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**Cinema
Studies**

INSIDE FORTELL

Cinema Studies: The Pedagogical Shifts • Film Studies: Speaking of and for the discourse • Overcoming Learning Disability Challenges: A Case Study from Kendriya Vidyalaya • Of frames and framers • Using Literature to Develop Critical Thinking for Multiculturalism • The Story behind Words • Teaching Letter Writing to ESL Learners • Workshop on English Language Courses at the BA Programme Level • A Report on English Language Writing Workshop

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Readers' Response

- I enjoyed reading the article by Dr Trilok Ghai, 'Learning a Foreign Language: Gulliver's Way' (FORTELL, Jan 2012, issue 23) in which he uses a key literary text, Gulliver's Travels to make one of the most significant points in language learning. This point comes towards the end when he lists down the strategies that Gulliver employs towards language learning and the factors that make Gulliver such a facile learner of language; in language learning, books are seldom employed and that there are no text books! Articles like this in FORTELL make this journal what it is: a discussion platform for innovative ideas that mate literature and language learning!

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From the Editorial Desk

One of the main endeavours of FORTELL is to highlight changing trends and practices in literature and language studies. Since new approaches are re-defining and re-contextualising the study of literature; it becomes imperative to analyze how popular fiction, media studies and cyber culture are impacting our approach to literary works. Increasingly, popular literature, including science fiction, detective thrillers and romances, is being incorporated into the syllabi of various Universities across the country thereby questioning the relevance of the established canonical texts that were once considered sacrosanct. Pedagogical tools are also becoming more explorative and examples from popular media are often used in classrooms to explicate points to students in classrooms, often a teacher's first point of entry into a text being a discussion of its screen adaptation. The focus of this issue of FORTELL is on Cinema Studies. The centenary celebrations of Indian Cinema have begun and the theme of the 20th Delhi World Book Fair held from February 25 to March 4, 2012 was Indian Cinema which generated lot of interest. 'Amateur analysis' is part of layman's experience of film watching. Film watching itself is being redefined with digital media. While early scholarship in Cinema Studies was essentially interdisciplinary in nature and literature is just one of the disciplines that it draws upon, the discipline has evolved and has its own vocabulary, tools and methodologies. As a popular medium, its impact and reach is astoundingly influential and we need to be conscious of its standing as an independent academic discipline while acknowledging its interdisciplinarity. Three papers in the issue deliberate upon the various complexities of Cinema Studies and the multiple approaches and directions that pedagogy and research take. Dr. Saugata Bhaduri's thought-provoking interview engages with the issue as well and also makes interventions on several contemporary debates related to interface between literature and language studies, decanonization and innovation in Higher Education. We hope that you enjoy reading the issue and that it generates discussion about Cinema Studies. We would love to have your feedback and your suggestions about other areas that you would like us to focus on in future.

Rachna Sethi and Ruchi Kaushik, Guest Editors



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- The Editorial and 'Inclusive Education' by CN Singh in the last issue of FORTELL attracted my attention most because of the recent incident faced by Jeeja Ghosh, who has Cerebral palsy and was forced to disembark from a flight by the pilot and Ms Anjali Agarwal with reduced mobility, who was not provided a wheel chair makes the strongest case for inclusive education in our schools. Concept of inclusive education at school level is a practical one that would ideally serve to integrate special needs children into society and foster understanding and acceptance of these special people. 'Abuzz with Business' by Iqbal Judge is a deep insight into class room teaching at school level too. Indeed Letter Writing can be made fun by using letters from banks, clubs and hotels as teaching material and making the children respond accordingly. Role play is an appropriate activity for Formative assessment.

