

Ilm o Amal

A bi-annual education resource brought to you by TRC

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ISSUE FOCUS

Potpourri

A varied collection of articles and activities to mull over as the term comes to an end.



Contents

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Editorial | 1 |
| An End of Term Letter | 2 |
| <i>Pehla Taleemi Basta</i> | 3 |
| Definition of Love | 5 |
| The Risk of Rewards | 6 |
| Making a Difference | 8 |
| Mind your English | 11 |

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Dear Readers,

We are often told that variety is the spice of life. It's true that sometimes it is nice to take a break from routines and try something new. In that spirit, we have changed the format of this issue of *Ilm o Amal*. Usually, we focus on a particular theme, on which most of the articles and activities are based.

This time around, we decided to present you with an *Ilm o Amal* Potpourri – a mixed bag of articles and activities that we hope pique your interest. There should be a little something for everyone.

In the English section we have provided a series of articles on various subjects. Alfie Kohn explains the often unnoticed repercussions of rewarding students in an article entitled, "The Risk of Rewards," and C.Z. Abbas provides insight into a refreshing new way of teaching the English language in "Mind Your English." An Urdu teacher from Mrs. Haque's school has written an excellent article explaining the many uses and advantages of TRC's educational kit, the *Pehla Taleemi Basta*. We are also excited to feature an article on TRC's new Early Childhood Education – Certificate Programme. Maria Haque explains the programme in detail and provides testimonials from the programme's first students.

In the Urdu section, we have another mix of articles and activities. Alif Laila, a sister organisation in Lahore, has contributed an interesting account of their Book Bus activities. We continue our ongoing feature on Inclusive Education that has been published in two previous issues. This time, the focus is on classroom management in an inclusive environment. We are also pleased to present two articles from students of the first year of TRC's Early Childhood Education – Certificate Programme, who have written on "The Importance of Self-Esteem" and "Praise and Appreciation." The section also includes ideas and practical activities for topics such as Bugs and Insects, Map Reading and Idioms.

As always, we would love to hear from you. If you have any ideas or suggestions for future issues, please send them to info@trconline.org.

The Editorial Team

An End of Term Letter

We would like to share this end of term letter with you. The school is in Delhi, India ... not very far from us. The names of the school, the parents, the student and the tutor have been changed to respect their privacy. We have taken permission from the mother of the student, to print this letter in *Ilm o Amal*.

*Ilm o Amal High School
10 October 2002*

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Tariq,

*While I listen to teachers discuss Tanya, I am strongly reminded of the black clothed nuns despairing of Maria's contradictory behaviour in 'The Sound of Music'! There is the Tanya who is fidgety and inattentive. There is the Tanya who chats incessantly, regardless of whether the lesson is in progress or not. There is also the Tanya who is interested in all sorts of things, in reading, in philosophy, in life. There is also the Tanya who will carry on a crusade for a classmate irrespective of whether she likes that particular person or not. A Tanya whose eyes light up when something pleases her. Above all there is the Tanya who personifies all that we at *Ilm o Amal High School* strive for ... a caring, committed and outstanding human being.*

*Tanya does not respond to a structured learning atmosphere. She is a free spirit and can and will attain excellence but on her terms, at her own pace. As this year she is free from the immediate rigours of the CBSE, she has blossomed in subjects that are giving this unfettered learning mode. She needs to extract the best of both worlds in preparation for the daunting academic demands in class **12!***

I enjoy every minute of my interaction with Tanya and would not like to see her change the way she has evolved as an individual. You must be feeling very proud of Tanya.

*With warm regards,
Samina Mirza
Tutor*

Do you wish you had a tutor like Samina Mirza when you were in school? Have you got any students in your class who pose a similar challenge to you as a teacher? How should one respond to such students? Ignore them? Punish them? Talk to them individually about what's on their mind and/or have regular classroom discussions on issues our young students may be grappling with?

