

English Language Teaching Expertise in India: A Sociocultural Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study utilized a sociocultural perspective to explore the teaching expertise of three EFL tenth standard teachers employed in Marathi-medium government-sponsored schools in India. The purpose of the study was to shed light on EFL teacher expertise and examine how teaching expertise is context and culture bound, given the specific sociocultural context within which teachers operate. The three participants in this research study are tenth standard, EFL teachers who teach English as a third language in the secondary schools of the Pune community of Maharashtra, India. The qualitative research paradigm utilizes the tools of ethnography and case study methodology to analyze the data. A significant finding of the research is that tenth standard EFL teaching expertise evolves over time and supports Berliner's notion of adaptive expertise (Berliner, 2001b). Secondly, the results indicate that EFL teacher expertise is dependent on the formation of the key construct namely, deep pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) which is a requirement of teaching expertise (Killen, 2009; Shulman, 1987). Thirdly, the research data support a dialectical view of human learning and development in relation to teaching expertise. Thus, the teachers' awareness of best teaching practices is modified through their interactions with their students, their communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and the sociocultural context (Vygotsky, 1978) in which they live and work, resulting in an ongoing transformation in the nature of their teaching practice and their professional identities as expert EFL teachers.

Keywords: EFL teacher expertise, adaptive expertise, deep pedagogical content knowledge; professional community of practice, sociocultural context, qualitative research.

Introduction

The end of the 20th century led to an awakening of the masses in India to the relevance of the English language as a means of partaking in their share of India's burgeoning economic wealth. Today, the Indian mindset has evolved from viewing the English language as a beacon of colonialism to English as the language of the Info-age and the world-wide web (Krishnaswamy and Krishnaswamy, 2006). Moreover, English is no longer restricted to the elite in Indian society as a mark of prestige, but it is now identified as an "associate official language" and an "international lingua franca" (Agnihotri, 2007, p.199). The English language is no longer studied to develop one's literary skills or knowledge of Shakespeare.

The twenty-first century demands require India's youth to have strong oral and written English language communication skills essential for lucrative employment and career opportunities. The Pune community has clearly understood the drive for such highly-valuable skills. However, what was required to compete for employment opportunities and access to economic advancement which would hopefully end the cycle of poverty was English

language oral proficiency (Pandit, 2009). Compelled by the dissatisfaction of the public to an outdated English language curriculum, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) created a National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2005) in response to calls for a more child-centered curriculum. The rise of widespread complaints and a general air of 'gloom and doom' among parents and educators spurred the need to investigate EFL teacher expertise from the Pune community perspective in Marathi-medium government sponsored schools.

The Pune Schools

The Pune schools either fall within the jurisdiction of the PMC (Pune Municipal Corporation) or are privately funded by trusts and individuals. The public's widespread discontent with the examination-oriented, state-wide secondary school curriculum influenced the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education to initiate the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Oral Test in English for tenth standard students from 2006 onwards. In addition, revisions to the tenth standard English language coursebook were carried out which aimed at creating more learner-centered and interactive lessons by positioning the teacher as a facilitator in the EFL classroom (English Reader: A Coursebook in English Standard X Third Language, 2007).

The three Marathi-medium government sponsored secondary schools in this study were assigned the following pseudonyms and will be referred to as schools A, B and VS. The schools cater to the under-privileged in society, who are the lower middle and lower class of the Marathi society and are mostly staffed by local Maharashtrians. Many of the parents are employed as farmers, maids and street vendors. All of the schools teach the same tenth standard EFL (third language) curriculum of the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education SSC (Secondary School Certificate examination). The secondary schools are state funded and financially strapped, the result of state underinvestment in such schools. The teachers who are employed in Marathi-medium schools are underpaid, overworked and in some cases lack teaching qualifications. Most of the teachers who teach in the Marathi-medium schools have themselves received their formal education in Marathi-medium schools.