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Cinema Studies: The Pedagogical Shifts

Divya Bajpai Jha

Cinema Studies became a full-fledged discipline of academic studies in the 1950s itself and by the 70s the first PhDs in this field made their appearance. Still, in spite of a considerable past as a field of academic enquiry, it is not uncommon to find a certain lack of understanding and appreciation of its contours and concerns even in academia. Most students of Cinema Studies can narrate incidents when their admission of pursuing a PhD in this discipline has met with smirks. There is a mistaken perception that to opt for Cinema Studies is only to indulge the film buff in you – as if it is to opt out of academic rigour and choose a soft option instead. With the Cultural Studies turn in Humanities, cinema increasingly became a site and a tool for hardcore academic and pedagogical enquiry. However, the most commonly voiced grouse of students of Cinema Studies against their counterparts in Humanities and Social Sciences is that the latter tend to treat cinema only as a text. Such an approach leads to the textual analysis of a film through theories like semiotics, psychoanalysis, feminism etc. Such an analysis, though useful in itself, tends to suspend evaluation and appreciation of the film itself and tends to use the film as a tool or a site to validate the chosen theory. Indeed, this eliding of the film and the text overlooks the crucial difference between the two.

If text is understood as a body of language, then it is something which is all of one material, it is determinable and objective. Cinema, on the other hand, is not all of one material. Nor can all the material of cinema be called 'language'. And yet, as Andrei Bazin points out that Cinema is also a language. One of its chief attractions is the evanescent character of its form which continuously defies determination. Finally, as opposed to being an object, cinema can at best be described as a process that exists in and can be explained through the encounters between the director and the various elements working in and around the film – be it the forces of the industry, the limitations of technology, the perceived expectations of the viewers, economic factors, issues of stardom, socio-cultural indices, to name just a few. To treat cinema only as a 'text' is, therefore, to infinitely limit the possibilities of its analysis.

How such a practice gained currency, especially among non-Cinema Studies academics, is not far to see. It has its precursors in the newly emerging field of Cinema Studies itself. The first students to arrive to study cinema were trained in disciplines like literature, art history, theatre,

music etc. They had virtually no knowledge of the process of cinematic production and the various variables thereof. Public screenings of films at the cinemathèques, museums and festivals were the only options available for film access. The cinema viewing experience was by and large limited to a single viewing and hence the subsequent analysis was largely dependent on recollection. Many finer nuances of the film were thus lost due to the limited exposure to the film itself. There was no organized archive of data and material available and the bibliography of the discipline itself was in a nascent stage, with only a few general film studies and single film analyses available. The absence of a vocabulary of cinema as well as a theoretical framework of its own meant that a cross-disciplinary analytical technique was the only option available for analysis. The cinema criticism of this time shows ample evidence of this tension – the desire to establish the specificity of cinema as an academic discipline while using a vocabulary and theoretical framework borrowed from neighboring disciplines.

Slowly a vocabulary for cinema emerged. As the discipline became institutionalized, the influx of students saw a happy mix of those trained in allied fields as well as those coming in with a background of film production. These brought in their intimate knowledge of the medium and the components thereof. Cinema criticism thus moved on from mere analysis of the narrative elements to an intimate engagement with the pro-filmic elements on the one hand and the cinematographic elements on the other. This was *mise-en-scène* analysis, a French term that is applied to the film's visual phenomenon. Andrew Dix defines the pro-filmic elements as those contents of a film's visual field that are considered to exist prior to and independent of the camera's activity: precisely the attributes of setting, props, costume, lighting and acting. To this list, endorsed by such cinema studies giants as David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, John Gibbs adds those elements pertaining specifically to cinematography, namely, framing, camera movement, the particular lens employed and other photographic decisions. Needless to say, the awareness and acknowledgement of the material presence of the camera as well as the other pro-filmic devices in the filmic process greatly altered the previously held assumptions of character, narrative, ideology, realism etc. of the film.

Likewise, attention was also paid to the other elements of cinema's stylistics, namely editing and soundtrack. Theories of editing came into

existence and these owed to other disciplines as wide ranging as musicology (S.M.Eisenstein) and linguistics (Christian Metz). Sound analysis too, gained ground. Roughly speaking, soundtrack in a film traditionally comprised of four elements, speech, including dialogue and voice-over, music, sound effects and silence. These are now usually assigned to either of the two cinematic categories, viz, diagetic sound i.e. sound which is part of the narrative world of the film and non- diagetic sound, that which is clearly not being produced in the on- screen space of the film.

