ОБУЧЕНИЕ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ: ОТ ГЛОБАЛИЗАЦИИ К КУЛЬТУРНОМУ МНОГООБРАЗИЮ
ОБУЧЕНИЕ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ:
ОТ ГЛОБАЛИЗАЦИИ К КУЛЬТУРНОМУ МНОГООБРАЗИЮ

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Сборник подготовлен по материалам международной конференции, проведенной Дальневосточной общественной организацией преподавателей английского языка совместно с Дальневосточным государственным гуманитарным университетом и Тихоокеанским государственным университетом. Статьи, включенные в сборник, освещают проблемы лингвистики, переводоведения и методики преподавания английского языка и культуры.

Изданию адресовано специалистам, студентам и аспирантам, занимающимся проблемами лингвистики, преподавания иностранного языка и культуры.

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НАПРАВЛЕНИЕ: ЛИНГВИСТИКА И ПЕРЕВОДОВЕДЕНИЕ //
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Therefore, we see that Shakespeare’s legacy is not frozen in time, but is a forever flowing essence. Each new generation, in our observation, interprets him in their own way, relying on the growing knowledge about the past and their own time. Creating an atmosphere of freedom for expressing individual opinions and encouragement of diversity of views in literature courses promotes the value of reading Shakespeare’s works and other classical writings. When the leading mechanism for interpreting a work of literature is one’s own vision of the author’s text, investigating literature becomes a personal goal, the strategy of reading changes, and the interest in close reading grows. As it was noted in one composition, “and even though there is a chance that the truth will not be so easily obtained, and digging to the very essence of the work will not be an easy process, one can experience an indescribable excitement akin to the one which is felt by a scientist who is about to discover the essence of a long-researched substance”. Our contact with the inexhaustible spiritual treasure of Shakespeare happens precisely through exploration because the dialogue between his works and the reader, from a historical perspective, “does not have a meaningful ending” [1, p. 226].

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Promoting Language Learning through Strategy Awareness

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Introduction

Indonesia’s people are extremely diverse in culture, language, ethnicity and religion. 583 languages and dialects are spoken throughout Indonesia but
Bahasa Indonesia is the official national language. English is not normally used in everyday communication in Indonesia but more people are increasingly aware of the importance of English as a tool that will assist educational and economic advancement. It is the language of international communication, commerce and trade especially in most big cities like Jakarta, Surabaya or Denpasar.

In Indonesia English language is officially first taught to students at Junior High School and is offered as a compulsory subject throughout the years until they graduate from Senior High School. Research, however, concludes that having spent six years studying English in high school, the students demonstrate only low proficiency in English and are not ready to use English in their real lives—whether to read books or magazines, to communicate for social purposes, or to write simple accounts [Kweldju, 2004, Depdknas, 2002, Dardjovidjojo, 2000, Kartasasmita, 1997, Alisjahbana, 1990; Tomlinson, 1990]. In an effort to hone the quality of teaching English in Indonesia, the government has kept changing the curriculum for English language. Despite technological breakthrough and other recent innovations, the unsatisfactory results of teaching English in Indonesia remain true.

To be a good or successful language learner, there is always a need to be “learning to learn” [McDonough, 199:80] and learn about learning. Research on language education has shifted its focus from how to teach a language to how a language is learned. The students are directed to reflect on how they learn and by developing their skills to pursue their learning goals, students will be empowered to change from passive recipients of information to active controllers of their learning. The teacher’s role, as facilitator, is to empower learners by promoting student involvement in learning, helping learners to develop skills that support learning throughout life, and helping learners to assume personal responsibility for learning.

**Review of Literature**

Learning is a gradual process and is heavily dependent upon the nature and will of the learners. Learning is a process that occurs best when what is being learned is relevant and meaningful to the learner and the learner is actively engaged in creating his or her own knowledge and understanding by connecting what is being learned with prior knowledge and experience [14].

Students' learning potential increases when attitudes are positive and motivation runs high. Brown [2000] points out that attitudes are cognitive and affective; that is they are related to thoughts as well as to feelings and emotions. Attitudes govern how one approaches learning, which in the case of language learning requires exposure to a new different culture and also to the difficult tasks of mastering the foreign language. According to Gardner [8] attitudes are a component of motivation, which “refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language.” Brown also states that second language learners benefit from positive attitudes and that negative attitudes may lead to decreased motivation and, in all
likelihood, because of decreased input and interaction, to unsuccessful attainment of proficiency. The research into the connection between positive attitudes and successfully learning a foreign language supports this simple observation, although it is important to understand that many variables are involved because we are dealing with complex social and psychological aspects of human behavior. All students possess positive and negative attitudes in varying degrees, and that the negative ones can be changed by thoughtful instructional methods, such as using materials and activities that help achieve their understanding and appreciation of the foreign culture [4, p. 181].