Furthermore, the schools adhere strictly to the teaching schedule to allow students sufficient time for revision prior to taking the public, tenth standard Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination in semester two of the school year. The first school term starts in June and ends in December. The tenth standard students sit the oral examinations in early February and the SSC written examination at the beginning of March in the second term. Students who have undergone ten years of public schooling may choose to attend a two-year Junior College which offers four streams; arts; commerce; science and law. Students then have the option of attending a degree-granting college according to their stream in their junior college. The tenth standard SSC examination results have a major influence on the schools' and the tenth standard teachers' reputation, their classroom practice as well as the students and their parents.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the EFL teacher expertise of three tenth standard teachers who teach English as a third language (as opposed to a second or third language) in the Pune district of Maharashtra in India. The decision was taken to focus on tenth standard EFL secondary school teachers as this standard is a crucial point in students' education where their educational future is mandated by the results of the Secondary School Certificate examination (SSC). Furthermore, the expectation was that good, if not expert EFL

teachers, could be identified and researched in the tenth standard due to the widely-accepted practice of moving good teachers through the school system to teach higher standards.

Research Questions

Although teacher expertise has been widely researched in the west, there is a notable absence of similar research on EFL teachers of government-sponsored Marathi-medium secondary schools who work in teaching contexts that adhere to a state-mandated curriculum and coursebook, culminating in a major, public examination. Thus, the following research questions are adopted for this study which hopefully will provide valuable insights into EFL teacher expertise:

1. How does the Pune community define English language teaching expertise among tenth standard EFL teachers?
2. What effect does the sociocultural context have in shaping EFL teacher expertise among these tenth standard teachers?
3. What are the characteristics of these expert teachers in terms of their classroom practices and participation in their communities of practice both inside and outside their school?

Theoretical Perspectives

Firstly, the study adopts Killen's (2009) model of teacher knowledge (See Figure 1, page 6) which uses deep pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) to understand teacher expertise within the Pune sociocultural context. The three EFL teachers' deep pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) was investigated which includes 1) the teacher's knowledge about how to teach the tenth standard syllabus content, 2) knowledge about their students and their learning and 3) knowledge about teaching specific forms of content in ways that enhance learning. Thus, this study employed Killen's (2009) model of teacher knowledge in conjunction with Wenger's social theory of learning from a sociocultural perspective. These theories are outlined below.

Killen's Model of Effective Teaching

Killen's model (2009) demonstrates the connection between the teaching which transpires within a specific curriculum, and the students whose lives span three contexts, namely the classroom, the school and the world outside the school. Therefore, teachers must be aware of the wider contextual factors which influence specifically *how they teach* and *what they teach*. Killen's model is grounded in the following premises, namely that the students' learning experiences must concentrate on "important knowledge"; helping students to develop "deep understanding of this important knowledge" is the goal of teaching and that the "learning environment" consists of the "classroom, the school, the community, the society and the culture".

According to the general principles of Killen's model, effective teachers must possess four kinds of knowledge. Firstly, they must have knowledge of the subject which involves deep understanding. Secondly, teachers must have knowledge of how students learn in order to teach them effectively. Third, teachers must have general pedagogical knowledge in order to structure students' learning in the best way possible. Last, teachers must possess pedagogical content knowledge or what Shulman (1987) refers to as the knowledge of how to teach in specific ways so that others can understand the subject. Killen believes that these forms of knowledge interact to create the fourth form which is deep pedagogical content

knowledge (see Figure 1, page 6). Thus, in Killen's words, "teachers must develop a deep understanding of content, learners and learning, and general pedagogy... as foundations for developing deep pedagogical content knowledge." (2009, p.47-48).

L.S.Vygotsky and the Sociocultural Theory of Learning (SCT)

Sociocultural theory supports the stance that learning is a collaborative achievement as opposed to the learner working unaided (Turuk, 2008) and positions the social context at the center of the communication and learning process. The most basic tenet of sociocultural theory is that "the human mind is *mediated*" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 1). According to Lantolf (2000), Vygotsky (1978) contended that just as humans do not act directly on the physical world but rely, instead, on tools and labor activity, which allows us to change the world, and with it, the circumstances under which we live in the world, we also use symbolic tools, or signs, to mediate and regulate our relationships with others and with ourselves and thus change the nature of these relationships (p.1). Lantolf states that these tools or artifacts, which may be physical, symbolic or psychological, are formed over time by human culture(s) and are widely accessible to succeeding generations. From the Vygotskian perspective, human learning can only be understood by taking into account the social and cultural constraints that affect individuals. This means that learning occurs through sociocultural interaction. From the Vygotskyian perspective, language is the most important tool.