Newly emerging scholarship of Cinema Studies, thus, took into account all these stylistic and technical elements, which in turn greatly influenced and altered cinema studies as a discipline. This was made possible by a variety of factors. Institutionalization of the discipline, development of discipline specific research tools and terminology, the advent of cinema trained research scholar, the arrival of videotape and later the DVD formats resulting in large scale availability of the film, thereby encouraging close analysis and repeat viewing, increased interest in archiving cinema and cinematic material – all these factors contributed to the concretization of a specific discipline. The result was a rigorous and exponential advancement in the field – cinema was now being studied through the genres formed, through nationalities and regions, through stars and their cinematic stardoms, through economic and industrial variables, through ideologies, through spectators and consumption patterns, through reception and sites of cinematic dissemination, to name a few.

Several theories of Cinema emerged and gained currency and prominence at different times. The ‘Apparatus Theory’ focused on the ideological effect of the cinematic apparatus on the spectator. The ‘Auteur’ debates, on the other hand focused on the issues of authorship in cinema. Over the years, the auteur debates have variously positioned the director, the production house, the cinematographer, or the writer as the author of the film. The decline of Auteurism in the 1980s and 1990s shifted the focus of cinema studies to what is generally regarded as the ‘Grand Theory’ turn in it. The Grand Theory had a suspicion of the auteur and instead focused on the semiological, Marxist, psychoanalytical and feminist reading of the filmic text. However, the last decade has seen a re- emergence of the study of auteurism in cinema. This is amply supported by the cinephile turn in film theory which proposes to include both the technical details like shot size, composition, lighting etc. and the expressive qualities of the film emerging from this technique.

The brief and somewhat sketchy description of the career of Cinema Studies is by no means a

teleological survey of the field as most of these developments were often overlapping and feeding into each other. The advent of digital technology, on the other hand, has marked a paradigm shift not only in the making and dissemination of cinema but also of our understanding of the various co-ordinates of its scholarship. David Bordwell’s mischievous coinage of SLAB theory, after the initials of Saussure, Lacan, Althusser and Barthes and its resultant amalgamation of semiotics, psychoanalysis, Marxism and textual study has now given way to multiple conceptual frameworks. Film makers too, have responded to the new medium in various ways. While the digital medium is indispensable for the new film making that is characterized by speed, spontaneity, lightness of touch and ease of revision, the flip side is losses of the tactile connect with the celluloid and its alluring charms. The generally utopist vision of the progressiveness of this new technology is, similarly fraught with dangers. In an increasingly technologically overpopulated and over -dependent world that we live in, it is worthwhile to be aware of the fact that just as the technology provides us – film makers and cinema scholars - an opportunity to manipulate it to our ends, so are we in danger of being manipulated. Cinema Studies lies firmly at the cusp of the opposing pulls of scholarship and the teaching of the discipline. Scholarship in the discipline is still firmly allied to the traditional printed form while the teaching of this discipline is increasingly taking recourse to production and practice based pedagogy. The need of the hour, in my view is to be aware of the systems of power and control nascent in the digital world as we negotiate for a new shift in the discipline in view of this digitally enhanced environment.

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Overcoming Learning Disability Challenges: A Case Study from Kendriya Vidyalaya

Nirmala Gupta

Introduction

One of the pitfalls of globalization is that the educational challenges have become more serious and complex consequently leading to students getting trapped in a web of learning disabilities. Thus exploring innovative instructional strategies and adapting new methodologies to assist students suffering from various learning disabilities and to help them adjust well in the mainstream is of paramount importance for contemporary teachers.

Case Study of a K.V. Student

Yash, a six year old student, studying in the first grade at Kendriya Vidyalaya, Agra seemed to be drastically different from other children in his class. He lacked expression, preferred his own company and always appeared frustrated and bewildered by the whole range of activity based teaching that he was exposed to. Yet, surprisingly enough, Yash appeared to be totally normal and well- behaved outside the classroom. Moreover, he showed confidence in performing all his classroom activities without any hindrance. It was soon brought to the notice of the teachers that Yash was suffering from learning disabilities including dyslexia. Little did we know that he was not only coping with learning disabilities but also bearing the burden of emotional turmoil that perhaps resulted in the discrepancy between his performance in classroom and his actual intellectual abilities.

