has been used by the teachers of English language for many years. Once it was also termed as Classical Method as it was used for teaching the classical languages, Latin and Greek (11). In applied linguistics, the grammar translation method is a

foreign language teaching method derived from the classical (sometimes called traditional) method of teaching Greek and Latin. The method requires students to translate whole texts word for word and memorize numerous grammatical rules and exceptions as well as enormous vocabulary lists. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Grammar_translation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammar_translation)) In this method the teacher selects a piece of literary work and translates it himself or asks the students to read it and to translate it from English into their native language. Whatever may be the purpose of this reading and translating, the students absorb some ideas from the passage. If the passage is taken from the famous literary piece of native speakers, the student will imbibe the beauty of literature through it. If the passage deals with some historical fact, the students will get to know that historical fact. Such as, the following text taken from an exercise book of English language deals with the freedom of press. “The First Amendment to the American Constitution declares freedom of the press to all people. Although this right was not officially adopted until 1791, the famous Zenger trial of 1735 laid the groundwork for insuring this precious freedom. John Peter Zenger emigrated as a teenager from Germany. In 1733, he began publishing The New York Weekly Journal. The following year, he was arrested for writing a story about the crown-appointed governor of New York. While Zenger was imprisoned for nine months, his wife dutifully published the newspaper every day, bravely telling the truth about the corrupt government officials sent by the king to govern the colonies. Finally Zenger’s long awaited trial took place. The hostile judge dismissed Zenger’s local lawyers, making it necessary for his wife to seek out Andrew Hamilton, a prominent Philadelphia lawyer. Persuaded by Hamilton, the jury bravely returned a not-guilty verdict, defying the judge’s orders for a conviction. As a result of determination and bravery on the part of the colonists, a lasting victory for the freedom of the press was gained by a young immigrant.” (Pyle & Page, 1996, 480)

Although the prime purpose of assigning the above passage for reading is not providing to the learner the knowledge of the history of the freedom of press, after reading the above passage the inquisitive mind of the learner will automatically be familiar with the early history of the freedom of press, will know about John Peter Zenger and the political problem existed in the colonies during his days. The learner will rather feel interested to know about that history and will read the passage again

and again until he fully comprehends the content. Thus this passage will serve two purposes simultaneously; providing the history of the freedom of press and developing the comprehending capability of the learner. This proves that language teaching, especially activities of reading skill development can be juxtaposed with imparting other ideas and information. Thus we find it an excellent opportunity for a teacher to insert some Islamic knowledge and thinking in the learners' hearts through this kind of reading assignments. The teacher can prepare a passage with some Islamic teachings and can assign this to students for reading. The passage can also be from a literary work of native speakers. In that case the passage may either contain an idea which has a close affinity to some Islamic thoughts or a wide difference from Islamic thoughts. Then the teacher may highlight the idea contained in the passage to show its affinity to or difference from Islamic teachings.

Here is a passage from John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which conations a didactic attitude having closeness to Islamic viewpoints. "Now, as Christian was walking solitarily by himself, he espied one afar off, come crossing over the field to meet him; and their hap was to meet just as they were crossing the way of each other. The gentleman's name that met him was Mr. Worldly Wiseman: he dwelt in the town of Carnal Policy; a very great town, and also hard by from whence Christian came. This man, then, meeting with Christian, and having some inkling of him—for Christian's setting forth from the City of Destruction was much noised abroad, not only in the town where he dwelt but also it began to be the town-talk in some other places— Mr. Worldly Wiseman, therefore, having some guess of him, by beholding his laborious going, by observing his sighs and groans, and the like, began to enter into some talk with Christian.

Worldly Wiseman: How now, good fellow; whither away after this burdened manner?

Christian: A burdened manner indeed, as ever, I think, poor creature had! And whereas you asked me, whither away, I tell you, sir, I am going to yonder Wicket-gate before me; for there, as I am informed, I shall be put into a way to be rid of my heavy burden.

Worldly Wiseman: Hast thou a wife and children?

Christian: Yes; but I am so laden with this burden, that I cannot take that pleasure in them as formerly, methinks I am as if I had none.

Worldly Wiseman: Wilt thou hearken to me if I give thee counsel?

Christian: If it be good, I will; for I stand in need of good counsel.

Worldly Wiseman: I would advise thee, then, that thou with all speed get thyself rid of thy burden; for thou wilt never be settled in thy mind till then: nor canst thou enjoy the benefits of the blessings which God hath bestowed upon thee till then.

Christian: That is that which I seek for, even to be rid of this heavy burden: but get it off myself I cannot; nor is there any man in our country that can take it off my shoulders: therefore am I going this way, as I told you, that I may be rid of my burden.