Are you wondering what 'Tanya' made of her school education? She is currently at Hampshire College in the United States studying Politics, Media and Film ... taking classes such as the new class of racism, the anthropology of violence and meaning of literacy. Do you think you may assess your students differently after reading this letter?

Please write to me at mahenaz.mahmud@trconline.org and share your thoughts. I look forward to hearing from you. We will publish selected letters in the next issue of *Ilm o Amal*.

Mahenaz

Pehla Taleemi Basta

By Mrs. Sadia Hussain

Urdu Teacher

Mrs. Haque's School

Good news for teachers of Urdu at the pre-primary level! Finally a resource has been developed specifically for the teaching of beginning literacy, numeracy and science in Urdu. The Teachers' Resource Centre has developed an educational bag called Pehla Taleemi Basta for use in pre-primary classes. The kit contains a variety of age-appropriate learning materials and visual aids, such as beads, lacing cards, flash cards, picture cards, story sequencing cards, puzzles, a magnifying glass, and a magnet.

At Mrs. Haque's School we first began using this kit last year at the pre-primary level and continued to use it through to second grade. Over the course of the year, we have conducted many activities using this kit, only some of which are mentioned below. For example, in Kindergarten and Grade 1, "Counting" and "One to one correspondence" was taught through the use of colourful beads and buttons. Even though, at this stage, children are easily able to count by rote, it is essential that children get the opportunity to count real objects. After counting out their beads, children created their own necklaces by stringing the colourful beads onto laces, thus enhancing their hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills, which is a necessary prerequisite skill for early writing. These beads and counters can also be used successfully for other activities such as sorting, sequencing and making patterns.

The TRC kit also provides a variety of picture cards of wild and tame animals, fruits and vegetables, birds, common things found in homes and transportation vehicles. Each card has related factual information provided on the back of the card and the Urdu name of the item. These cards are a great resource to



develop vocabulary and can work as a spring board for discussion as well. For example, pre-primary children can do sorting and classifying activities with these cards, such as sorting fruits from vegetables or sorting vehicles by land, air and water. In the lower primary grades, the same cards were used for a writing activity. Children were divided into groups and were given a card. Each group discussed the picture on the card and collectively constructed a few sentences in Urdu about the pictured item. They then shared their writing with the rest of the class. This activity was thoroughly enjoyed by the students.



When teaching children primary and secondary colours, the TRC kit proved very effective. The kit provides teachers with colour tablets made of transparent cellophane paper. Thus, through exploration and experimentation children could easily place two primary colours on top of each other to form a secondary colour. This created great interest among the children and facilitated quick acquisition and recognition of colours and their names.

In addition, there are numerous other activities which can be carried out with the TRC Kit that provide children with valuable learning experiences in Urdu. Conveniently, the TRC kit also has pre-made lesson plans for teachers which are easy to follow and implement. The kit is handily designed as a folding cloth bag which makes it easily portable from class to class. It can also be hung within the classroom so that children may have easy access to the different materials. The best part of the kit is that the materials are culturally and linguistically relevant, thus making them more appropriate than most other educational materials found in the commercial market.

All in all, the TRC Urdu kit is a great tool to encourage and motivate children towards literacy and numeracy in the Urdu language. After the introduction of the TRC kit, we noticed a hugely positive change in the children's attitudes towards Urdu classes. We are sure that through the continued use of this kit, children's first experiences with literacy and numeracy in Urdu will be positive ones.

Work has already started on the next issue of Ilm o Amaal! We will be focussing on the Environment and how schools can get involved both globally and locally. If your school has held successful "Eco-Friendly" activities and events, we would love to hear about it! Send us a description and photos of your event so we can share your ideas with all our readers.