During the initial phases of the Readiness Programme, Yash demonstrated difficulty in coping with the classroom situations but subsequently, he started to adjust. Soon it was discovered that Yash was unusually slow in reaching the developmental milestone; he seemed to be struggling with the alphabet and was constantly getting confused with letters like b and d, g p and q and copying from the board seemed to be a herculean task for him. At a later stage, though showing some signs of improvement, he still made frequent spelling mistakes and constructed sentences while omitting several words in it. His writing was totally messy with an inordinate mixture of upper and lower cases. Yash's reading was slow paced and lacked fluency. In fact, Yash's horror during the exams was humungous enough to make the boy merely

copy the questions on the worksheets! The child felt helpless.

Experimentation

Sensing Yash's plight, I felt that if I could modify my teaching according to his requirements; make it interesting by designing tasks that suited his special needs and carry them out in a way and at a pace that he was comfortable with, the boy would certainly show improvement. Thus, I conducted certain experiments which I summarize below:

1. A print-rich environment

One important intervention for a student like Yash was to provide him a colorful classroom comprising a display board, a creative corner with art materials such as crayons and markers where he would let go of his inhibitions and feel excited to explore on his own.

2. Oral drilling

Yash caught momentum in the learning process by reciting melodious rhymes, through LCD, tape- recorders, active motion and mime.

3. Identification of the Alphabet through multi-sensory techniques

Yash was made to reverse 'd' and 'b'; 'g', 'q' and 'p'. To make him understand the problem of b and d, striking visuals were designed. Teaching him with hand postures seemed to be a successful experiment. Also, practicing letters on the carpet and then with a sidewalk chalk on the board (sidewalk chalk forced him to write big) made the concepts clear to him.



Using multisensory approach proved to be innovative and made learning easier and faster. I prepared some flash cards out of sandpaper containing letters and instructed Yash to run his fingers over those letters in order to give him a strong tactile memory.

4. Activity hopscotch

I felt that some outdoor activity would break the monotony of learning and would stimulate Yash. Therefore, he was asked to jump and run in between a few boxes with alphabet drawn inside. He had to jump into the correct box when the order was set.



5. Reading story books or reading cards

When Yash was introduced to the colorful pictorial illustrations from story books, the result was astonishing. He attempted to make up some imaginary story using the illustrations, bearing no relation to the text. Yash had the aptitude to read the passage from the book in small chunks of sentences as they were short and printed in big sized letters. Short and easy passages made reading more conducive for Yash.

6. Using technology

An extraordinary thing in Yash was that he was computer savvy and was excited at using the computer in the resource room. Playing with the key board became a passion for him and he ultimately started recognizing all the letters accurately with correct pronunciation. He could also narrate incidents and stories well after seeing them on the computer screen. The use of calculators, word processors and audio tape recorders too proved helpful. He learnt to record his own voice subsequently listened to it with attention.

7. Imaginary activities like fly away feelings

A meditation activity was introduced for Yash to improve his concentration level. He was asked to sit quietly with his eyes closed and imagine the sound of water ripples. Other thought provoking images included imagining colored balloons drifting down from the sky, choosing a balloon, untying its knot and letting all the air out. Later on, asking him to imagine exuding feelings like sadness, anger, and fear into the balloon and watch it float away. By providing Yash an opportunity to overpower his own imaginary skills and feelings helped generate self- confidence in him which subsequently enabled him to speak more in the classroom.

8. Acting, miming, drama and role play

In order to make Yash more vibrant in the class, activities like role- playing, dramatization, miming games, matching and guessing games were focused on. Employing drama and indulging in dramatic activities made a dull child like Yash transform into an active and lively person. They also helped him in using the language resources creatively and thus enhanced his linguistic abilities. He was gradually but strongly motivated to utilize his spoken skills in a much better way.

9. Helping with the blackboard

Special time had to be taken out for Yash as he was struggling to cope with difficulties related to reading and copying from the black board. To begin with, he was made to sit in the front row. Moreover, using different colored chalks for each line, writing the letters clearly and in bold helped him to concentrate better and figure out what had been written on the board.