Wenger's Social Theory of Learning

According to Wenger (1998), learning is "the very process of being engaged in, and participating in developing, an ongoing practice" (p. 95). Furthermore, the concepts of community, practice, meaning and identity are central to Wenger's framework. Wenger identifies a community of practice as integrating all the parts of a social theory of learning which are community, practice, identity and meaning (1998, p.5). Wenger defines practice as always social practice (p.47) and includes both the tacit and the explicit. Furthermore, Wenger has delineated three aspects of how practice supports the coherence of a community which are outlined below.

Wenger defines the first aspect of practice as the origin of the coherence of a community, namely *mutual engagement*. According to Wenger (1998), "Practice resides in a community of people and the relations of mutual engagement by which they can do whatever they do." (p.73). Therefore, participants engage in sustaining "dense relations of mutual engagement" (p.74) which creates a structure around whatever they are there to do. The second aspect is the negotiation of a *joint enterprise* which is the result of a collective process of negotiation. It is defined by the participants who are in the process of pursuing (p.77) and producing "relations of mutual accountability that become a part of the practice" (p.78). The third aspect which views practice as a source of the coherence of a community is the evolution of a *shared repertoire*. The shared repertoire of a community of practice includes

"...routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice."
(Wenger, 1998, p. 83)

According to Wenger, the term participation is used to describe the social experience of living in the world in terms of membership in social communities and active involvement in social enterprises. Participation in this sense is both personal and social. It is a complex

process that combines doing, talking, thinking, feeling, and belonging. It involves our whole person, including our bodies, minds, emotions, and social relations (p. 55).

Literature Review

The chronicles of history portray a fascination towards those who excel in a given area such as sports, sciences or the arts. However, how expertise is achieved and even maintained was not entirely evident and numerous theories and postulations abound which are testimony to such enigma. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) posited that intelligence is more than “calculative rationality” (p.36) and produced a five-stage model of novice to expert skill acquisition which supported their belief in the “knowing how” rather than the “knowing that” (p.4). Researchers such as Glaser and Chi (1988) ground their work in the origins of cognitive psychology and supported the notion that expertise was connected to the cognitive processes of the mind. A decade later, Glaser (1996) described the development of expertise as a “change in agency” during learning which occurs over time.