Definition of Love

QUOTE

A group of professionals posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 year-olds, "What does love mean?" The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined. See what you think:



When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love.
Rebecca - age 8

During my piano recital, I was on a stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore.
Cindy - age 8

Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs.
Chrissy - age 6

Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK.
Danny - age 7

If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate.
Nikka - age 6
(we need a few million more Nikka's on this planet)

Love is when someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth.
Billy - age 4

You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.
Jessica - age 8

Love is what makes you smile when you're tired.
Terri - age 4

And the final one -- Author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia once talked about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child. The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his Mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing, I just helped him cry".

UNQUOTE

Acknowledgement: We don't have the original source, but found it on:
www.smartchoice.powerfulintentions.com

The Risk of Rewards

By **Alfie Kohn**

Many educators are acutely aware that punishment and threats are counterproductive. Making children suffer in order to alter their future behavior can often elicit temporary compliance, but this strategy is unlikely to help children become ethical, compassionate decision makers. Punishment, even if referred to euphemistically as "consequences," tends to generate anger, defiance, and a desire for revenge.

Moreover, it models the use of power rather than reason and ruptures the important relationship between adult and child. Of those teachers and parents who make a point of not punishing children, a significant proportion turn instead to the use of rewards. The ways in which rewards are used, as well the values that are considered important, differ among (and within) cultures. This digest, however, deals with typical practices in classrooms in the United States, where stickers and stars, A's and praise, awards and privileges, are routinely used to induce children to learn or comply with an adult's demands (Fantuzzo et al., 1991). As with punishments, the offer of rewards can elicit temporary compliance in many cases. Unfortunately, carrots turn out to be no more effective than sticks at helping children to become caring, responsible people or lifelong, self-directed learners.

Rewards vs. Good Values

Studies over many years have found that behavior modification programs are rarely successful at producing lasting changes in attitudes or even behavior. When the rewards stop, people usually return to the way they acted before the program began. More disturbingly, researchers have recently discovered that children whose parents make frequent use of rewards tend to be less generous than their peers (Fabes et al., 1989; Grusec, 1991; Kohn 1990). Indeed, extrinsic motivators do not alter the emotional or cognitive commitments that underlie behavior--at least not in a desirable direction. A child promised a treat for learning or acting responsibly has been given every reason to stop doing so when there is no longer a reward to be gained. Research and logic suggest that punishment and rewards are not really opposites, but two sides of the same coin. Both strategies amount to ways of trying to manipulate someone's behavior--in one case, prompting the question, "What do they want me to do, and what happens to me if I don't do it?", and in the other instance, leading a child to ask, "What do they want me to do, and what do I get for doing it?" Neither strategy helps children to grapple with the question, "What kind of person do I want to be?"

Rewards vs. Achievement

Rewards are no more helpful at enhancing achievement than they are at fostering good values. At least two dozen studies have shown that people expecting to receive a reward for completing a task (or for doing it successfully) simply do not perform as well as those who expect nothing (Kohn, 1993). This effect is robust for young children, older children, and adults; for males and females; for rewards of all kinds; and for tasks ranging from memorizing facts to designing collages to solving problems. In general, the more cognitive sophistication and open-ended thinking that is required for a task, the worse people tend to do when they have been led to perform that task for a reward. There are several plausible explanations for this puzzling but remarkably consistent finding. The most compelling of these is that rewards cause people to lose interest in whatever they were rewarded for doing. This phenomenon, which has been demonstrated in scores of studies (Kohn, 1993), makes sense given that "motivation" is not a single characteristic that an individual possesses to a greater or lesser degree. Rather, intrinsic motivation (an interest in the task for its own sake) is qualitatively different from extrinsic motivation (in which completion of the task is seen chiefly as a prerequisite for obtaining something else) (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Therefore, the question educators need to ask is not how motivated their students are, but how their students are motivated.