Worldly Wiseman: Who bid thee go this way to be rid of thy burden?

Christian: A man that appeared to me to be a very great and honorable person; his name I remember, is Evangelist.

Worldly Wiseman: Beshrew him for his counsel! There is not a more dangerous and troublesome way in the world than is that unto which he hath directed thee; and that thou shalt find, if thou wilt be ruled by his counsel. Thou hast met with something, as I perceive, already; for I see the dirt of the slough of Despond is upon thee: but that slough is the beginning of the sorrows that do attend those that go on in that way. Hear me; I am older than thou: thou art like to meet with, in the way which thou goest, wearisomeness, painfulness, hunger, perils, nakedness, sword, lions, dragons, darkness and in a word, death and what not. These things are certainly true, having been confirmed by many testimonies. And should a man so carelessly cast away himself, by giving heed to a stranger?

Christian: Why sir, this burden upon my back is more terrible to me than are all those things which you have mentioned: nay, methinks, I care not what I meet with in the way, if so be I can also meet with deliverance from my burden” (Bunyan1853, 14-16).

The passage has been taken from a famous literary work *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan. If this passage is chosen for reading assignment the students will enjoy reading it. The students will realize how a pious man who always wants to go on the path of righteousness faces temptations from worldly pleasures which always try to deviate him from the right path and how he always has to face troubles and

sorrows in the way of righteousness. Although the passage is taken from a writer who is Christian, the information provided here has close affinity to the teachings of Islam. Here the teacher can point out some similarities and also can give the students briefing on early Islamic history when the Muslims had to suffer a great deal for taking shelter under the shadow of Islam.

The teacher may also select a passage, which contains an idea contrary to Islamic belief and try to present Islamic viewpoints in this respect. Here is a passage from V.S. Naipaul's *Beyond Belief, Islamic Excursions among Converted Peoples*. "Islam in its origin is an Arab religion. Everyone not an Arab who is a Muslim is a convert. Islam is not simply a matter of conscience or private belief. It makes imperial demands. A convert's worldview alters. His holy places are in Arab lands; his sacred language is Arabic. His idea of history alters. He rejects his own; he becomes, whether he likes it or not, a part of the Arab story. The convert has to turn away from everything that is his. The disturbance for societies is immense, and even after a thousand years can remain unresolved; the turning away has to be done again and again. People develop fantasies about who and what they are; and in the Islam of converted countries there is an element of neurosis and nihilism. These countries can be easily set on boil" (Naipaul, 1998, 1).

After assigning this passage to the students for reading the teacher may indicate that Islam is not a religion of the Arabians, it is a religion of human beings prescribed for them by their Creator. Since this is his original religion a man accepting Islam can not be termed as a convert. By accepting Islam he has actually returned to his originality. Islam is a universal religion. The universality of Islam is an undeniable fact, a characteristic peculiar to Islam. Almighty Allah has assigned Muhammad (SM) as Prophet and Messenger to the entire mankind, revealing to him His Holy Book to serve as a means of guidance and a reminder to all humanity. Being the final incarnation of the divine ordinance to mankind, this universal religion makes no distinction among humans as to gender, race, color, language, economic level or social caste. Islam has made all humans equal in terms of duty assignment and the legal capacity as well as in terms of rights and duties. This is why the character of the Islamic message is universal and perennial. It is a divine Message addressed to mankind wherever they are

and in whichever epoch they live, a beacon that invariably guides them to the right path in this world and in the Hereafter.

In the GTM it is not extremely necessary that the passage be from some works of literature of target language. The teacher may write a passage carefully designed to include particular grammar rules and vocabulary. The translation may be written or spoken or both. Students should not translate idioms and the like literally, but rather in a way that shows that they understand their meaning. (Freeman, 2000, 19) Here also the teacher can get a chance of imparting some Islamic ideas in the minds of the students. He/she can do it by preparing a passage, which contains some Islamic thoughts. Such as the passage may be on the value and necessity of truthfulness in the life of human beings.

Through Grammatical Lessons

GTM implies that learning grammatical rules of the target language is important for the students. In this method grammar is taught explicitly. Here the teacher gets an opportunity to present some Islamic ideas in the class. For example while teaching grammar and making sentences to apply grammar if some examples are made in such a way that they convey some Islamic teachings, the students will get to know both grammatical structure and Islamic knowledge. For example for teaching structure of sentences with modals like 'can' and 'could' a teacher can use both secular examples like 'We can see the lake from our bedroom window.' 'My grandfather could speak five languages.' and also some other examples reflecting Islamic activities, such as, 'My younger sister can read the Quran.' 'My grandfather could guide the people to the right path with excellent Quranic teachings'. If the teacher, instead of using secular examples, uses Islamic examples the subconscious minds of the learners will imbibe those teachings. Thus the activities of Grammar Translation Method (GTM) can be infused with some teachings of Islam and Islamic ideas and values can be inserted in the minds of the learners through this.

