Impact of Teachers' Classroom Language Assessment Literacy (CLAL) on Students' Performance

By Santosh Mahapatra
In this presentation...

- A little bit about me
- An overview of my study
- Classroom Language Assessment Literacy
- Significance of the study
- Methodology
- Results
- What my results mean
- Some thoughts about future
A little bit about me

- Santosh Mahapatra
- Teach undergraduate, post-graduate and doctoral courses at Birla Institute of Technology and Science Pilani, Hyderabad Campus, India
- Research interests: Teacher education in language assessment, use of web 2.0 tools in language education and critical pedagogy
An overview of my study

Aim of the study: To explore the relationship between teachers' CLAL and their students' performance in writing

18-month longitudinal multiple-case study – 3 English teachers from an urban English medium high school in India

Phase I
- Assessment of teachers' CLAL
- Co-construction of rubrics to assess students' writing portfolio
- Collection of students' writing samples for almost a semester

Phase II
- 60-hour training programme for teachers comprising components on construct of language proficiency, classroom assessment, objectives of assessment, assessment criteria, assessment methods, basic principles of assessment, task design, analyzing and interpreting assessment results, etc.

Phase III
- Assessment of teachers' CLAL
- Collection of students' writing samples and development of writing portfolio
- Evaluation of portfolios to trace improvement, if any, in students' writing performance
- Individual teacher's development of CLAL vis-à-vis their students' improvement in writing
- Cross-case analysis
- Strong relationship
Classroom assessment (CA)

- “learner-centred, teacher-directed, mutually beneficial, formative, context-specific, on-going, and firmly rooted in good practice” (Angelo and Cross 1993, p. 4)
- More?
CA

• provides qualitative information about students’ achievement (Farhady, 2003)
CA involves the use of:

- checklists
- self- and peer-assessment
- journals
- interviews
- portfolios

(Rea-Dickins, 2008)
“skills”: “necessary and appropriate methodology”

“knowledge”: “relevant background in measurement and language description, as well as in context setting”

“In relation to CA

“principles”: “proper use of language tests”

(Davies, 2008, p. 328)
Significance of my study

- CA in schools in India: Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)
- Lack of adequate and effective pre- and in-service training for ESL teachers (Mahapatra, 2015)
- India: little research on teacher education in assessment (Mahapatra, 2015)
- Research on the relationship between AL and student performance: underexplored area (Hailaya, 2014)
Methodology

- Approach: longitudinal, multiple-case study
- Participants: 3 teachers from an urban English medium high school, their students from one class each
- First 5 months: teachers’ CLAL and students’ performance in writing, observation of classes
- A 60 hr-training programme for teachers in classroom assessment (language skills)
Assessment of teachers’ CLAL and development of students’ writing portfolio

Students’ progress (n = 65)

Category I: 45A + 20B
Category II: 7A + 40B + 18C
Category III: 18A + 39B + 8C
## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Improvement in CLAL</th>
<th>Improvement in Students’ Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor-acceptable</td>
<td>70A+99B+26C (N=65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Poor-effective</td>
<td>97A+99B+14C (N=70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ineffective-effective</td>
<td>75A+52B+17C (N=48)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Improvement in CLAL correlated to improvement in writing

• Highest improvement in “task achievement and organization”, least in “sentence formation and vocabulary”

• CLAL: highest improvement in theory and task design – least change in attitude towards CA, better integration of CA to teaching

• Impact: positive impact in all cases
What my results mean

- Training in assessment can make teaching less examination-driven
- Development in CLAL can lead to better use of assessment-for-learning
- Shift in focus from assessment to learning
- More effective tasks
Some thoughts about future …

- Future: use of controlled studies, impact of school management, workload, self-motivation, etc.
1. What is language proficiency?
2. What is ‘construct of language proficiency’? Can you give me an example?
3. Can you tell what are the major language skills components? Any idea about sub-skills? Examples?
4. Can you tell how summative assessment is different from formative assessment? Any examples or samples?
5. What kind of tasks can a teacher use to assess her students’ L/S/R/W/V/G? Examples/samples?
6. Are you familiar with assessment criteria? What about rubrics?
7. What kind of rubrics do you use? For what purposes?
Appendix II Rubrics for assessing of CLAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>• Exhibits an excellent understanding of the principles of assessment and other basic concepts related to assessment, designs appropriate assessment criteria and tasks, chooses and utilises various methods of assessment effectively whenever required, offers effective feedback to students on their writing, evaluates and improves used assessments, …..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix III Levels of students’ progress in writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of progress</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visible (A)</td>
<td>indicates clear signs of progress of a learner who has moved from a lower level of performance to a higher level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some (B)</td>
<td>represents minor progress in one aspect of writing but may not necessarily mean progress to a higher level of performance as indicated in the rubrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal (C)</td>
<td>refers to absence of any observable change or progress in the aspects of writing considered in the rubrics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Task achievement and organisation (I) | Sentence formation and vocabulary (II) | Mechanics (III) |

