



Sensations Webinars for ENGLISH Teachers

Teaching English with graded,
authentic, global resources



Danny Norrington-Davies
International House

Richard Chinn
King's College
London

Working with emergent language: Ideas and activities from the classroom

All attendees will receive a certificate of attendance and slides via email link 24 hours after the webinar.



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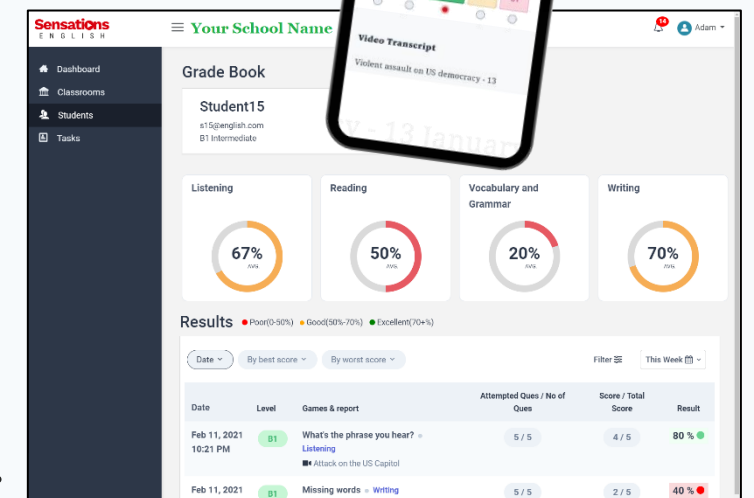
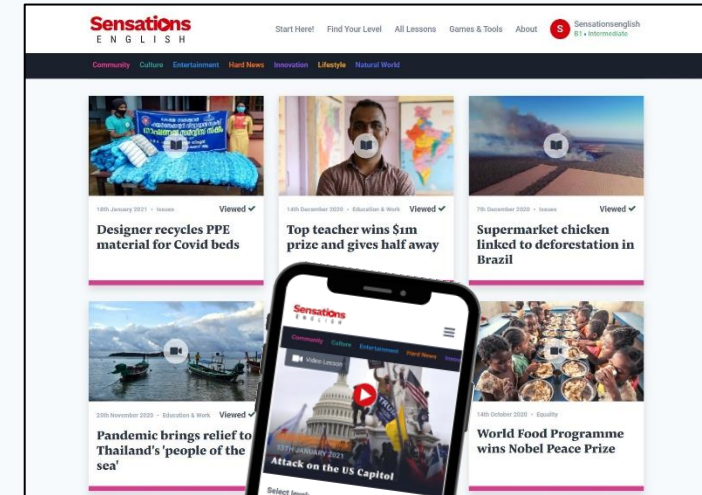
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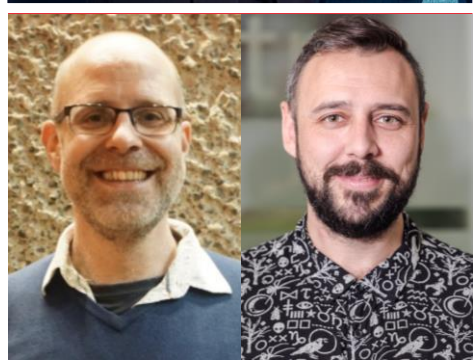
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What is emergent language?

“Unplanned language that is needed or produced by learners during meaning-focused interactions. This language is then explored through reformulation, clarification, and support from the teacher.

(Chinn & Norrington-Davies, 2023)



What is emergent language?

T: What did you do this morning?

S1: I water the flowers

T: Ah you have a garden?

S1: No garden just... (mimes an oblong box.)

S2: Balcony?

T: Do you have a balcony?

S1: No balcony. Just the ... (mimes oblong box)

T: a window box! (teacher boards this)





Why is emergent language important?

When learners become **aware of a gap** in their existing L2 performance which prevents them from expressing what they want to express, they are **sensitized** to attend to any input containing the forms they need (Ellis, 2016).



Emergent language includes

- **Errors or communicative breakdowns** produced by students.
- **Extensions**: alternative ways of producing the same meanings.
- Language that teachers or learners **judge** to be in some way **new, interesting or useful to share**.
- **Questions** raised by learners about an aspect of language.