Through Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach

In 1970 educators found that being able to communicate is required more than linguistic competence. It required communicative competence, i.e., knowing when and how to say what to whom. This contributed to a shift in the field in late 1970s and early 1980s from a linguistic structure-

centered approach to a communicative approach. (121) and hence Communicative Language Teaching method came into existence. CLT is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign language that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. It is also referred to as “communicative approach to the teaching of foreign languages” or simply the “communicative approach” (Wikipedia).

Communicative language teaching sets as its goal the teaching of *communicative competence* which includes the following aspects of language knowledge:

- Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions
- Knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants (e.g., knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication)
- Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g., narratives, reports, interviews, conversations)
- Knowing how to use different kinds of communication strategies to maintain communication despite having limitations in one’s language knowledge (Richards, 2006, 3).
- To achieve the goals mentioned above the advocates of communicative approach suggest various classroom activities. Now we’ll see how some classroom activities suggested by them can be utilized to impart Islamic knowledge to the minds of the learners.

Through Fluency Tasks like Dialogue Making and Role Play

One of the goals of CLT is to develop fluency in language use. Fluency is developed by creating classroom activities in which students must negotiate meaning, use communication strategies, correct misunderstandings, and work to avoid communication breakdowns. There can be various activities for developing the fluency. A group of students may be engaged to carry out a role-play in which they have to adopt specified roles and personalities provided for them on cue cards. For example, the students can act out a dialogue in which a customer

returns a faulty object to a department store from where he has purchased it. The clerk asks what the problem is and promises to get a refund for the customer or to replace the item. In groups, students now try to recreate the dialogue using language items of their choice. They are asked to recreate what happened preserving the meaning but not necessarily the exact language. They later act out their dialogues in front of the class. (15) This is an excellent opportunity for a teacher to inculcate Islamic teachings in the hearts of the language learner. Here the teacher can provide the students with a text containing some Islamic teachings so that the students can have some ideas and information. The students thereafter will make a dialogue based on that information using the language of their own choice and act it out in pair or in group. The teacher can also provide a model dialogue for role play. An example of this type has been given here.

A Model Text and Dialogue Infused with Islamic Ideas and Teachings

Business as a Means of Livelihood

In order to lead a smooth life man has to earn livelihood. Man can earn money in various ways, like through trade and business, physical labour, employment, gift, grant, donation, inheritance, interest, bribe, stealing, robbing, cheating, gambling and so on. But Islam does not give a man unrestricted freedom to earn livelihood. According to Islam some ways of income are legal while some other ways are illegal. Among the Islamically legal ways of income the best is that which is earned by man through his labour. Al-Miqdam (the companion of the Prophet (pbuh) narrated: The Prophet (pbuh) said “Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which one has earned by working with one’s own hands. The Prophet of Allah, Dawood used to eat from the earnings of his manual labor (Bukhari- Vol. 3, Book 34, Hadith 286). Abu Sa’eed narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said: “The truthful, trustworthy merchant is with the prophets, the truthful, and the martyrs” (Tirmidhi- Book 10, Hadith 7). But the purity of business can be marred for various reasons, which can make a business one of the most heinous professions. These nefarious aspects are, riba (interest), adulteration, formation of syndicate in order to create artificial crisis by stocking essential goods, cheating the customers by giving less in weight, concealing the defects of the goods, telling lies to conceal or attract the customers, cheating the customers by

giving goods of low standard and taking the price of high quality goods and so on. Islam as well as all other religions does not support these heinous activities. In Hadith we find that Hazrat Ibn Abbas (R) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said to the people of weights and measures: “You have undertaken such two activities, because of which many nations before you got destroyed (because of cheating in weight and measure.” (Tirmidhi- Book 10, Hadith 16). In the holy Quran Allah says, “Woe to those measuring agents, who, when receive from others, realize full in weight, but when give to others, give less in weight.” (Sura Tafteef-1) Regarding the riba (interest) we find in the Hadith, Ibn Masud (R) narrated : “The Messenger of Allah cursed one who consumed Riba, and the one who charged it, those who witnessed it and one who recorded it” (Tirmidhi- Book 10, Hadith-3).

A Dialogue between Two Old Friends Rahat and Maruf Who Met after so Many Years

Rahat: Hi Maruf! Is it you! I think I am not dreaming, am I?