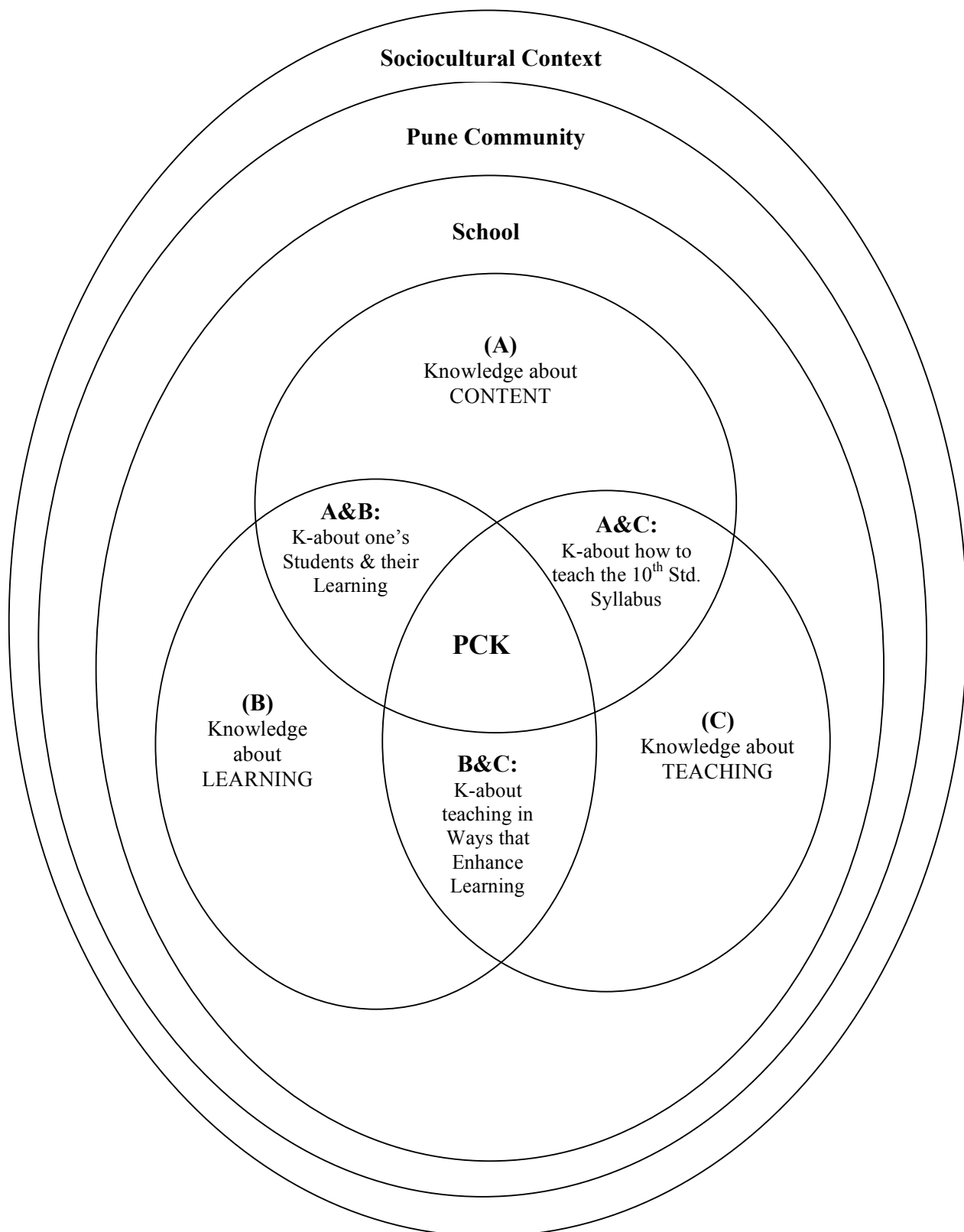


Figure 1. Teacher Expertise from the Sociocultural Perspective
[Adapted from Figure 1.4 in Killen (2009), p. 46]

Sternberg and Horvath (1995) proposed a prototype view of teaching expertise which refers to expertise as a state. In their definition of expertise, experts are shown to have a family resemblance to each other and this creates the category of an expert. The prototype represents the central tendency of all the examples in the category.

However, researchers such as Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) offered a different way of thinking about expertise as a process rather than a state and as something that people do rather than something which they possess. For example, they identified two facets of the process of expertise as “reinvestment” (i.e. the conserving and reinvesting of resources in the activity) and “progressive problem-solving” (i.e. the refining and improving of the cognitive aspect of problem solving to succeed in subsequent attempts (p.82). Furthermore, their research supported the stance that how experts face tasks maximizes their potential for learning compared to non-experts who approach tasks in such a way that it minimizes the potential for learning. Tsui (2003) examined the classroom practices and knowledge of four ESL teachers in Hong Kong and determined that

“...the development of expertise in teaching is a continuous and dynamic process in which knowledge and competence develop in previous stages and form the basis for further development. It is also a process in which highly competent teachers constantly set new goals for themselves and accept new challenges. In the process of achieving those goals and meeting these challenges, they gain new insights. It is in the process of constantly gaining new competence that expertise is developed.” (p.7)

Other researchers such as Ackerman (2003) supports the belief that expertise is grounded in certain trait clusters which are suited to notable performance in certain academic domains. Hatano and Oura (2003) summarised the expert-novice differences and the process of attaining expertise. They identified the influence of a rich, domain knowledge, years of problem-solving experience, socioemotional changes (e.g. in interest, values and identity in conjunction with knowledge and support), support of other people and artifacts and lastly the significance of the sociocultural context .