Creating the right conditions

Lead in

Response to a text

Communicative
task

Feedback on
content/meaning



Key questions

Should emergent language work be immediate or delayed?

What is an appropriate reformulation or extension?

How do my students feel about emergent language work?

Can I work with emergent language in my teaching context?

It's hard to hear what learners are saying when they are talking together in class

How do I monitor my techniques and skills?

In a communicative task, what areas of language should I focus on?



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Issue 1: I find it hard to hear what my learners are saying



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Rodrigo's story

- Rodrigo is a teacher from Colombia who wanted to extend his practice by doing a CELTA course.
- He was very confident working with target language, but the idea of emergent language was quite new to him.



Rodrigo's story

- However, during monitoring a speaking activity Rodrigo was clearly concerned and complained to his tutor:
- I can't hear any mistakes or gaps!





Problems

- Not listening to what learners are actually talking about
- Grasping at learner errors
- Worrying about other parts of the lesson



Our advice

- Stop listening for errors
- Spend time tuning into individual groups
- Note down what they are talking about
- Put these points on the board to support feedback on content after discussion parts of the lesson



Task 1: Sensations B1

What do you think is happening in the picture?
Where do you think it is?
Why are the people doing what they are doing?





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**Listen to the learners
completing the task.
What do they talk
about?**





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Preparing the board

Demo?

Game?

China/India –
where?

National day?



Prompts for feedback

1. In feedback, invite learners to share their contributions.
Use the following prompts:

Thomas you said it was a demonstration. Why do you think so?

Jiaxi you're sure it's not China. Why do you think so?

Noor you said there are no flags. Why is this important?

2. Ask follow-up questions to encourage the learners to say more and extend their turns.



Some interesting negotiation

- **Danny:** OK. What do you think is happening in the picture?
- **Thomas:** I think a **manifestation**....
- **Astrid:** Yes
- **Salman:** No..... wait... (typing in his phone)
- **Salman's phone:** 'Demonstration'
- **Salman:** Demonstration
- **Thomas:** Demonstration. Yes.



Some interesting negotiation

- **Jiaxi:** What is demonstration?
- **Salman:** Ok yes. Or something else.
- **Thomas:** Why?
- **Danny:** Jiaxi has a question
- **Jiaxi:** What is demonstration?
- **Noor:** But there are no signs.
- **Salman:** Like in London. When they walking in the street.
- **Jiaxi:** (Shaking his head)
- **Thomas:** (To teacher) Manifestation is OK?



Some interesting negotiation

- **Danny:** OK everyone, look at the board



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Issue 2: What can I reformulate, extend or teach?



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Listen again. What language might you choose to reformulate, explore or introduce?





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Lexis: Unknown language

- a demonstration
- carry | placards
banners
- wave flags
- celebrate | independence day
your national day