In one representative study, young children were introduced to an unfamiliar beverage called kefir. Some were just asked to drink it; others were praised lavishly for doing so; a third group was promised treats if they drank enough. Those children who received either verbal or tangible rewards consumed more of the beverage than other children, as one might predict. But a week later these children found it significantly less appealing than they did before,

whereas children who were offered no rewards liked it just as much as, if not more than, they had earlier (Birch et al., 1984). If we substitute reading or doing math or acting generously for drinking kefir, we begin to glimpse the destructive power of rewards. The data suggest that the more we want children to want to do something, the more counterproductive it will be to reward them for doing it. Deci and Ryan (1985) describe the use of rewards as "control through seduction." Control, whether by threats or bribes, amounts to doing things to children rather than working with them. This ultimately frays relationships, both among students (leading to reduced interest in working with peers) and between students and adults (insofar as asking for help may reduce the probability of receiving a reward).

Moreover, students who are encouraged to think about grades, stickers, or other "goodies" become less inclined to explore ideas, think creatively, and take chances. At least ten studies have shown that people offered a reward generally choose the easiest possible task (Kohn, 1993). In the absence of rewards, by contrast, children are inclined to pick tasks that are just beyond their current level of ability.

Practical Implications of the Failure of Rewards

The implications of this analysis and these data are troubling. If the question is "Do rewards motivate students?", the answer is, "Absolutely: they motivate students to get rewards." Unfortunately, that sort of motivation often comes at the expense of interest in, and excellence at, whatever they are doing. What is required, then, is nothing short of a transformation of our schools. First, classroom management programs that rely on rewards and consequences ought to be avoided by any educator who wants students to take responsibility for their own (and others') behavior--and by any educator who places internalization of positive values ahead of mindless obedience. The alternative to bribes and threats is to work toward creating a caring community whose members solve problems collaboratively and decide together how they want their classroom to be (DeVries & Zan, 1994; Solomon et al., 1992). Second, grades in particular have been found to have a detrimental effect on creative thinking, long-term retention, interest in learning, and preference for challenging tasks (Butler & Nisan, 1986; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987). These detrimental effects are not the result of too many bad grades, too many good grades, or the wrong formula for calculating grades. Rather, they result from the practice of grading itself, and the extrinsic orientation it promotes.

Parental use of rewards or consequences to induce children to do well in school has a similarly negative effect on enjoyment of learning and, ultimately, on achievement (Gottfried et al., 1994). Avoiding these effects requires assessment practices geared toward helping students experience success and failure not as reward and punishment, but as information.

Finally, this distinction between reward and information might be applied to positive feedback as well. While it can be useful to hear about one's successes, and highly desirable to receive support and encouragement from adults, most praise is tantamount to verbal reward. Rather than helping children to develop their own criteria for successful learning or desirable behavior, praise can create a growing dependence on securing someone else's approval. Rather than offering unconditional support, praise makes a positive response conditional on doing what the adult demands. Rather than heightening interest in a task, the learning is devalued insofar as it comes to be seen as a prerequisite for receiving the teacher's approval (Kohn, 1993).

Conclusion

In short, good values have to be grown from the inside out. Attempts to shortcircuit this process by dangling rewards in front of children are at best ineffective, and at worst counterproductive. Children are likely to become enthusiastic, lifelong learners as a result of being provided with an engaging curriculum; a safe, caring community in which to discover and create; and a significant degree of choice about what (and how and why) they are learning. Rewards--like punishments--are unnecessary when these things are present, and are ultimately destructive in any case.

For More Information :

Birch, L.L., D.W. Marlin, and J. Rotter. (1984). Eating as the 'Means' Activity in a Contingency: Effects on Young Children's Food Preference. *Child Development* 55(2, Apr): 431-439. EJ 303 231.

ERIC/EECE. Publications. Digests. The Risks of Rewards

<http://ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/eece/pubs/digests/1994/kohn94.html>

Making a Difference

By Maria S. Haque

Even though we know that learning begins at birth, fewer than 30% of Pakistan's young children have access to early schooling. Not only is there a great need for pre-primary education in Pakistan, but there is an even greater need for trained pre-primary teaching professionals. At present, the only validated ECE programmes in Pakistan are based on the Montessori approach to ECE. Keeping in view the dire need for trained early childhood professionals, the Teachers' Resource Centre (TRC), a non-profit, non-government organisation, established in 1986, is offering an innovative Early Childhood Education Programme (ECE), to meet the need for trained, professional ECE teachers in private and public sector schools. This ECE programme is the first of its kind in the country.