Learning strategies instruction is one means of improving students’ acquisition of a foreign language. Language researchers claimed that language teachers should not only teach about the language but also teach learners how to learn [10; 12]. Extensive research into learning strategies reveals the importance and relevance of this instruction for language students. Learning strategies are the thoughts and/or actions that students use to complete learning tasks. Unlike teaching strategies, learning strategies are the tools that students themselves can employ independently to complete a language task. Students who also analyze and reflect on their learning are more effective learners; that is, they are more able to acquire, retain, and apply new information and skills. The goal of teaching learning strategies is to help students to consciously control how they learn so that they can be efficient, motivated, and independent language learners [5]. Students do not just acquire new strategies; they discover how and when to apply them. Their ability to use strategies effectively and to match them appropriately with tasks has broad implications for learning both content and language. Language learning researchers [10;12] have concluded that learning strategies can be taught in order to achieve better performances in language learning. The results of the studies on the instruction of language learning strategies, in general, indicate that students who experienced instruction on language learning strategies outperformed those who did not [11]. Students who think and work strategically are more motivated to learn [Paris, 1988] and have a higher sense of self-efficacy, or confidence in their own learning ability [17]. That is, strategic students perceive themselves as more able to succeed academically than students who do not know how to use strategies effectively. Students who expect to be successful at a learning task generally are successful, and each successful learning experience increases motivation.

**EFL issue**

Although Indonesian people are increasingly aware of the significant role of English, many of our students at our Secretarial School have poor command of English. They seem to demonstrate low attempts to improve their English skill and lack strong commitments to improve their English proficiency seriously. Since good knowledge of English is one of the main requirements for a secretarial position, it is important to equip our students at Secretarial School with the necessary English communication skills which they will need later after
they graduate. Brown (2000) describes several studies about the effects of attitude on language learning and concludes that “positive attitudes toward the self, the native language group, and the target language group enhanced proficiency”. Research confirms that negative attitudes towards the foreign language and group can impede the learning of that language while positive attitudes toward the foreign language and group may increase language learning success. Since attitudes can be modified by training and experience, effective strategies can encourage students to be more positive towards the language they are learning. To address the issue, the writer is interested in implementing learning strategies instruction in order to improve the students’ achievement in English proficiency.

This paper focuses on cultivating students’ positive attitudes and enhancing their motivation, and empowering them to become better, more effective language learners who understand their own learning processes, can exert some control over these processes, and take more responsibility for their own learning. This self-knowledge and skill in regulating one’s own learning is a characteristic of successful learners, including successful language learners.

**Context of classroom action research**

Classroom action research is carried out as a teacher reflects critically about a teaching situation, identifies learning or instructional problems, and institutes methods to solve them. The basic steps of an action research include exploring and identifying a problem in the classroom, collecting data and reflecting on the problem, thinking about something that will probably fix the problem, developing and instituting a plan of action and reporting on the final results [9]. The study was conducted for one semester which lasted 12 weeks of class meetings. While the core objective was to improve the students’ English language proficiency, the project focused on cultivating positive attitudes of the students and enhancing their motivation, and on empowering students with strategies which help them understand the language acquisition process, connect language learning with their larger educational and life goals, and succeed as language learners.

**Profile of the students**

20 students were involved in the project. They were undergraduate students from Secretarial School in Surabaya, Indonesia. All of them were female semester four students aged between 20 and 24 years old, and they have completed their first three semesters of the six-semester diploma program. English is one of the core subjects for them. On average, the students spend eight hours of English instruction each semester. In semesters four, they took Communicative English as well as Business English for Secretary.

Most of these students did not understand or communicate English well yet. They had big difficulty building sentences in English. Grammatical, vocabulary as well as pronunciation errors which obscure meaning occurred frequently in their sentences. They lacked confidence and were reticent to speak in
English even in the classroom during the Speaking class. Despite the constant encouragement, most students did not make serious attempts to work up to their potential and were too shy or afraid to speak the target language. Another concern was that many students were undisciplined or did not seem to reflect seriousness in their study. A few did not complete their assignments or pay attention to the lesson. Some frequently arrived late for class or did not bring lesson materials during the class. A few others were often seen busy sending/receiving SMS or some even tried to receive phone calls using their cell phones during the class meeting.

