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APPLYING PARAGOGY FOR BETTER LANGUAGE INTERACTION IN HIGHER  
EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Interaction in English language is essential in his technetronic world in all spheres of life. Students in higher education of our country are still facing difficulties while interacting in English language. The teacher as a facilitator could do much in developing the interaction skill of learners. But the problem of shyness and the thought of getting teased in front of the class always pull back the students in higher education institutions from interacting in English language. Here lies the importance of peeragogy or paragogy in developing the language interaction of students. This paper gives a discussion on evolution of peer-based learning. Most importantly, the paper sheds light on how paragogy helps in content enrichment, extensive reading, reviewing the book, developing critical literacy and vocabulary enrichment.

Key words: Paragogy, Language Interaction, higher education

Introduction

Getting information from the classroom with the help of teacher as a facilitator is worthwhile and students are quite familiar with this strategy. As far as students are concerned, not like in the traditional period, they are having many opportunities to explore themselves from the already existing technological arena. Information is overloaded in today's world and there is great necessity to keep ourselves updated by moving through the wisdom of real-world experiences. Apart from lecturing, students could also learn through debates, discussion and many more methods of interaction. There is always no need for a facilitator to back the students in all aspects, they could do more to interact with their peers in different platforms using their creativity and talents. Peeragogy is one such methods, where one is enriching knowledge through peer interaction without the support of the facilitator and in a sense, every student is facilitator by themselves in the platform. It could be through online mode or offline mode that students could interact each other in a better way.

Howard Rheingold coined the term "Peeragogy" in his Regent's Lecture at the University of California, Berkeley in 2012. Mr. Rheingold combined social media with paragogy to describe peeragogy as the "future of high-end online learning in which motivated self-learners collaborate via a variety of social media to create, deliver, and learn an agreed curriculum." In the paragogical approach, each and every learner serves to be the role of an instructor, helping each other and even get themselves engage in developing syllabus, creating strategy for promoting critical thinking and thought provoking discussions. According to Regent, "peeragogical design to work, the group needs to establish a group consensus for expectations, learning objectives, media

technology, and the social contract of the course". There should be a stable process of communication with each other, a strategy for responding to questions and giving timely feedback. A proper evaluation schedule should also be set up to be done after completion of the course. There needs to be a process to translate changes to the learning environment to be implemented in the next cycle.

### Evolution of peer-based learning

In the case of traditional peer-based learning, learners are encouraged to clarify their doubts, formulate their questions, engage in group work with the support of the teacher as the facilitator. Though major role is played by the students in all the activities, teacher is always there as a guide behind the curtain. The selection of the topic, implementation of the topic, providing learning experiences, and finally the evaluation process is done by the teacher. According to Alice Christudason, there are four common peer-learning strategies- Buzz group, Affinity group, Solutions and Critic group, and Teach-Write-Discuss.

Buzz group is when students are divided into smaller groups for discussion in class and, following the small group discussion, one member of each small group presents during the whole class debrief. Affinity group is similar to buzz group but it requires each small group to find their own time outside of the class meetings to discuss. Solutions and critic groups work by pairing up two small groups together one is responsible for teaching the whole class on a selected topic and the other for evaluating the presentation. Lastly, the teach-write-discuss method utilizes a whole classroom discussion at the end of the instruction to examine how much students have learned from a lecture.

In our digital world today, learning opportunity extend beyond the physical boundaries of classrooms. One of the first peer-learning communities, Peer 2 Peer University (P2PU) was created in 2009 to provide inexpensive (free) higher education with quality content to millions of learners on the Internet. There are many other online peer-learning communities similar to P2PU. The newest platform is the Massive Online Open Classes (MOOCs), most notably Coursera. These online communities still employ an instructor to facilitate learning with open forums for discussion between learners around the world.

### Working Principles of Paragogy;

- **Decentralized center:** Understanding the concept of shared context is more important than understanding one's self-concept.
- **Meta-learning as a source of knowledge:** There is a lot to learn about learning.
- **Peers have different but equal perspectives:** Learners must confront and make sense of the difference among them as part of the learning experience instead of seeking to confirm what one already knew.
- **Learning is distributed, not linear:** It is important to learn how to work around a given social field as side-tracking is allowed.
- **Realize the dream (if you can), then move one:** Learners should attempt to fulfill their personal motivations but shouldn't dwell too long.