Maruf: Not at all. I am really Maruf your friend of university days. Many years have passed since we last saw each other. Any way, I am so much excited to see you.

Rahat: We were close friends in our varsity life. After the examination you went away to Malaysia and since then we didn't see each other.

Maruf: I tried to contact you several times, but couldn't.

Rahat: I also had to go away to Chittagong to undertake my father's business. What are you doing now?

Maruf: I spent a few years in Malaysia and then came back and opened from a business centre in Dhaka. What about your business?

Rahat: My business is going on excellently. You will be amazed to hear that within three years I have bought five luxurious apartments and two latest model cars.

Maruf: How have you done it? Have you got Aladin's magic lamp?

Rahat: It was almost like Aladin's magic lamp. A friend of my father proposed me to join a syndicate for importing vegetable oil, rice and sugar. The syndicate consists of only ten businessmen having hot links with some leading commercial banks. We stocked these items in huge

quantity and soon there was a crisis in the market and we showed the magic. You can not imagine, I invested only two crore taka and within six months my investment rose to five crore with three crore net profit.

Maruf: That's great. You are so lucky.

Rahat: Maruf, you had been one of my best friends. I am so much happy to get you after so many years. I am not leaving you. I want to take you also in touch of Aladin's magic lamp.

Maruf: I am so happy that after so many years you have still kept up that old closeness. I really appreciate your sincerity and your love for me. But I think I am not able to join the syndicate.

Rahat: Why? Are you thinking about huge amount of money? No, no. You mustn't think about the fund. I'll manage everything.

Maruf: I'm not thinking about fund. I am rather thinking something else.

Rahat: What's that?

Maruf: I studied some teachings of Quran and Hadith. In one Hadith I found that stocking essential goods in order to create artificial crisis and make huge profit is a serious sin in the light of Islam. I want to be an honest businessman because I have known that the Prophet (SM) said, "The truthful and trustworthy businessmen will stay with the prophets, truthful persons and martyrs (on the day of judgment—Tirmeezi).

Rahat: Is it really so?

Maruf: Of course. I can give you so many books about the rightful ways of business.

Rahat: Actually I didn't think the matter in this way. You are about to change my outlook. I think I must change my way of business.

Maruf: It will be a great achievement for your life if you can do so.

Rahat: I hope, Insha Allah I shall be able to do that.

Maruf: May Allah give you that mental strength.

The model text thus provided will help the students to get some ideas and the model dialogue will help them know some model sentences to express those ideas. When the students will finish reading the text and dialogue they will be set in a group of four/five persons to act out similar

dialogue, for example, to play the role of one shopkeeper and three customers. The Shopkeeper is dishonest. He tries to conceal the defects of the goods and sometimes gives underweight to the customer. He does not know that these are serious crimes in the light of Islam. The affected customers come to him with objections of defective goods and underweight. He denies the misdeeds. One of the customers advises him to fear Allah and tells him the teachings of Hadith. The shopkeeper becomes afraid and promises to mend his habit. The kind of tasks can be termed as fluency tasks.

Through Accuracy Tasks

Fluency tasks can be followed by some accuracy tasks, i.e., tasks of providing the correct grammar points. Students in groups of three or four complete an exercise on a grammatical item, such as choosing between the past tense and the present tense, singular and plural number of verbs and nouns and such other grammatical points. The teacher has previously presented and practised these grammar points in the whole class. Together students decide which grammatical form is correct and they complete the exercise. (15) In the group the students talk with each other in English about the reason of certain choice. These activities can also be infused with some Islamic knowledge. An example of such exercise is given below:

Work in a group of four to choose the correct words out of two options in italic in the following passage.

Truthfulness: a Virtue That Ennobles Human Beings

“Truthfulness means/meant reporting what actually happened. It is one of those virtues/virtue, which have/has made human beings the best of all creatures. It saves/saved a man from lots of sinful activities, which debase/debased a man, and thus ensures for him heavenly pleasures. Holy Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM) said that truthfulness relieves/relieved man and falsehood plunges him into destruction. The holy Quran also urges us to follow truthfulness by saying that Allah accompanies those persons who adopt truthfulness. The Quran says, “Do not confound truth with falsehood [2/42]”, “Always speak/speaking the truth. Shun words that are deceitful and ostentatious [22/30]”. The Prophet (SM) said, “The greatest Khyanat (transgression) is that you will

tell your brother something, which he will take as true, whereas you have/had told him a lie.” Truthfulness also ensures/ensured social peace, as a truthful person never violates/violated his limits. He is a person who is quite safe for other people of the society. He is an honest employee for an employer. By dint of truthfulness all can/can be shine in life. Many persons have become/became great in this world by virtue of truthfulness. So all of us should/should be follow truthfulness in all our activities.”