Almost ten years after the work of Dreyfus and Dreyfus, Berliner (1994) identified five stages of teacher expertise from the novice to the expert. In the last and fifth stage, which is the expert level, the teacher has both an “intuitive grasp of the situation and seems to sense in nonanalytic and non-deliberative ways the appropriate response to be made” (p.166). In other words, they “go with the flow” and when problems arise they apply “deliberate analytic processes” to make sense of the situation. Berliner (2001b) later distinguished between the adaptive expert, who is a lifelong learner and who applies expertise to find solutions to new problems, and the restrictive kind of expertise. Lastly, Killen’s (2009) model (See Figure 1, page 6) of teacher knowledge which was adopted for this study supports the view that

“...teachers must develop a deep understanding of content, learners and learning, and general pedagogy...as foundations for developing deep pedagogical content knowledge.” (p.47-48)

Methodology

The aim of this study was to examine EFL teacher expertise within a specific sociocultural context, namely the Pune context and how teacher expertise shaped and was shaped by the sociocultural context. In achieving this aim, the study adopted the sociocultural perspective (Schoen, 2011, p. 12) to examine "...how individual, social and contextual issues impact human activity, especially learning and behavior." including the role of social interactions in addressing teacher expertise.

Ethnographic research methodology and case study methodology was employed to investigate tenth standard EFL teacher expertise in the Pune context. The study entailed video-taped classroom observations and audiotaped teacher interviews. A semi-structured questionnaire was developed using Tsui's (2003) findings on teacher expertise. A grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998) was applied to the interview data which were transcribed and coded using both open and axial coding. The process was iterative throughout with the coding from the interview data read and reread to identify pertinent codes and themes. Braun and Clarke's (2006) Thematic analysis was then applied to identify the most relevant themes. Most notably, it was the data which guided the researcher to apply Killen's (2009) model of teacher knowledge in the analysis stage and it was not chosen prior to conducting the data collection.

In order to fully explore the nature of EFL teacher expertise and to answer the three research questions which framed the main study, Killen's (2009, p. 46) model of teacher knowledge was adopted which identifies four types of knowledge, i.e. "knowledge of the subject"; "knowledge about how students learn"; "general pedagogical knowledge" which interact to produce what Shulman (1987) referred to as pedagogical content knowledge i.e. knowledge of how to teach so that the subject is comprehensible to others and which enhances specific forms of learning. Thus, the data was organized to reflect what teachers' know about "teaching particular forms of content" (A+C); "how students' learn specific types of content" (A+B) and "how to teach to enhance students' learning" (B+C) (Killen, 2009).

Teacher Participants

This study identified the tenth standard EFL teacher as the main unit of analysis which according to Yin (1984) is of prime importance in the research design where case study methodology is employed. Each of the three teachers were assigned a pseudonym (i.e. Mr. L., Mrs. S. and Mr. G.) and each teacher was considered to be a single case representing teacher expertise among tenth standard EFL teachers in Marathi-medium schools. The three case studies generated rich data which was highly contextualized. Even so, it is important to keep in mind that the schools are situated in a specific context (i.e. semi-rural, urban slum, and urban lower-middle class) within the Pune area which limits the degree of generalization to be drawn from the conclusion.

The selection of the three teachers in the main study, two males and one female, was based on the following criteria. Firstly, all of the EFL teachers were highly recommended by their school principals/peers as 'good teachers'. Secondly, the teachers' students had achieved noticeably higher SSC examination results which the school administration and students attributed to the teaching they received. In addition, initial classroom observations underscored the teachers' mastery of the content although preference was shown for teachers who displayed a high level of English language proficiency in their classrooms. Lastly, the SSC examination at the end of tenth standard is such a major, public examination that schools would prefer to have the most effective EFL teachers teaching this standard who are identified by their students' performance on standardized tests including peer and student recommendation. Thus, it was hoped that the characteristics of teacher expertise would be

more easily identified at the tenth standard given the fact that schools recognize the better performing teachers by shuffling them through the school system to teach the higher standards.