The ECE-CP is a year-long, Early Childhood Education Certificate Programme, committed to developing and supporting early childhood professionals. It has been developed in collaboration with institutional partners, Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, and Ryerson University in Canada. Teachers who wish to complete the ECE-CP can then further pursue a two year ECE diploma Programme, from Sheridan College in Canada.

The programme is based on the High Scope Early Childhood Curriculum, which is a system of education for children aged 0-6 years. The curriculum is based on the belief that children learn best through "active learning," "direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, events, and ideas. Children are encouraged to "construct" their own knowledge by pursuing their personal interests and goals, guided by trained adults who understand the important learning areas for children in the preschool years. Through TRC's efforts this program has been modified to fit the needs of Pakistani schools.

The very first group of teachers who attended this year-long programme graduated in July 2006. To receive their certificates, the teachers had to complete a total of 10 courses, some of which were Child Development, Learning Environments, Play Experiences, Understanding Families, etc. In addition to taking these courses, teachers also taught in their respective pre-primary classrooms in the mornings, thus providing them with the unique opportunity to broaden their skills by applying theories learned in class to actual practice.

A total of seven teachers were enrolled in the ECE-CP programme and were representative of diverse backgrounds from communities across Karachi. Five of the seven teachers were teaching in private schools servicing lower-



middle to upper-middle class students, whereas the remaining two teachers worked at government and community schools. Their respective schools were located in Clifton, P.E.C.H.S., and Malir. The teachers were also teaching a wide range of age levels from 2 to 8 years of age.

The focus of the TRC, ECE-CP program is to help teachers understand how young children learn and develop, how to implement a suitable curriculum, equip and organize a classroom, record observations and use these observations to plan their daily routine. This program not only focuses on changing teaching methods but also on making sure teachers understand the reasons why these methods are more appropriate. As one teacher enrolled in the ECE course clearly states:

Whatever someone (administrators/other teachers) used to tell me I would do, without really knowing why I was doing it. Now it is really clear to me what I am doing, why I am doing it and what the learning outcome will be. Now I know and understand the reason behind what I am doing.....The change I feel in myself is that now my approach is professional. Otherwise, I was doing my job as an untrained individual, without really knowing what I was doing.



Understanding the reason a certain methodology works prompted most teachers in this program to make tangible changes in their teaching methods. Currently, in Pakistan the emphasis in preschool education is teaching by 'rote', where children are seen as empty vessels into which knowledge is transferred. Teachers in this ECE programme recognized that children are active learners who learn by doing. Proof of this change in their belief is exhibited through several teachers' statements below:

Before I believed that children learned through rote method, now I believe that children can learn through play, communication and through developing their skills. Previously my beliefs were very rigid, now I think I am much more flexible.

My teaching methods have changed a lot, previously in my classrooms I used to lead the group, but now I have started sharing power with the children.....It's a real big change. It's a more child centered approach and it caters to each individual child.

This program has not only helped teachers change their beliefs about teaching but have also prompted them to question and reflect on their existing views especially in regard to understanding young children.

This course has changed my views. Previously I didn't think that children knew much, but after this course what I have come to know is that they (children) have a lot of experiences and what a teacher needs to know is how to pull out and build on those experiences. I used to think that I had to let them know what to do and how to do things. But now I know that I am giving more responsibility to my children and they are better able to fulfill those responsibilities.

The majority of these teachers have already begun to make changes to the physical environment of their classrooms; a testimony that they are convinced the approach works. Most teachers have started working with the physical space and environment in their classroom by setting up distinct corners which are available to the children during the school day. One first grade teacher speaks out:

Before this course I did not have learning corners in my classroom, now we have these. Through these learning corners we have integrated our curriculum and now children are taking more interest. I think they are learning more because they are more open to discuss different things and they are more involved.