~~The face is no Chinese~~

- They don't look Chinese
- watch a match/game
play a game

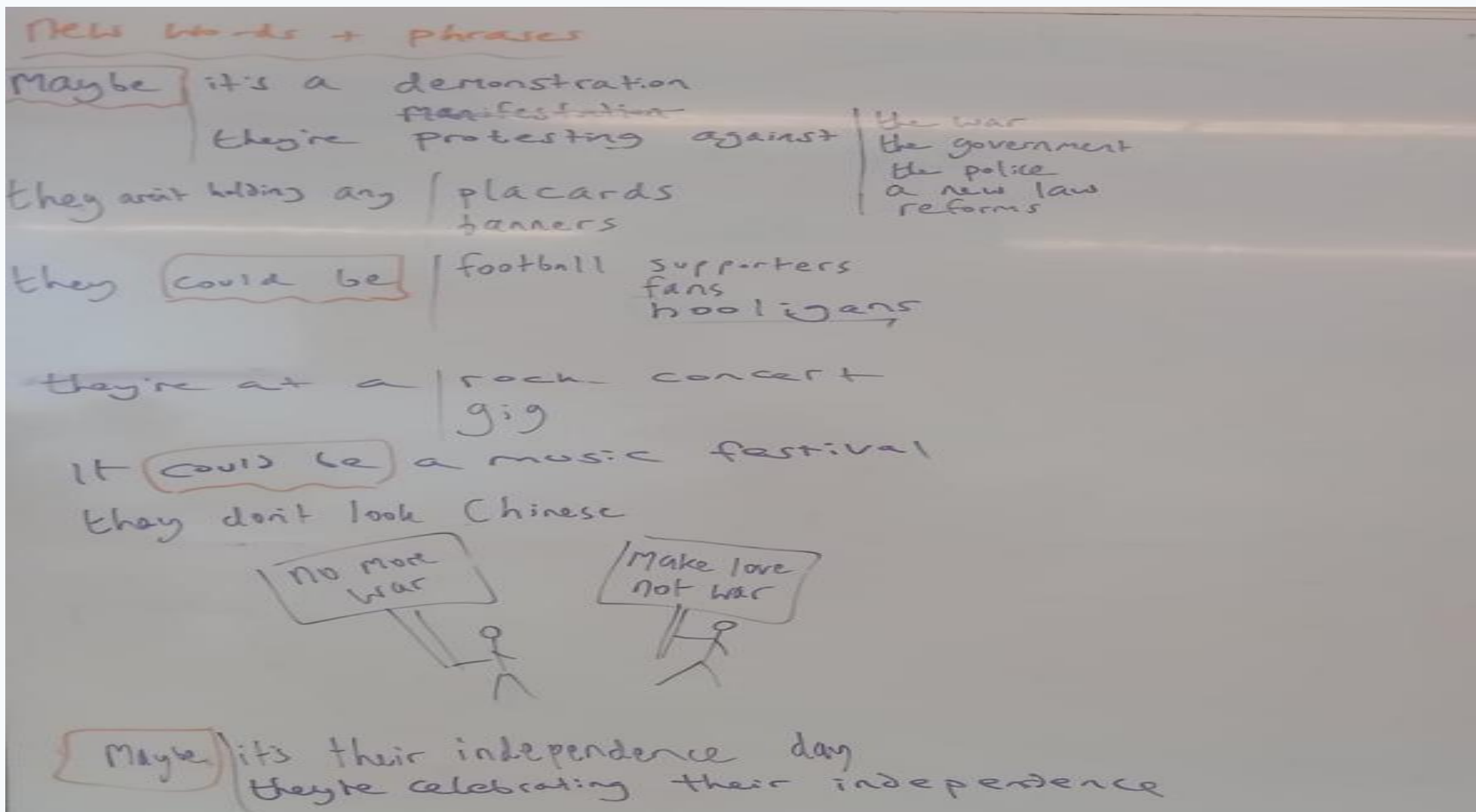


Input on language for speculating

- Maybe it's a | demonstration
 | football match
- It could be | a traditional festival
 | their independence day
- I think they might be | football fans
 | football supporters
 | hooligans



Board at this stage





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**Watch the video.
Were your ideas
correct?**