Data collection

Questionnaires, vocabulary tests, personal observation and informal interviews with the students and colleagues were used to collect data about the students. At the beginning of the project, a survey questionnaire was distributed asking for their opinions of learning English, their strength and weaknesses, their good and bad experience while learning English, their motivation and their expectations or suggestions. They were also given Vocabulary Level tests to measure how big their vocabulary is assuming that vocabulary is an essential component in language learning.

The Vocabulary Level Test is a diagnostic matching format test which is developed to find out what areas of vocabulary the learners know well and what they do not know. It has five levels within the test — 2000 word, 3000 word, 5000 word, 10000 word Levels and Academic Word List Level. Each level contains 30 items grouped in blocks of three test words.

The Productive Vocabulary Level Test uses the same words sampled from 2000, 3000, 5000, 10000 Levels and Academic Word List with 18 items at each level. In the test the learners have to complete the incomplete words using the context clues and initial letters.

The students' responses in the questionnaire confirmed that they were aware of the importance of good mastery of English for daily communication and for their professional development. They admitted they liked studying English and they clearly expressed their eagerness to have excellent mastery of English skills but almost half of them were of the opinion that learning English was hard. They claimed that the learning materials and learning activities were often not stimulating or the content of the course was not interesting to them. Surprisingly, the fact that the teacher spoke English in class was not seen as a challenge for many students. They preferred that the teacher used L1 in the classroom, otherwise they would not understand their teacher. They also suggested that the teacher should speak at a low speed. Game activities were the most preferred class activity in the classroom (70%) and the second most favorite was problem solving, (almost 40%). The students were varied in their knowledge of English, but the majority had a lot of difficulty understanding or communicating simple ideas in English. When the students were asked to assess themselves how good they believe their English is and score themselves using 1-10 scale, two stu-
udents claimed that they deserved a score of 4; four students a score of 5; five a score of 6; seven a score of 7; and only two students believed they deserved 8.

Table 1 depicts numerous factors which they believed have become major obstacles for their improvement in their English speaking skill. You will notice that the supposed obstacles are grouped into two categories – the first four are problems which are assumed to arise due to the students’ poor ability in taking control of their learning and the other four problems are beyond their control.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lack of confidence</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of discipline in study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor basic knowledge of English</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>familiarity with effective learning strategies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficult material</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uninteresting material</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uninteresting way of teaching</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classroom climate which is not conducive</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many admitted they lacked confidence as they had very limited vocabulary and/or had a lot of trouble building correct sentences in English. Some stated that they did not have ideas what to say. The students were bored with the learning material and did not seem to understand the connectedness of the material and their interests. They obviously expected a different way of teaching or learning environment which would be more exciting and challenging to them.

Many students did not seem to make blatant attempts to prove their serious eagerness to master English. They were reticent to speak English in class with their classmates. The responses in Table 2 explains several reasons why the students were unwilling to participate verbally in the classroom. The students admitted that the three main reasons why they were unwilling to participate verbally in class were trouble in building sentences, lack of vocabulary and fear in making mistakes. These weaknesses seemed to have a big impact on their confidence.
Table 2: What makes you reticent to participate verbally in class?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lack of confidence</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feeling shy to make mistakes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feeling afraid to make mistakes</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>limited vocabulary</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trouble in sentence building</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not interested in the topic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not interested in sharing ideas</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>having no idea what to say</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the interview and observation it was found out that most students never practiced speaking outside class, or reviewed the materials they previously learned in class. Besides, they hardly ever used a dictionary and even had a lot of trouble using a dictionary – both bilingual and mono lingual dictionaries. They were not also aware of the salient features which a good dictionary provides – pronunciation guide, the rich examples and contexts, collocations, grammar reference, to name a few.

The results of Vocabulary Level and Productive Vocabulary Level tests confirmed that the students lacked basic vocabulary and had very weak language control. Most of them had quite limited vocabulary and did not even fit into 1500 word level. No wonder they had great difficulty building sentences in English.