For others who already had learning corners in their classrooms, this course helped them understand why these corners were important and how to effectively manage student involvement. As one teacher reveals:

In my school, learning corners were already there, but what I came to know through this course was how to manage those corners and know what the purpose of these corners was for the students. It was never clear to me previously. Now I know how to help them (children) to select their corners and how to shift them from corner to corner. Previously they were free to go to any corner they wanted and after coming back there would be no discussion, but now I take their review of what they did and what they learnt. This way if they do not understand or are not approaching the corner in the right way I know how to help them.



Just with these minor changes teachers have begun to see major changes in their students:

I have seen a tremendous change in the children, they are more confident and bold. They do not hesitate to communicate and they try to express whatever they want.

I have observed that the children are now more communicative, and have developed better problem solving skills. Before there was just a rigid timetable that they had to follow. But after changing all these things they (children) are more open to communicate.

These seven teachers have also impacted their colleagues teaching methods. Teachers reported that their peers were coming to their classrooms to observe, to request guidance, and to initiate discussion based on both curriculum, planning and instructional methodologies.

All teachers stated that they had learnt a lot from this course and that this course had changed them professionally as well as personally. Some teachers said they had observed changes in their skills such as becoming more organized or improving their spoken, written and reading skills. Others commented on changes such as developing more confidence:

I am more confident now. Whatever I am doing, I have a strong base behind me and I can talk about it.

The most common response was about how this course had changed their attitudes toward their own learning. Many teachers felt that their 'thirst for learning has increased' and thus they were now more likely to carry on acquiring knowledge about childhood through reading, workshops and online research. The following quotes describe how some teachers felt this course had changed them:

Now after taking this course I realize that I don't have enough knowledge. I need to do more research about what is going on in education.

I never used to read much and now I have started studying and reading on the relevant topic. The learner has to take the responsibility for his/her own learning.

This course has changed my attitude in that I want to learn more now. This is just a start!

A program such as this, which focuses on changing teachers' perceptions of the learning process, is what Pakistan truly needs. These teachers have already altered their own deeply held beliefs about teaching and are committed to the further pursuit of learning. They are working toward making changes in their own classrooms and have in turn positively affected teachers around them. This kind of bold change is just a start in the right direction, but it is what is needed to make all the difference.

Mind your English

By C.Z. Abbas

What sustains a language? The answer is its sentences. I call my shortcut to English three dimensional or simply 3D, because language is dynamic. It has body, vitality, and it must communicate; it is not a dead soliloquy.

What one will find in most students' compositions is a contrived and sometimes forceful opening followed by a chain of positive statements. It is like the ticks that foretell death on a monitoring machine.

There is very little precision in the talk between students during which a 'How' question gets a 'Who' reply and a 'Where' question gets a 'When' reply. There is a lack of subtlety in their mismatched communication. This is probably why they raise their voices.

Teachers must know what I mean by boredom when they sit down to correct a pile of essays in which one affirmative statement leads to another, without even a negative statement to add a little spice. And all this is written in blind good faith by our struggling youth.

On December 28, 2003 in Dawn's education page I read an article by a writer who complained that in business colleges here, students who are weak in English have to attend extra English classes in which they study English literature. She asked why, and I agree - is this to make life even more difficult for students already under pressure?

The Pak-American cultural centre (PACC) has through many decades offered shortcut courses for spoken English where generations of non-English speaking students have picked up enough to carry them through to successful careers.

My proposed 3D English course is another shortcut. It can be taught at any level from class one (six-year-olds) to even adults. It is best suited to those who have some rudimentary knowledge of the language. It is useful as a benign corrective to the sneaky little habits that have crept into what is today known as 'Pakistani'.