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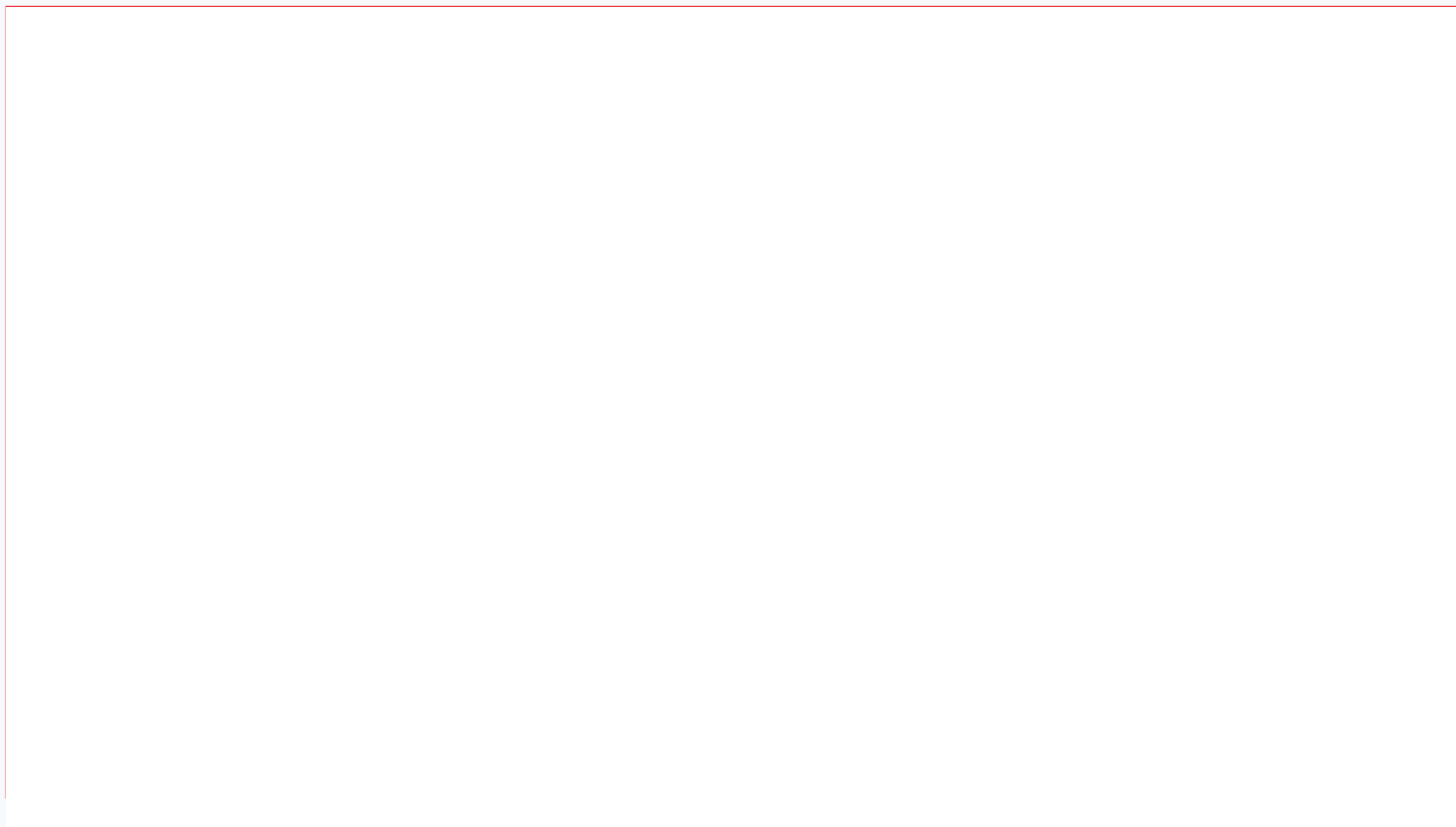
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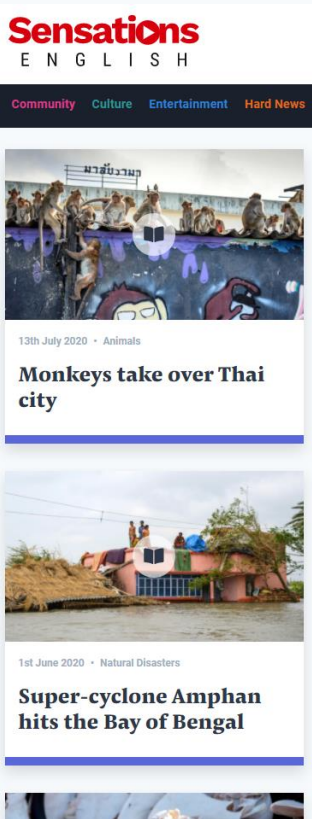
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Task: Would you like to go to this festival?



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Issue 3: What aspects of language/interaction should I focus on?





What would you prioritise?

- **Prioritising language that causes miscommunication/prioritising obvious gaps**
- **Choosing language or interactional skills relevant to the teaching context**
- **Focusing on repeated issues with the same or similar forms/repeated interactional issues**
- **Choosing language that is interesting or useful**
- **Focusing on high frequency language**
- **Recycling previously taught content**
- **Working with language influenced by the learner's L1**
- **Providing feedback on task specific language/interactional moves**



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**Look at the board at the end of the lesson.
What language has the teacher focused on?**





End of lesson

New words + phrases

Maybe it's a demonstration
manifestation
they're protesting against

they aren't holding any placards
banners

they could be football supporters
fans
hooligans

they're at a rock concert
gig

It could be a music festival

they don't look Chinese

Maybe it's their independence day
they're celebrating their independence

they tried to trap the spider
the roose

they try to grab the dragon's hair

It's crowded and rowdy
there's a lot of pushing and shoving

I would go if I had the time
I'd go if it was less rowdy
if I could be an actor
if there were more women.