**Intervention to cultivate positive attitude and enhance learner motivation for effective language learning**

Advances in technology and the learning demands of the information age have resulted changes in the nature of learning. The students’ responses in the questionnaire revealed that the students were not happy with the conventional way of teaching or did not find it challenging. More than half of the class suggested that the presentation of the material be in the form of songs, videos/movies, or games or that class meetings take place outside the classroom. According to Gardner (1985, 10) attitudes are a component of motivation, which “refer to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language.” Brown describes several studies about the effects of attitude on language learning and concludes that “positive
attitudes towards the self, the native language group, and the target language group enhanced proficiency"[4, p.181] A paradigm shift from a focus on the teacher to a focus on the learner is therefore essential to deal with the issues of lack of motivation, negative attitude and learning difficulty. The empowerment of learners provides a more meaningful and effective experience and produces an environment which fosters maturity and responsibility in learners for their learning. Empowerment is the development of knowledge, skills and abilities in the learner to enable them to control and develop their own learning. The teacher’s role, as facilitator, is to empower learners by promoting their involvement in the learning process, helping learners to assume personal responsibility for learning, and helping learners to develop skills that support learning throughout life. This way, the learner becomes a willing participant instead of a passive follower.

The empowerment strategies included helping students understand the language acquisition process, promote engagement in language learning and achieve success with learning strategy instruction. These strategies were introduced and integrated into the students’ regular classes. Monitoring and evaluation were made during the project.

Helping students understand the language acquisition process

Students need to understand that learning a language means becoming able to use it to understand, communicate and think. Students also need to recognize that language learning takes place in stages and that all students have to work through a sequence of “approximate” versions called interlanguages (ILs), each of which represents a level of understanding of the target language. For this reason, The students were encouraged to attempt to use the target language as much as possible inside and outside the class and were frequently reminded that making mistakes is a natural process of learning a foreign language and that students will not improve without practice or making mistakes. They were repeatedly told that the teacher does not expect mastery of forms and that correction is kept to minimum and done only when errors result in miscommunication or misunderstanding. The students were also made aware of the various sources available for language exposure and were encouraged to immerse themselves with them.

Promoting Engagement in Language Learning

As the students did not respond to the language class positively and felt that they had to take the course to fulfil the university language requirement, they were encouraged to develop an imaginary scenario for themselves in which they saw some reason for using the language. This way, they may think of ways in which they really may use it or come to understand that purpose is an integral part of their language learning. Students’ motivation for learning a foreign language increases when they see connections between what they do in the classroom and what they may do with the language in the future. Their attention increases when classroom activities are relevant to their interests or life goals. For
this purpose, the students were also involved in choosing the learning materials. The teacher welcomed and considered the students' suggestions or feedback but did not necessarily agree to all.

Achieving Success with Learning Strategies Instruction

Learning strategies instruction shows students that their success or lack of it in the language classroom is due to the way they go about learning rather than to forces beyond their control. Some students learn how to use strategies effectively and as they do so, they become more self-reliant and better able to learn independently. They begin to take more responsibility for their own learning and their motivation increases because they have increased confidence in their learning ability and specific techniques for successful language learning. In this project, Learning Strategies instruction was done by:

- encouraging the students to recognize their own thinking and learning processes. For example, the students learned how to organize their learning which boils down to planning the tasks and setting the goals; they also learned to manage and monitor their own learning which includes checking their progress; they learned how to evaluate themselves by assessing how well they applied the strategies and how well they accomplished the task.

- teaching specific learning strategies on how students use resources to learn most effectively – the students learned how to make use of a dictionary, how to expand their vocabulary (through reading assignments, guessing, making notes, word association), how to improve pronunciation (understanding the phonetic symbols), and how to improve their language skills through the internet. The students were also assigned extensive reading activities which aimed to increase the knowledge of vocabulary and to make them learn independently while motivating them to enjoy reading. In other words, the students were given opportunities to take more control over their learning through relevant and meaningful activities. This way, they were empowered to change from passive recipients of learning into active controllers of their own learning.

Report on the findings and implication

The study was conducted for one semester lasting twelve weeks long. By the end of the project a survey questionnaire was distributed to measure the degree to which the study resulted in a change to their attitudes and motivation toward learning English as a Foreign Language and their progress in enhancing their skills in English. 82% of the students agreed that they learned a lot of new experience and enjoyed the benefit from using the new syllabus. Having learned more strategies and techniques in learning English as a Foreign Language and more skills in improving vocabulary and pronunciation, they felt more empowered and became more confident to participate more eagerly in the learning activities. 71% stated that they were making progress somehow and therefore gave themselves a higher score at the end-of-semester questionnaire than they did at the beginning-of-semester questionnaire. 60% disagreed with the statement that they feel at ease when speaking English in the classroom. 60% con-
firmed that establishing rapport between the teacher and the students and building a positive class atmosphere were essential to creating students' positive attitude toward EFL learning.