10. Solutions for difficulty in counting backwards

Yash was facing a difficulty with counting especially counting backwards. In order to overcome this problem, I made him practice counting aloud from 0 to 100. This was done with the aid of 100 marbles which he would put into a bowl when counting up to 100 and then would take them out one at a time when counting backwards. This activity enabled him to correlate and understand that the number he was saying represented the number of marbles in the bowl, i.e. 97 in the bowl, when he'd got 3 in the hand. He was also given a lot of practice with rote counting -10, 20, 30 ... 100, and then 5,10,15,20 ... 100. Now, he is quite confident with sums that require him to place the numbers in ascending order.

11. Encouraging peer learning

Yash's response to comprehending tasks and showing willingness to finish them was overwhelming when he was put into a group. His learning trajectory became more meaningful and constructive. Observations from this experiment showed that students like Yash can show tremendous improvement when supported by motivating and sympathetic classmates. For example a reading group activity that was quite successful was as follows: some sight words were written in a 'Word Wall' filled with words. Yash repeated the word again as he selected it and wrote it on a piece of paper and prepared a word pictorial book. This process was experimented through the peer learning technique and worked well.

Reflection

Seeing himself in a new light can be a turning point for a child and this new-born self-confidence laid the foundation for a special kind of learning for Yash as he struggled to improve his language skills that his fellow pupils found so much easier to acquire. All the teachers noted the improvement in his classroom performance. Perhaps the most rewarding progress had been in his self-esteem.

Conclusion

Some fun loving activities made Yash more responsive and helped in inculcating lifelong learning skills in him. There was a remarkable change in his behaviour and attitude brought about by the pivotal role played by his teachers and peers. Praising him from time to time and giving

him small incentives worked wonders. The key words in this experiment were a positive outlook, patience and perseverance.

Academically speaking, Yash still has a long way to go to catch up with his peers. But it is not and cannot be an over-night change. His learning accomplishments will yield further results only if he is constantly nurtured with care and affection. A few words of praise, some sparkling stars and smileys, some positive comments scribbled on his notebook are some of the non-academic certificates and medals that we can award to Yash. Perhaps, these will be the only medals and certificates he will ever get in his school time but they will, undoubtedly, play a significant role in his life - in boosting his confidence to excel despite all odds.



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Film Studies: Speaking of and for the discourse

Ravneet Kaur

Living amidst infinite media images, isn't it natural for us to accept the presence of these clusters of images without questioning what they intend to convey? We are intrigued by the way these images affect our beliefs, ideologies, desires, aspirations and many other obvious levels of consciousness yet how far do we approach them without any prior notions of familiarity? The last few decades of excessive accessibility to global visual media and with the general tendency towards casual 'seeing' on rise, call for visual literacy is seeping into Indian academia through various intellectual exercises. There is no dearth of research papers on popular media including cinema by M.Phil. students of Delhi University. However, the need to introduce Film Studies as an independent subject for undergraduate and postgraduate students is yet to be realized. It is not hard to speak of infrastructural and administrative problems that might incur, before and after the subject is implemented, what is difficult here, is to debunk the myths that happen to circulate around the implementation of the subject. What is the most grievous part of the matter is that many other Indian Universities like Jadavpur University seem to have surpassed these myths. Introduction of Film Studies for B.A. Application course has been much appreciated, though, the experimental nature of its syllabi construction is still problematic. It has been quite a while that the course was introduced

as an option for third year students, Deshbandhu College being the first to implement it. After numerous efforts being made by Institute of Life Long Learning in the direction of promoting the course, the situation remains bleak. It would not be wrong to say that the syllabi makers, teachers and the students, all share similar apprehensions when we bring forth a new course in university curriculum; content, pedagogy and thereafter professional and the career probabilities.