Findings and Discussion

EFL Teaching Expertise According to the Pune Community

This section answers the first research question which asks how the Pune community defines English language teaching expertise among tenth standard EFL teachers.

The Pune community regards the SSC examination results as a measure of the quality of the tenth standard teachers and the schools in their need to identify an objective measure of teacher expertise. The media play a role in upholding this belief by publicly lauding schools, teachers and students who achieve high SSC examination results in local newspapers and online. Interestingly, the views of the teachers, parents and schools mirror this faith in the SSC examination results. The teachers in this study have received accolades either in the form of money given by their school, awards or praise by superiors and colleagues for their students' improvement in the SSC examination results which further reinforces the belief in such results. Although researchers such as Berliner (2001a) surmised that students' scores (such as the SSC examination results) are an unreliable indicator of a teacher's expertise, clearly these teachers are effective in improving their students' SSC results.

Furthermore, the expert teachers in this study uphold the teaching profession as more than a job by referring to it as a calling or a noble profession. This explains why the teachers in this study go beyond the call of duty in their professional lives and act in ways which indicate a high level of commitment to the profession. This places teacher expertise in a different category where attitude and motivation (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993) are what inspires these teachers to do what they do in their professional lives. In addition, the teachers are expert at identifying and successfully attending to both their students' and their parents' ongoing needs which strengthens the formation of the parent-teacher relationship and which is based on trust.

This study confirms that these expert teachers are expert problem-solvers. Researchers such as Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) also support the view of expertise as progressive problem solving where experts are constantly engaged at the edge of their knowledge. The results of this study indicate that teacher reflectivity is a critical component of progressive problem solving. This study has identified the constructs personal teaching efficacy and emotional affect as significant core themes which are common among all of the teachers in the main study. Emotional affect provides a useful lens through which to understand these expert teachers and what they do both inside and outside their classrooms, and how they position themselves vis-à-vis their professional and school community, their students and the wider Pune community to which they belong.

Lastly, this study illustrates the transformative nature of the identities these expert teachers have adopted in the course of their professional lives and which is rooted in their emotional affect. For example, Mrs. S. identifies herself as a dutiful teacher and a second parent to her students; Mr. G. believes he has a moral duty and identifies himself as a moral servant of society and Mr. L. identifies himself as a helper, a facilitator, a gardener and a warrior. The range of teacher identities which have emerged from this study are grounded in the different social and cultural roles these teachers have adopted over the years (either willingly or unwillingly) as they interact with their students and their parents, their work community of practice and the wider social and institutional Pune context. Furthermore, the presence of these identities which define the teachers in this study validate the high level of

caring and commitment they uphold and also confirms their identity as expert teachers in their practice of adaptive expertise.

Effects of the Sociocultural Context on EFL Teacher Expertise

This section answers the second research question which asks what effect the sociocultural context has in shaping EFL teacher expertise among these tenth standard teachers.

This study emphasizes the situatedness of these three teachers' expertise as it relates to the immediate local Pune community. Each teacher's expertise is grounded in their beliefs about the best ways to teach their students given the challenges presented by the sociocultural context. This study examines how these three teachers participate in the practices afforded to them by their position as tenth standard EFL teachers who are considered to be experts in their field. This study discovered that the teachers successfully negotiate what they do as expert teachers to tackle major issues which affect their students' academic success such as poverty, hunger, disease, student employment, absenteeism, disillusionment (i.e. parental and student) and conflict resolution.