Let us look at the sentence box around which the system revolves. It represents all the sentences we use to communicate in any language. It includes:

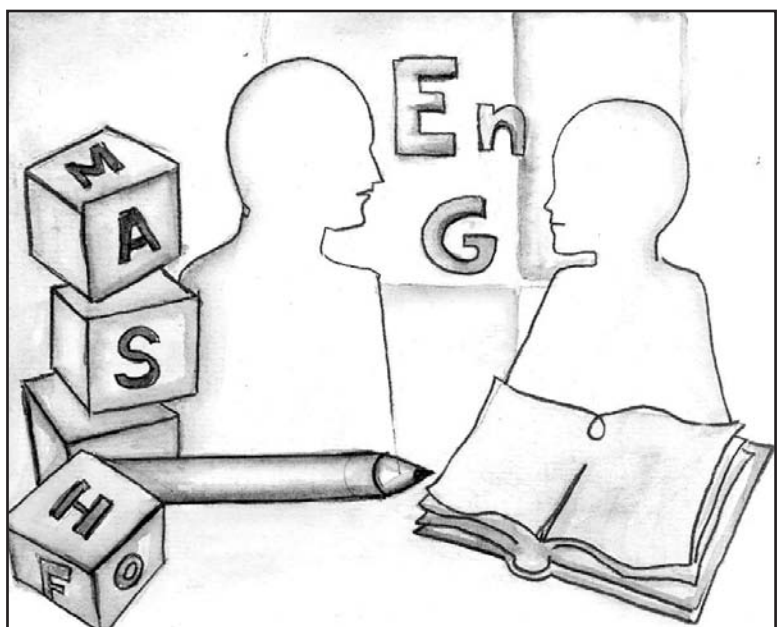
Red S = Affirmative Statements
Black S = Negative Statements
Red ? = Affirmative Questions
Black ? = Negative Questions

Red R = Affirmative Replies
Black R = Negative Replies
Red O = Affirmative Orders
Black O = Negative Orders

I think these, and only these sentences, are used in all languages alone or in some combination. It is only the sounds and word orders that will probably differ. With the use of all these types of sentences our ability to communicate with each other is complete and powerful. An analogy would be playing tunes on the piano using all the eight notes of the scale, or using one note only, the affirmative statement.

"This is my sentence box," I say to the younger students holding the box (filled with assorted items) for all to see. "It holds all the different languages of the world. Do you believe me?" I ask.

"S is for Spanish," some bright child chirps up, "No," I say, "and R is not for Russian either -



but it was a good try." When they shake the box and hear the sound of rice, lentils, beads and buttons talking to them they are ready to believe me.

We move forward. All spoken sentences convey thoughts to others who, hopefully, respond. A written sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. (How many seniors fail to punctuate! We cannot start too young.)

With the red 'S' turned towards the class the affirmative statement when discussed with six-year-olds is called a 'yes statement' (Y.S). No problems here.

The black 'S' now comes under focus, - 'No' statement, for Class-I. No, 'The cat is dead' is not a negative sentence. The 'No' statement would be 'The cat is not dead'. This elicits consternation even at the Class - IV level.

There are eight 'special question words which are the most complex to deal with and take time. These cannot take a 'yes' or 'no' answer and demand their own 'expected' answers. They are:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| * Where expected: answer place. | * Whose expected: answer person's name (possessive). |
| * Why expected: answer reason. | * Which expected: answer choice. |
| * When expected: answer time. | * What expected: answer general information. |
| * Who expected: answer person's name. | * How expected: answer state or manner. |

The children make sets of small cards with the question word on one side and the expected answer on the other. Then they take a guess as to "What's on the back" in pairs on their desk-tops.

A question is often asked by making a statement and raising the tone of the voice at the end of it. For example: You like (raised voice) cricket? Your mother is (raised voice) busy?

Though this method is used extensively locally, it is not correct. This distortion of the language does not apply to the 'special' questions, but to the other 12 words along with their negatives with which one can legitimately start a question in English. All the questions can take a 'yes' or 'no' reply and usually do.