While I taught Film Studies as an optional course to the handful of BA final year students of my college who had no background to media studies or literature in general, I was surprised at their responses. In my orientation lectures I was often confronted with the similar question asked with elusive naivety, 'Why do we need to study Films?' Initially, I was slightly uncomfortable with the question, but isn't it true that all pervasiveness of filmic experience somehow limits our understanding of the need of comprehending films as a knowledge form. I knew a theoretical lecture may not suffice as an answer to the students. I found that most of them had seen Chaplin's classic film *Modern Times* at some point in their childhood. Much prior to their 1930s film history class, I chose to screen the film as their first visual experience in the classroom. Students were extremely skeptic initially, speculating as to why Chaplin, a comic hero is included in their curriculum. As expected,

most of the students were bursting with laughter. More importantly, they began to pick up the social nuances embedded in the comic satire which they had failed to notice when they saw the film years ago. Having studied History and Political Science, they effortlessly probed into the Marxist implications of the filmic text, located in the period of Great Depression in America. They also appreciated Chaplin's genius and his exemplary understanding of the silent medium. Soon they were engaged in exploring the thematic and cinematic representations that the film has to offer. The first battle was won. They were ready to learn to comprehend what they have seen earlier and eager to explore new ways of doing that.

The anxiety of the students while they opt for this 'new' course is explicitly connected with the underrated perceived value of the course at the undergraduate level. None the less, in a short span of enrolling in the course I have seen students acknowledging the worth of the subject. But the situation is much grimmer than it is talked about. Apart from two other colleges, in the past few years, none of the colleges took up this course. Besides, most of these colleges had to stop the course for reasons that were never addressed later on; the course faces acute marginalization. We need to enquire into the factors that have delayed the introduction of Film Studies as a degree course in itself when within the university circle there seems to be a desire to be literate in visual media. By keeping Cinema Studies as a reserved forum of research for the privileged-research scholars or professors in this case, aren't we shutting options for the young students who would like to study the subject? Regressing into a submissive frame of reference, the current Application course calls for a wider perspective to sustain itself and develop further. And I suggest that before we commit ourselves to reformation of any kind in this regard, we need to be vigilant about the framework of canon formation in the Film Studies courses and understand the ways in which the elaboration of subject will work as a discourse, thereby, determined by the cultural imperatives.

Spanning over a century, world cinema both in popular and marginal forms offers a complex and massive history of theory and practice to be taught. Film courses worldwide have undergone transformation of canons over the past few decades, and thus extended the parameters of analysis and have emerged as a dominant discourse to interrogate the representation of race, class, gender, sexuality, nationalism, etc within

the context of respective cultures. A delayed initiative of regulating Film Studies courses implies absence of speculation on those moments of cultural transformations that would have contributed to the evolution of the course itself. On the other hand, it is even more hazardous if a hasty framework of such courses falls into trap of merely imitating western model of canons without any inquiry. While the intellectual import in the context of film reading and the viewership is regularly noted by the research scholars and film critics, an institutionalized course would ensure mass participation on the part of the student population with respect to the visual literacy that I have pointed out earlier. As with lot of other courses in Delhi University we struggle to sustain a conventional looking, lengthy beginner's course; we end up traumatizing students with a lengthy module with an honest intention of introducing them to new paradigms of knowledge.

Since Film Studies is a discipline that proposes multiple avenues of research, the selection of introductory course content is in itself a tricky task. A mere introduction to the study of history of cinema in relation to the various movements such as Italian neo-realism, French new-wave, Indian new-wave, and so on accounts for a thorough reading of the cultural, political and historical mechanisms that provide context to the production and reception of these films. The briefest introduction to the technological aspects of filmmaking that is required to understand the fundamental way in which film image is produced includes study of elements like camera movements and angles, editing and sound. Classification of genres is another important section that can not be overlooked. To incorporate a section on Indian film history with significant moments like that of early developments and reputed filmmakers like Guru Dutt, Bimal Roy, Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, and so on is as tempting as inclusion of contemporary filmmakers such as Wongkar Wai and Almodovar. In such a case, a curriculum of the course especially, an introduction course, not only runs the risk of including excessive content, even teaching the course may suffer from over-enthusiasm, thereby perplexing students. It is extremely important for the curriculum designers and the teacher to dissociate themselves from an obsession with the subject. The sheer anxiety to share the love for a subject can easily seep into confused teaching.