Through Mechanical, Meaningful and Communicative Exercises

Some advocates of CLT proposed that there should be three different kinds of practices in CLT classroom. These are: mechanical, meaningful, and communicative practices. *Mechanical practice* refers to a controlled practice activity, which students can successfully carry out without necessarily understanding the language they are using. Examples of this kind of activity would be repetition drills and substitution drills designed to practise use of particular grammatical or other items. *Meaningful practice* refers to an activity where language control is still provided but where students are required to make meaningful choices when carrying out practice. For example, in order to practise the use of prepositions to describe locations of places, students might be given a street map with various buildings identified in different locations. They are also given a list of prepositions such as *across, from, on the corner of, near, on, next to*. They then have to answer questions such as “Where is the book shop? Where is the café?” etc. The practice is now *meaningful* because they have to respond according to the location of places on the map. *Communicative practice* refers to activities where practice in using language within a real communicative context is the focus, where real information is exchanged, and where the language used is not totally predictable. For example, students might have to draw a map of their neighborhood and answer questions about the location of different places, such as the nearest bus stop, the nearest café, etc. (16) Exercise sequences in many CLT course books take students from mechanical, to meaningful, to communicative practice. For example, the following exercise aimed at teaching the students the use of superlative adjectives is found in *Passages 2* (Richards and Sandy, 1998).

A grammar box contains the following discussion.

Superlative adjectives usually appear before the noun they modify.

The funniest person I know is my friend Bob.

The most caring individual in our school is the custodian.

They can also occur with the noun they modify

Of all the people in my family, my Aunt Ruth is *the kindest*.

Of all my professors, Dr. Lopez is *the most inspiring*.

Superlatives are often followed by relative clauses in the present perfect.

My cousin Anita is *the most generous* person *I've ever met*.

The closest friend *I've ever had* is someone I met in elementary school.

The discussion is followed by these exercises—

A. Complete these sentences with your own information, and add more details. Then compare with a partner. An example has been shown as—

- i. One of the most inspiring people I've ever known is ...
- ii. *One of the most inspiring people I've ever known is my math teacher. She encourages students to think rather than just memorize formulas and rules.*
- iii. The most successful individual I know is ...
- iv. Of all the people I know... is the least self-centered.
- v. The youngest person whom I consider to be a hero is ...
- vi. The most moving speaker I have ever heard is...
- vii. The most important role model I've ever had is...
- viii. Of all the friends I've ever had... is the most understanding.
- ix. One of the bravest things I've ever done is ...

B. Use the superlative form of these adjectives to describe people you know. Write at least five sentences.

Brave, honest, interesting, smart, generous, inspiring, kind, witty

C. Group Work

- Discuss the sentences you wrote in Exercises A and B. Ask each other follow-up questions.

- My next-door neighbour is the bravest person I've ever met.
- What did your neighbour do, exactly?
- She's a firefighter, and once she saved a child from a burning building ...

If students read and practise aloud the sentences in the grammar box, this constitutes mechanical practice. Exercises A and B can be regarded as meaningful practice since students now complete the sentences with their own information. Exercise C is an example of communicative practice since it is an open-ended discussion activity. Now if the examples provided in the above discussion of mechanical, meaningful and communicative exercises are based on some moral lesson the whole practice will be Islamized. Such as instead of saying, 'The funniest person I know is my friend Bob, if the teacher says. 'The most authentic book I know is the holy Quran,' the purpose of teaching superlative degree will in no way be marred.

An example of mechanical and meaningful grammatical exercises with grammar point 'modal auxiliary' has been shown here. These exercises may be on the basis of a passage infused with Islamic teaching. Read the following text and do the exercises with your partner.

Man in Society

Man is a social being. Naturally man has to depend upon one another for various reasons. That's why man has been living together since the dawn of civilization. Men of different creed and culture and different social status may form a society. For a peaceful life, therefore, a nice harmony should exist among the fellows of the society. This social harmony can not exist if one does not honour another's opinion, if one has a mentality of encroaching upon another's property, if one has a tendency to grab or block other's rights and if one, being proud of one's social status and wealth, shows pride and haughtiness. Islam being a religion of peace enjoins its followers to establish a social harmony among the inhabitants of the society. The Quran, the scripture of Islam, says, "Respect and honor all human beings irrespective of their religion, color, race, sex, language, status, property, birth, profession/job and so on [17/70]". In the society, when we deal with other people we must follow a modest outlook. The Quran says, "Choose best words to speak and say them in the best possible way [17/53, 2/83]" Do not shout. Speak politely

keeping your voice low. [31/19] “Speak in a civilized manner in a language that is recognized by the society and is commonly used [4/5]. “Do not be contemptuous or arrogant with people [31/18].” “Do not walk haughtily or with conceit [17/37, 31/18].” If we follow these Quranic teachings while dealing with people in the society our society is bound to be an abode of peace and harmony.