The 'short answer' – Yes, I can. No, he isn't - is applicable with all these question words. It is very English and is not commonly used here. It is part of the rhythm of the English language. Did they? Yes, they did. Can he? Yes, he can. Haven't we? No, we haven't... and so on.

How often one hears: "Can you come? Yes. I will come". "Were they there? No. they did not come", "Will they meet me? No. they aren't meeting you", instead of: Can you come? Yes, I can. Were they there? No, they weren't. Will they meet me? No, they won't.

I believe this comes from our teachers' delight in over burdening children with a demand for a long answer which is an exercise in parroting. Answer the following questions and give a long answer:

Q: Did grandma see you run into the bushes?

A: Yes, grandma saw me run into the bushes.

Q: Does your sister want another piece of pie?

A: Yes, my sister wants another piece of pie.

Some years ago I gave a course of 3D English to a group of ladies. There were three viable reasons why these ladies answered my advertisement. Firstly, they were unable to help their young with their school homework. Secondly, they wanted to understand what their teenagers were talking about. Finally, they were now expected to accompany their husbands to business dinners etc., and found themselves unable to converse.

The third reason interested me as I was sure it was their addiction to the long answer that killed any conversational opportunity. For instance:

Guest: "Mrs. Ali, do you have any children?"

Mrs. Ali: "Yes I have some children."

Guest: "Mrs. Ali, did you attend the firm's Bingo party last month?"

Mrs. Ali: "Yes, I attended the firm's Bingo party last month"

The Guest moves on to engage in a more interesting conversation. Mrs. Ali should have used the short answer with any simple follow-up sentence to keep the conversation going, for example:

Guest: "Do you have any children?"

Mrs. Ali: "Yes, I do. I have a boy and a girl", or "Do you?"

Guest: "Did you attend the firm's Bingo party last month?"

Mrs. Ali: "Yes. I did. it was fun. Did you?" or "No, I didn't I had to attend a wedding", or "I'm not fond of gambling".

A short answer almost always echoes the question word used by the inquirer. It is followed by any short relevant sentence which invites a further response. We practiced this round and round the class. It was most entertaining.

The use of direct and indirect speech was initiated with the help of cartoons, some original and some cut out from newspapers. In the latter case, words were cut away and larger speech balloons were drawn, in which the children inserted their own words. Stress was on the use of all types of sentences.

Young students drew their own, in a quarter of a page, they added speech balloons and filled these in with direct speech which were reproduced inside inverted commas in a reported account on the opposite page. Older students researched cartoon strips identifying the sentence types as per the sentence box.

There are many support activities which have not been mentioned in this account, that have given children and students the chance to enjoy the freedom of twisting and turning among the eight types of sentences (and their negatives), that language gives us to use while speaking or writing.

My advice to teachers is that until the children or students' style of writing changes from the string of affirmative statements, they should stipulate when setting compositions that an X number of negative sentences and an X number of instances of direct speech inside inverted commas, should be included in their writing. They should also be advised to use as many different types of sentences as possible.

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what is 'interact'?

This section is an invaluable addition to the original TRC website.

While the [main website](#) site serves to introduce the organization in a broad way, 'interact' extends its usefulness by providing not only more information on some of TRC's newer activities and areas, but also through offering the advantage of various forums for valuable interchange of ideas.

Visit each of the new sections, listed on the left, for Introductions to their scope and access the updates. Leave comments that would benefit the TRC, this website, or later visitors.

'the latest buzz' displays a selection of the recent-most entries culled from all of the sections.

Topics for the poll section - '[your opinion counts](#)' - will be altered on a fortnightly basis to allow all members sufficient time to cast their vote and to have a larger sampling of data. The more popular topics will trigger off further discussions in various sections.

The '[keep updated](#)' facility offers you the option to be informed by email whenever a new item is posted on this site, so you never miss an important announcement or a useful addition.

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