Adopted from Mahapatra (2018)
## Appendix IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Task Achievement and Organization</th>
<th>Sentence formation and vocabulary</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1 (Good)</td>
<td>He/she can: - Follow a required or given format for writing applications, formal letters, post cards, short news reports, etc. - Complete a writing task without much support from the teacher - Write paragraphs on familiar topics - Write post cards, very short news reports and letters - Present information and ideas in an organized manner on some occasions - Write better if he/she discusses his/her writing with the teacher and follows the teacher's advice</td>
<td>He/she can: - Write simple and short sentences on past, present and future happenings - Differentiate between the use of singular and plural forms in sentences - Use simple connectives such as 'and' and 'but' - Use appropriate vocabulary on some occasions - Use prepositions such as 'on', 'in', 'over', 'under', 'outside', 'inside', etc. in sentence - Write without much problem if he/she looks closely at how sentences are used in books and newspapers</td>
<td>He/she can: - Spell most words correctly - Use capitalisation without any major difficulty - Use the full stop correctly and comma on some occasions - Use a dictionary for support - Understand if he/she makes any spelling or capitalisation related mistake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 (Average)</td>
<td>He/she can: - Follow a required or given format for writing applications, formal letters and post cards - Complete a writing task with some amount of outside support from the teacher and classmates - Write paragraphs on familiar topics with some support from the teacher - Write post cards, very short news reports and letters if supported by the teacher and classmates - Present information and ideas related to familiar topics in an organized manner on very few occasions - Write better if he/she discusses his/her writing with classmates and the teacher</td>
<td>He/she can: - Write simple and short sentences on past, present and future events if supported by the teacher and classmates - Differentiate between the use of singular and plural forms in sentences on some occasions - Use simple connectives such as 'and' and 'but' when prompted - Use prepositions such as 'on', 'in', 'over', 'under', etc. with some minor problems - Write better sentences and use more appropriate words if he/she practices with the help of the teacher</td>
<td>He/she can: - Spell some words correctly - Use capitalisation correctly on some occasions - Use a dictionary for support if guided - Understand spelling or capitalisation related mistakes only when guided by the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 (Barely Manageable)</td>
<td>He/she can: - Follow the beginning and ending format of an application - Write a few sentences related to some very familiar topics - Gather information and ideas about a few familiar topics, but needs constant support of the teacher to organize them - Write better if he/she practices writing a lot more</td>
<td>He/she can: - Write very few simple and short sentences to convey his/her name, father's name, the name of his/her school, etc. - Use a few words on a few very familiar topics like family, friends, etc. - Use 'I', 'we', 'he/she', 'she' and 'they' - Write a complete sentence when supported constantly by the teacher - Write a few sentences if he/she learns using tense forms and prepositions and words related to familiar topics</td>
<td>He/she can: - Spell a few words correctly - Use capitalisation on very few occasions - Spell words correctly and use capitalisation if he/she talks to the classmates and looks at how they write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A- (Beginner)</td>
<td>He/she can: - Follow a required or given format on a few occasions - Write only a few words on a few familiar topics - Gather some information and ideas about familiar topics if guided constantly by the teacher - Start writing if he/she learns some more words and how to gather information</td>
<td>He/she can: - Write a few words on a few very familiar topics like family, friends, etc. - Use a complete sentence when supported constantly by the teacher - Use 'I', 'he' and 'she' - Write a few sentences only if he/she learns more words related to familiar topics</td>
<td>He/she can: - Copy words from a book - Spell words correctly and use capitalisation if he/she tries to improve his/her English and talks to the classmates and looks at how they write</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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(Mahapatra, 2018)
# Appendix V

## List of characteristics of the classroom assessment task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Rating Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It states the task objective/s clearly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. It assesses what it intends to assess.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. It is/can be integrated with the classroom teaching.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. It provides/can provide information about students’ ability to use the language skills and components covered.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. It gives/can give diagnostic information about students’ learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. It requires students to respond to a simulated real life context by using their language ability.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. It motivates/can motivate students to learn.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. It leaves very little scope for teacher bias in scoring/grading students’ performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. It offers/can offer every student equal chance to perform.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. It provides feedback to students about their performance.</td>
<td></td>
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References


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