Speaking

- i. Work in pair. Ask and answer the following questions:
- ii. Why should a nice harmony exist among the fellows of the society?
- iii. What things are necessary for a peaceful social harmony?
- iv. What are the Islamic suggestions to achieve the social peace?

Writing

Suppose you have an American pen-friend. Sometimes he sends e-mails to you describing some beautiful aspects of Christian religion. Now you want to share some of the beautiful aspects of your religion with him. Now draft an e-mail for him telling about how Islam teaches some excellent social conducts which are sure to contribute a lot to the establishment of a peaceful and harmonious coexistence in the society.

Grammar with Mechanical and Meaningful Exercises

Modal Auxiliary

Read the following sentences from the above text and note the grammar points that follow:

- i. A nice harmony should exist among the fellows of the society.
- ii. This social harmony can not exist if one does not honour the other’s opinion.
- iii. When we deal with other people we must follow a modest outlook.
- iv. In the above sentences should, can and must are modal auxiliaries, which are used with the present forms of verbs to express meanings like advisability, ability and obligation etc.

Some other modals are would, could, shall, will, may, might and so on.

- * In passive structure a modal is followed by 'be' and past participle form of a verb. Such as, 'A modest outlook should be followed by us in the society.'
- * 'Be' can also be used as main verb after a modal in active structure. Such as, 'We should be modest in our outlook while dealing with other people in society.'
- * In a WH question structure WH word is followed by a modal, such as, 'How should we behave with other people in society?'
- * In a negative structure a modal is followed by 'not', such as, 'For a peaceful co-existence in the society we must not encroach upon other's property.'

Work in pair to correct the following sentences :

- i. In the society we should not behaving roughly with other social fellows.
- ii. We must be followed the Islamic teachings to establish peach in the society.
- iii. Any man must not be walk haughtily and with conceit in the society.
- iv. Social peach can not establish if everyone in the society doesn't respect the other's opinion.

(Here the teacher may invite some pairs to the front of the class to demonstrate the dialogue on the correction of sentences. While the pairs will perform the others will listen. This activity may develop other's listening skill as well.)

Use the modals to describe some Islamic teachings which will contribute to the establishment of a harmonious coexistence in the society. Compare your sentences with your partner. (One example has been given for you.)

'We must not show haughtiness and conceit while dealing with other social fellows.'

Write answers to the following questions and practice asking and answering with your friend.

- i. Why should we respect and honor all human beings irrespective of creed and culture?
- ii. Should we speak politely with other people?
- iii. Can we behave in the society according to our sweet will?
- iv. Why mustn't we walk haughtily and with conceit in the society?

Work in a group of four and discuss what a man in a society should do or shouldn't do, can do or can not do, must do or mustn't do and also discuss the reasons why these things should be, can be and must be or shouldn't, can not be or mustn't be done.

Through other CLT Activities

Many other activity types have been used in CLT, including the following:

Task-completion activities: puzzles, games, map reading, and other kinds of classroom tasks in which the focus is on using one's language resources to complete a task.

Information-gathering activities: student-conduct surveys, interviews, and searches in which students are required to use their linguistic resources to collect information.

Opinion-sharing activities: activities in which students compare values, opinions, or beliefs, such as a ranking task in which students list six qualities in order of importance that they might consider in choosing a date or spouse.

Information-transfer activities: These require learners to take information that is presented in one form, and represent it in a different form. For example, they may read instructions on how to get from A to B, and then draw a map showing the sequence, or they may read information about a subject and then represent it as a graph.

Reasoning-gap activities : These involve deriving some new information from given information through the process of inference, practical reasoning, etc. For example, working out a teacher's timetable on the basis of given class timetables.

Most of the above activities can be juxtaposed with Islamic thoughts by planning the materials carefully and selecting

the items from Islamic resources, such as, for opinion sharing activities, the students can have debate and opinion sharing on whether or not some Islamic values like showing honesty in activities, refraining from falsehood, respecting the elders, spreading Salam, paying Zakat, praying five times a day, observing fasting in Ramadan, refraining from interest and bribe, keeping up good relation with neighbours and relatives can play an effective role in formation of ideal society. In the opinion sharing some of the students may have negative attitude and comments while the others will try to correct their mistakes.