It has the biggest basket in the world full of roses
The city is famous for perfume and beauty products
well-known for

EL from the listening

EL from Task 2

Prediction task



What would you prioritise?

- **Prioritising language that causes miscommunication/prioritising obvious gaps**
- ~~Choosing language or interactional skills relevant to the teaching context~~
- ~~Focusing on repeated issues with the same or similar forms/~~**repeated interactional issues**
- **Choosing language that is interesting or useful**
- **Focusing on high frequency language**
- ~~Recycling previously taught content~~
- **Working with language influenced by the learner's L1**
- **Providing feedback on task specific language/****interactional moves**



End of lesson

New words + phrases

Maybe it's a demonstration
manifestation
they're protesting against the war
the government
the police
a new law
reforms

they aren't holding any placards
banners

they could be football supporters
fans
hooligans

they're at a rock concert
gig

It could be a music festival

they don't look Chinese

It has the biggest basket in the world full of roses

The city is famous for perfume and beauty products
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Task specific language

Task specific language



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What can I do next?



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Gather data about your EL practices

- Take photos of your board and examine language choices
- Talk to other teachers
- Record yourself doing feedback on content or in interaction and note your moves, student uptake etc.
- Start a teaching journal to track your progress/identify your principles



What steps can I take?



Focus on genuine, meaningful interaction and pick up on content



Start listening out for and working with reformulations and extensions



Explore, monitor and develop your practices by gathering data



Start examining the beliefs underpinning the language you and your peers choose to focus on



Thanks very much!





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Chinn, R. & Norrington-Davies, D. (2023) Working with emergent language. Hove: Pavilion publishing

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References and useful reading

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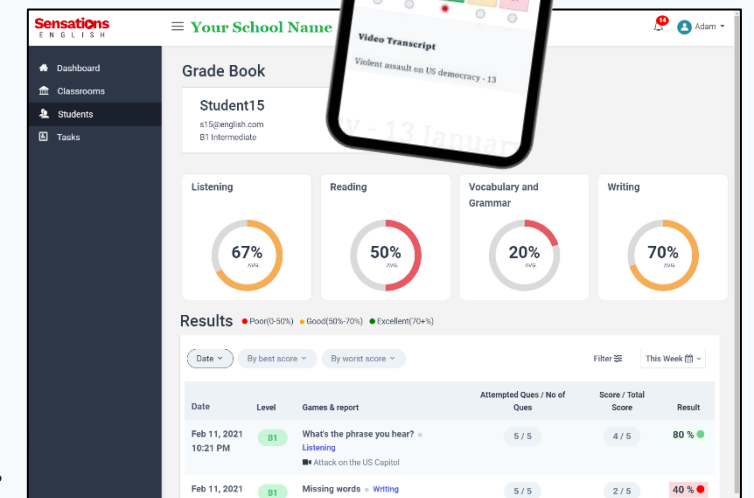
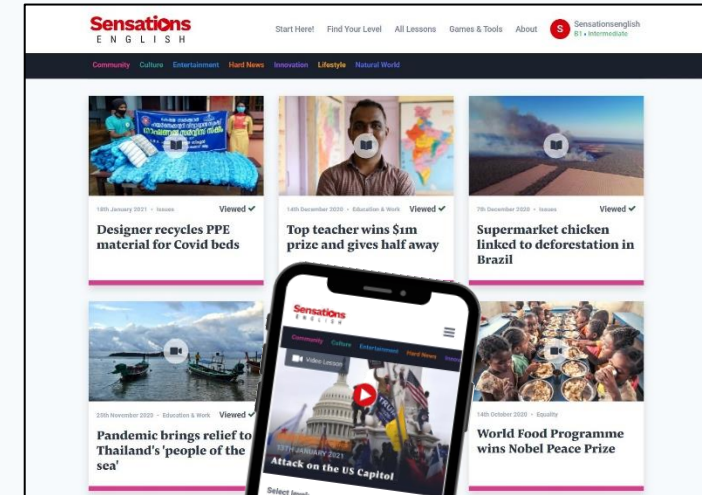
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