### Why Paragogy?

- To empower the worldwide population of self-motivated learners who use digital media to connect with each other, to co-construct knowledge, to co-learn.
- Learning is a social, active, and ongoing process.
- Co-learning is ancient; the capacity for learning by imitation and more, to teach others what we know, is the essence of human culture. We are human because we learn together.
- It is becoming clear that with today's tools and some understanding of how to go about it, groups of self-directed learners can organize their own courses online.

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**Paragogy and English language**

Content enrichment is very much necessary as far as students of higher education is concerned. English is a vast area including periods of old English, Middle English, early modern English and late modern English. The vast horizon of content including prose, fiction, poetry and drama is difficult to fetch in classrooms by the students of higher education. Paragogy is a better platform to discuss the characters and events of different literature and thus helping the students to get an insight in to the characters, their dialogues, major incidents etc. It is difficult for a teacher to acquaint the learners with the knowledge of such a vast content of English language and literature. Students in a platform of paragogy could easily share their views and criticisms on this platform and it would be helpful for them to explore themselves the content materials. But with such a broad area of study, prospective students are often confused about to actually learn in English Literature. Paragogy provides a better platform to discuss the content in a better way.

Extensive reading is much enjoyable to the students as there is no need to focus on the text by studying the vocabulary, grammatical structures and phrases. Students are getting chances to read longer piece of writing through peer-to-peer interaction. Paragogy provides a balanced reading programme through extensive reading and raises awareness on the language which may in-turn lead to fluency.

Every individual will have to draft letters in one or the other situation in their life. we are really cautious while drafting formal letters. Conscious regarding the usage of words, grammatical structures, concord and sentence formation. Peer-to-Peer interaction support a lot in this regard to frame letters and improve the skill to prevent irrelevant words from creeping into your draft. Paragogy platform will help to avoid the ambiguous words, complex sentences and filthy communication. Sample templates are provided by different students which will help them a lot to draft a better formal letter. Drafting letters is a skill which cannot be acquired in a day time, it improves overtime. The more we practice, the more perfection we could achieve.

The merit of the content of the book is analysed through book review along with the style of writing. Wide variety of books are being published every year and literature lovers are not able to go through all the books. It is also difficult to identify the worthiness of the content in a better way. Book reviews will definitely help the readers to select the books to read according to their interest and need. Paragogy helps in peer-to-peer interaction about the credibility and authenticity of various books. Different individuals will be having different perspectives on books and paragogy platforms definitely help to get various views on single book. Apart from getting reviews, paragogical approach will also help to get the information on the content of the books, the characters and incidents.

One important way a person could learn his self-worth is through interaction. Positive description of our work and ideas could boost our level of creativity, especially when it is from your peers. Nurturing of creativity could be made possible through paragogical approach as it is a platform where peers focus on the uniqueness of creativity and gives timely reinforcement. Positive criticism could also be appreciated in this platform which will help the students of higher education to mold themselves. Getting appreciation and positive criticism for your creative ideas, may be your literary piece of writing, your critical literacy skill; will help you a lot to improve your creativity and develop it in a better direction.

Vocabulary enrichment is possible through the approach of paragogy. Incidental learning happens through purposeful interaction in the platform of paragogy which in turn leads to the enrichment of active vocabulary of the learners. Students interacting through online or offline mode without the mediation of a facilitator are even free to speak without any hesitation, especially when it comes to the second language English. Students of higher education get themselves acquainted with the different usages of different words in various situations. Since there is always the pull of mother tongue while speaking in the target language, paragogical approaches will support them for a better acquisition of language.

**Conclusion**

In the scenario of technology influenced teaching and learning there is a lot of space or the students of higher education to get access to different sources of learning. The point to be focused here is that, better the

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interaction, higher the interaction as far as English language is concerned. Students in the higher education find themselves to perform better in the National Eligibility Tests and various other qualifying examinations related to English language. Going through the whole content is impossible and much difficult. The platform of paralogy will serve them much better in this regard not only for content enrichment but for vocabulary enrichment and developing skill of reading as well.

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