The above discussion shows that if the activities of CLT are infused with some Islamic ideas and values the ESL/EFL learners will be benefited in two ways; they will get some Islamic ideas subconsciously inculcated in their hearts and they will have some language practices for developing their communicative competence.

A Lesson from EFT Showing Juxtaposition of the Teaching of Language and Imparting of Islamic Knowledge

The idea of CLT activities combined with Islamic ideas is no longer an odd idea. It has come from those who are working with CLT in Bangladesh. With a view to implementing CLT in Bangladesh a new text book for English language, ‘English for Today’ was prepared and prescribed at schools, colleges and madrasahs of Bangladesh. The activities of this textbook are set in such a way that real communication occurs in the class and students can develop their four skills of English language as well as develop their grammatical competence. The communicative activities used in this text book include talking on picture, listening to a dialogue, producing similar dialogue with a partner, talking about someone or something, talking about oneself, writing letters or paragraph following models provided in the texts, working in pair and group on gap filling, information transfer, substitution table, matching words and pictures, rearrangement of sentences and open-ended sentences. It is notable that ‘English for Today’ prepared for madrasah students have slight differences from that prepared for schools and colleges. These textbooks are infused with some Islamic thoughts and teachings. A notable example is ‘English For Today’ (for class 9-10) where the UNIT-1 entitled: Sources of Islam and

Personality’ contains such lessons as ‘Al- Kitab, Sura-e-Fatiha, Sources of Islam: Al Hadith, Personality: Hazrat Abu Bakr (R), Personality: Hazrat Khan Jahan Ali (R).

Lesson-1, Al-Kitab has five sections, A, B, C, D, E. Section A requires a student to ask his/her partner to look at the picture of a man who is reading the Quran sitting in a mosque and ask his/her partner questions like, ‘What is the picture about? What is the man reading? Where is he reading? It is to be mentioned that this type of questions before a lesson is helpful in several ways. It prepares the students for the lesson to come. It arouses their attention and wakes up their brain. It develops students’ speaking capability. Although a few questions are given here, the teacher can form other questions to establish real communication, such as the students can ask each other, ‘Do you read the Quran? Can you read the Quran? Do you go to mosque everyday? How many times a day do you say your prayer? And so on. Section-B contains a dialogue between two students about the importance of Al-Kitab. The section reads: “Man is created and Allah Himself is the creator. There are many other creations. But man is the best of them. He created man and genie for his worship. Allah created the soul of man and the soul promised to worship Allah as Lord. Allah is *Khalik* and man His created being is *Makhluk* and His vicegerent. So there is a relation between the Master and the servant. The relation is proved by faith in Him and obedience to Him.

To serve Allah is to worship Him. Hazrat Adam (am) the first man came to this world of ours with that responsibility. But his descendents forgot Allah and began to do evil deeds (sins). To lead them aright, Allah sent books from age to age on His choicest men. These books are Divine Books and the man whom these were revealed are termed Prophets. These Divine Books are termed Al-Kitab.

Of the Divine Books, four are mainly known to us. They are the Towrat revealed to Hazrat Musa (am), the Zabur to Dawood (am), the Injil to Isa (am) and the Quran on Hazrat Muhammad (SM). The Quran is the last and greatest book ever so revealed. All these books, particularly, the Quran are of great importance to us because we can not lead and live an Islamic life without the teachings and learnings of them. It is evident that we depend on the fundamental principles of Islam that we get from the Quran” (Ali, et al, 2003, 21)

The book map of this book sets the aim of this lesson as developing the listening, reading and writing skills of the students. It is expected that two students will act out the dialogue contained in this lesson and others will listen to it. The teacher will help the students understand the meanings of new words and the students will read the passage silently while the teacher will monitor their reading and give them necessary help. Thus their listening and reading skills will develop. At the same time the students will imbibe some Islamic knowledge also from the passage.

Section: C asks the students to read the conversation in section B and write another dialogue between a student and his partner on the holy Qur'an using some clues like- 'A Divine Book-teaches us full code of life-helps us keep away from evil deeds-teaches us to be honest and noble. The aim of this section is to develop the writing capability of the students. This is a meaningful exercise where the students have their choice of producing sentences. This exercise will help the students utilize their creative faculty and at the same time will help them refresh their knowledge of the Quran and other divine books. Since a model of the dialogue has been provided in the text the task will not be so difficult. This exercise can also be done in the group work, where a group of four/five students will work together to write the dialogue. This dialogue can also be used for talking. Two students will demonstrate the dialogue. Thus this exercise will develop both writing and speaking skills of the students.