Table 3 confirms the benefits which the students believed they derived

**Table 3**: How students benefited from the learning strategies instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>increased motivation</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased vocabulary</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more confidence</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more fluent</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more informed of effective learning</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>using English more in classroom</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that almost all students felt more motivated to improve their English and as a result they had more confidence to participate in the class activities. They also believed that they were better informed of effective learning strategies and argued that learning English was more challenging than it was before.

Table 4 represents how the students responded to the changes

**Table 4**: Students responses to the project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>No.of SS agree</th>
<th>No.of SS disagree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>interesting learning material</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interesting way of teaching</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involvement of students in selecting learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>materials</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have derived a lot of benefits from this course</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found the learning material difficult</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

The research evidence points overwhelmingly to the power of Extensive Reading to foster language learning, especially vocabulary acquisition.

Table 5 presents a comparison of the results of the Vocabulary Level and Productive Vocabulary Tests conducted at the beginning of the project – VLTTest1 and PVLTest1 respectively, and the ones by the end – VLTTest2 and PVLTest2. The focus was on 2000 word level and the list shows the number of
correct answers the students gave. In VLT Test 2 and PVL Test 2 most students
gave more correct answers than they did in VLT Test 1 and PVL Test 2 and only
two of them failed to do so. 10 students (50%) demonstrated an average increase
of more than 10% (ranging from 13% to 30%); 6 students below 10% (ranging
from 7 to 9%); and only 2 students made an average increase below 5%.

Table 5: Results of Vocabulary Level test

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VLT Test 1</th>
<th>VLT Test 2</th>
<th>PVL Test 1</th>
<th>PVL Test 2</th>
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Strategy awareness and learning strategy instruction have led them to a
more positive attitude towards language learning as they find learning more en-
joyable and challenging. They agree that they found the class less stressful and
they realize they were empowered to learn more independently through relevant
and more meaningful class activities. This project has its limitations and lays
emphasis on examining the significant role of students empowerment to enhance
their motivation and cultivate their positive attitude towards language learning.
It does not attempt to assess to what extent the empowerment strategies result in
the language learning success – an interesting topic which needs separate research.

Conclusion

The study uses classroom action research principles and is aimed at overcoming problems which impede the students’ oral mastery of English. The students’ empowerment strategies are implemented to foster maturity and responsibility in students for their learning. By applying the strategy, the students are empowered to be actively involved in the learning process to change from passive recipients of information to active controllers of learning. The teacher’s role, as facilitator, is to promote student involvement in learning, helping learners to develop skills that support learning throughout life and helping them to assume personal responsibility for learning. The focus of attention is on students and the language learning process. It includes helping them understand the foreign language acquisition process, promoting their engagement in language learning process and learning strategies instruction for their success in language learning.

Some recommendations include empowering students as early as possible for more effective and successful language learning and conducting further research which assesses to what extent empowerment strategies have impact on language learning success.

References


The Worlds of William Butler Yeats

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One of the greatest figures of twentieth century writing, William Butler Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923. His life was full of variety and his interests wide-ranging—from poetry to theatre, politics to spiritualism. From Celtic legends and ancient sagas, as well as his own experience, he created a world literature. But first of all, he was the son of his dear native country—Ireland. There is no other piece of land on the earth, small as it is, which gave birth to such an enormous galaxy of writers, poets and dramatists as Eire, the independent state of Ireland, which gained its independence from British colonialism thanks to these people, too. To mention but few, they are Jonathan Swift, Bernard Show, Oscar Wilde, James Joyce, William Butler Yeats, Sean O’Casey, Behan Brendan, Samuel Beckett [1, p. 5].

One of the brightest stars in this unprecedented galaxy is W.B. Yeats, poet, gentleman and politician whose contribution into the cultural and political life of Ireland cannot be overestimated. A closer look at his biography fills us with enchantment and, perhaps, with owes, since it was an outstanding existence of a “larger than life figure” (This word combination has been snatched by the author