The teachers believe that the expert teacher has the ability to have an impact on a student's life (i.e. personal teaching efficacy) and they cited evidence from their lived experiences to substantiate their belief. Secondly, the expert teacher adopts a lifestyle which is imbued with teaching and learning. Lastly the expert teacher has unwavering commitment and devotion to the teaching profession. The teacher's beliefs are also corroborated by Killen (2009). The following are examples of the kinds of activities the three teachers participate in which are constructed via their communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). For example, Mr. L., who teaches in the semi-rural B school, participates in home visits in cases of chronic absenteeism and he uses the metaphor of waging a war in teaching English to his students. Mr. G., who teaches in an urban slum school (i.e. the VS school), also conducts home visits. He has learned that the disillusionment of families with the current education system, as a result of the recurrent cycle of poverty, requires him to motivate both parents and students to invest in the same education system which is failing them. Mrs. S. does not participate in home visits because the A school is in an economically-advantaged urban area and requires no such visits. In fact, Mrs. S.'s school suffers from overcrowding which she believes is a result of mismanaged urban development and the good reputation of the school. She develops strong interpersonal relationships with her students who inform her if any student in the school is experiencing personal or financial difficulties. In this way she develops the trust and confidence of students by maintaining an informal network of compliancy.

Characteristics of Expert EFL Teachers

This section answers the third research question which asks what are the characteristics of these expert teachers in terms of their classroom practices and participation in their communities of practice both inside and outside their school.

Inside School

This study indicates that these teachers have developed an enhanced understanding of content, of their learners and their learning, and of general pedagogy and that it is the interaction of these three elements which produces pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) which is at the heart of their teacher expertise (See Figure 1, page 6). The three expert teachers showed both similarities and differences in knowing how to teach the tenth standard

syllabus, in knowing about their students and their learning and in knowing how to teach to enhance their students' learning.

Wenger's framework (1998) defines the practice of community as social practice and supports the notion of a community of practitioners (i.e. expert teachers) mutually engaged in the creation of a shared repertoire. This shared repertoire is outlined here in the following ways. Firstly, this study found that the teachers' expertise about how to teach the syllabus content (A+C) exemplified learner-focused teaching; the personalizing of teaching; the theorizing of practice; lifelong learning and membership in a teaching community of practice. Secondly, in relation to their students and their learning (A+B), they cited specifically learning to teach the students; interpreting students' reaction to the lesson; checking students' understanding; collegial collaboration; student engagement (in the learning process) and the management of learning which included the students' social and learning needs. Thirdly, this study found that these expert teachers are adept at teaching in ways that enhance learning (B+C) by transforming the teaching practice; using improvisational teaching; reconceptualizing the medium of instruction; reconceptualizing the teaching of literacy and reconceptualizing the teacher identity.

Thus, teacher expertise is characterized by the ongoing transformative nature of the teacher's work, in their relations (Wenger, 1998) and mutual engagement with the subject matter, with their students (and their parents), with their colleagues, with their school and the Pune community. For example, researchers such as McCaughtry (2005) have investigated the ways in which teachers' social and emotional knowledge influence their evolving pedagogical content knowledge. The findings indicate that the relationship between knowing students and teaching were more "sophisticated and interconnected" than was typically thought in the PCK literature. The above findings are supported by the literature in the field of expertise which describe expertise as an ongoing process as opposed to a state (Tsui, 2003). For example, Berliner (2001b) refers to the adaptive expert as a lifelong learner throughout their professional lives. Berliner describes the adaptive experts as adept at problem-solving which extends the knowledge base. Furthermore, Andrews (2007) supports the view that the adaptive expert displays the "ability to adapt and innovate".

Another important aspect of these teachers' professional lives is the notion of reflection. According to Tsui (2003), "reflection and deliberation are characteristic of expertise" which is supported by Schon (1983, 1987) who believes that expert knowledge arises from the interplay of two separate processes which are reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. The aim of this study was not to distinguish between these two processes, although this study has brought to light the fact that these expert teachers do reflect upon not only their teaching, but also how to teach to enhance their students' learning and that they have the potential to learn and change. The construct teacher reflectivity is an important characteristic of the expert teachers in this study, without which the potential for professional growth is stymied.