Section: D requires that the students will ask each other and answer the following questions:

- i. Who is the first man created by Allah?
- ii. What do you know about Al-Kitab?
- iii. How many are the main divine books?
- iv. Who are the men on whom the main divine books were revealed?
- v. What do you understand by Khalik and Makhluk? While the students will do these asking and answering the teacher will monitor the class and provide necessary cooperation to the students. He/she will correct students' mistakes gently and won't do anything which might hamper the students' fluency. This exercise will develop the speaking skill as well as reading skill, as

the students will have to revise the text for answering the questions.

Section: E requires that the students will read the text once more and then write another paragraph in their own language. Since the students will have to write it in their own language they will have to exercise their own writing capability as well as their own knowledge of the subject. This will develop their writing skill.

It is notable that most of the activities here are to be done by the students and the teacher will monitor the activities walking through the class and extending necessary cooperation to the students. The remarkable feature of this CLT based UNIT is that it will play an important role, if the activities are done properly, in developing students' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and at the same time it will enrich their knowledge of Islam and the students will acquire new knowledge of Islam by sharing ideas. Taking it as a model texts classroom activities infused with Islamic thoughts and values can be planned with a view to inculcating these ideas in the subconscious minds of the ESL/EFL learners.

Problems in Inculcating Morality through TESL/TEFL and Some Suggestions

Inculcating morality through TESL/TEFL may be hampered for some problems. It is very natural that an English language teacher may not have appropriate knowledge of Islam to conduct the class. This problem may be overcome if the institutions working for Islamization of knowledge formulate texts with the help of language experts and also prepare teachers' guide with necessary materials and guidance to conduct the classes. Secondly an English language class may have non- Muslim students to whom the teachings of Islam may not sound good. To overcome this problem only those Islamic teachings, which have the same appeal in other religions as well, should be chosen. For example truthfulness is such an Islamic quality which is honoured in every religion. So if a lesson is prepared to show the value of truthfulness in Islam as well as in other religions, the lesson would never be boring to any student irrespective of religion. Thirdly a class working with a lesson infused with Islamic teachings may seem to some students similar to that of Islamic studies. Thus the classes may seem monotonous to some of

the students. To avoid the monotony it can be suggested that all ESL/EFL lessons should be interesting with stories from Quran and Hadith and stories of Islamic history. Besides while preparing the lessons it should be kept in mind the teaching of morality should be implicit or indirect. Side by side with lessons prepared in this way there should be lessons focusing on some current issues, games and sports, interesting matters, learners' native cultures and literary pieces of native speakers. Moreover a lesson thus prepared can be used only in those institutions where the students are given orientation that while studying at those institutions they will have to face Islamic knowledge, work in Islamic environment and try to practise Islamic way of life. It is natural that the students coming to those institutions are mentally prepared to find Islamic attitude in all subjects of their study. So the lessons prepared in the manner discussed might not be unacceptable to them. Probably for this reason only 'English for Today' prepared for madrasah students have lessons infused with Islamic teachings. Finally if the concerned teacher has sincerity, Islamic mentality as well as the skill to make the classes interesting, inculcating Islamic thoughts and ideas in the hearts of the learners through EFL/ESL teaching will no longer remain impossible or unrealistic.

Conclusion

To sum up we can say that inculcating morality through teaching of English as SL/FL is possible by preparing teaching materials, such as reading texts, writing items, listening and speaking materials in such a way that they convey essence of good character. Institutions and organizations working for Islam can play a vital role in this regard. They can do it by curriculum designing, establishing Islamic schools, colleges and universities and training the teachers in this way. Fluency activities like role play, dialogue and paragraph writing can be based on some Islamic teachings with the help of proper guidance from the teacher. Even the grammatical practices and accuracy activities can be juxtaposed with Islamic teachings.

If the curriculum is prepared in this way and the teachers are trained accordingly it is assumed that our students will get the touch of morality both in direct way through subjects of Islamic studies and indirect way through other subjects like English. These students as they grow up will develop a good character. They will know about their duties towards

their society, their fellow human beings and their country. These students when they take up the social responsibilities will apply the morality they have gathered in their character. The society, the country and above all the whole human community will be benefited through these students.

This system of inculcating morality through language teaching can be started right from the primary level and can be continued to the tertiary level. As English is an integral part of the syllabus in all educational institutions in Bangladesh it can be one of the best ways of conveying the essence of good character to the conscience of the learners. Just as most of the texts of Arabic language in our madrasahs are mingled with Islamic education, the texts of English language at our schools, colleges and universities can also be mingled with moral education if the authority concerned with curriculum designing feels its necessity and long term benefit.

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