Outside School

This study stresses that it is essential to take into consideration the dialectical nature of the sociocultural context in which expert EFL teachers work and the specific knowledge they use in their teaching practice. The benefits of attending the in-service teacher-training programs which were expressed by the teachers in this study indicates that these programs, if organized to encourage learning and an exchange of ideas are an important part of a teacher's professional development in the construction of a community of practice (CoP). For example, all of the teachers believed that their participation in the in-service teacher training programs as part of their work CoP was an advantageous learning experience. They cited being shown

the changes to the syllabus and how to effect these changes in their classroom teaching. In addition, the exchange of ideas among their peers and the teacher-trainers running these programs resulted in teachers developing an awareness of best teaching practices and that each teacher has their own style of teaching. Therefore, this implies that such programs should be organized frequently and not only for the desired purpose of imparting the changes to the syllabus.

Limitations

Certain limitations emerged in the process of conducting the research. Firstly, the situatedness of the findings limit the possibility of generalizing to a wider population due to the differences in the local school context in which these teachers operate and which affect the nature of their teaching expertise. Secondly, even though only a second-hand view of the individual communities in which these teachers live and work is available, yet it is apparent that the teachers in this study believe in forming close ties to the students and the local community. For example, the absence of first-hand observations of Mr. L. and Mr. G.'s home visits into these semi-rural and urban slum communities could have more deeply portrayed how these communities construe teacher expertise and how these expert teachers utilize these same experiences. In addition, it would have been time-consuming yet worthwhile to observe students' visits to the home of Mrs. S. and the transformation she undergoes as she conducts her outside-class EFL lessons. A third limitation of this study on teacher expertise emanates from the sociocultural approach selected to investigate the phenomenon whereby the teachers are studied as "the whole person in action, acting within the settings of that activity." (Lave, 1988). For example, even though there is a lack of progressive documentation on each of the three teachers' developmental trajectories, however this study corroborates the three teachers' continuous transformation over time.

Recommendation

This study offers valuable insights into how the Pune community define and understand the meaning of EFL teacher expertise and who these expert teachers are in the eyes of the local community. Therefore, this research supports the argument that the sociocultural context plays a major role in shaping EFL teacher expertise. It underscores the need to comprehend EFL teachers' beliefs and practices as they emerge from participating in their communities of practice, the impact of the social collective and its' influence on these beliefs and practices including the situatedness of teaching expertise. This study has identified the role of the teacher's PCK in their teaching practice and the adaptive nature of their teacher expertise as it shares a dialectical relationship with the sociocultural context. This is evident from the three teachers' classroom practices and participation in their work communities of practice.

The call for effective and accessible in-service teacher training is essential in India where the rapid expansion of teachers has resulted in the hiring of teachers which are less qualified and experienced (Hill and Chalaux, 2011). In order to implement changes which are more meaningful for teachers, expert EFL teachers should be identified who would be willing to serve as teacher trainers or mentors and who have undergone similar teaching experiences in the same secondary schools in which these teachers teach. The increased opportunity for the networking of teachers across schools, combined with peer-based professional development rather than non-peer based, would at least help to underscore the most pertinent problems teachers are facing in Marathi-medium schools today. Such changes could potentially offer the means to identifying solutions to the problems which could be actualized through modified teacher training programs such as pre-service and in-service teacher

training programs. The implication is that these changes would be highly effective as they emanate from front-line teachers who are experts in their profession rather than top-level administrators.

Conclusion

This study supports Killen's (2009, p. 47) view regarding the role of PCK and teacher expertise. In addition, this study adds to Killen's model by underscoring the need to consider the dialectical nature of the sociocultural context and the role it plays in the shaping of deep pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) which is at the heart of EFL teacher expertise. Furthermore, this study indicates that all of the teachers exhibited 'adaptive expertise' (Berliner, 2001b) in their ability to problem-solve the challenges they faced in their professional careers and used their expertise to solve new problems and find solutions to the challenges they faced. Therefore, these teachers are continuously striving to "change their core competencies and continually expand the breadth and depth of their expertise" (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2005), to adapt their knowledge and skills to be much more than a "routine expert" and to re-evaluate personally-held beliefs and practices with the aim of helping their students to learn. Thus, this study supports the view that adaptive expertise is a critical component of teacher expertise which develops over time and that it is a process rather than a state (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1993).

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