Most of the Film Studies teaching polarizes the two aspects of filmic discourse- formal/aesthetic merits and socio-ideological value. A teacher

may approach film texts like a historicist and be interested in the intrinsic development of cinema and its aesthetic parameters at various historical junctures or may perceive cinema as a representation of social reality, focusing on the issues and debates that it entails; it is important for a teacher to introduce the beginners' course with an equal emphasis on both. To notice the slightest camera movement that occurs in the early film, *The Life of an American Fireman* (1903) was equally thrilling for my students as to see how *Voyage to the Moon* (1902), a 13 minute film is no less poignant than any of the contemporary full length sci-fi films in its ideological value. A teleological study of the early developments of cinema can never go wrong with the beginners. Along with the major developments incurring shifts from short duration to full length feature, from silent cinema to sound, and from black and white to color, changes in camera movements with passing years, arrest students' mind while studying film history.

Both film watching and film teaching is notoriously loaded with the notions of pleasure. While many students, who enroll in the course, presuppose a definitive idea of pleasure vis-à-vis film watching, it is imperative to maneuver strategies to facilitate them towards a fresh perspective towards viewing. A theoretical understanding of a cinematic movement must synchronise with the spontaneous analysis provided by students in the classroom. I noticed students with no prior background of literature or visual arts bringing in their honest responses to the films, providing immediacy and novelty. At the same time, their observations were generally journalistic in nature, recording details of the mis-en-scene that were helpful in making connections across different cinematic movements. No wonder, film teaching is afflicted as it is with connotations of pleasure, is often in danger of getting reduced into a conflict with the students' likings and interest. A teacher might feel enormously gratified after screening the most loved shot of a film, with a prior perception of the 'greatness' so well imbibed through years of reading about it and probably having it discussed over several times in seminars and conferences. On the contrary, students' response might be disastrous and shocking and may pass it as a monotonous or simply label it as a bad film. What gets overlooked here is that a teacher's prolonged affiliation with the subject and her notion of pleasure cannot rationally match those of beginners whose idea of entertainment being

a construct of familiar apparatuses cannot change overnight. The quantum of familiarity that students relate to while watching popular cinema can be methodically dealt with, and can be held as a stratagem to explain to them structures that authorize the order of pleasure of a spectator in a given context. Thus, a model of self reference can be used to address the paradox, bringing students out of a closet of assumptions. For instance, 'montage', a popular formal element, used liberally in Hindi cinema and television, a much recognizable element for students is a locus of argument around shot and the cut and shot versus cut in Film Studies. The students gradually learn about montage as an ideological tool, a cinematic equivalent of dialectical materialism that provided form to Eisentein's films such as *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), *Stacha* (1924) and *October* (1927). The subject becomes really interesting for students when they make connections between popular films like *Mother India* and the Odessa sequence of *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). The discussions on the binaries of melodrama and realism as cinematic modes, and the work of various filmmakers where one mode is chosen over the other have determined the way films have been made; the choice between montage and long take-deep focus have changed the way people perceived the cinematic image. The similar arguments regarding form can be further extended to the teaching of European films vs Hollywood films, where the former chose to use Bazin's aesthetics and the latter institutionalized continuity style, popularly adopted by Indian cinema. Although there are no defined methodologies to study, read or teach films, yet several connectors and linkages vis-à-vis technology, form and issues across cultures and time periods help understand world cinema and the influences whatsoever. A democratic approach to the teaching of course seeks attention of the students to the diverse range of opinions that this course proposes to reflect.

While a series of problems afflict the existing Film Studies course, we are being sluggish about the addressable issues. On the one hand, Indian film scholars have been substantially articulate about the paradigmatic shifts vis-à-vis Indian Film making and their spectatorship, on the other, film education is struggling for expression in academics. It is in the scholars' reassessment of the issues of national identity, gender and sexuality that readings of narrative traditions vis-à-vis Indian viewership and hierarchies of marketing strategies are evoked. Clearly, it isn't soon that the role of this course will be realized with a

sense of commitment; it seems to be suffering in neglect like other subjects in humanities. I wish I could share mere joy of filmic experience with my friends who remain more content with the Filmic culture that our city inhabits than my moaning over academic nexus and Film Studies affair. Excited to hear about this year's theme of the Book Fair, 'Indian cinema', I went to the theme pavilion and saw that it was gleaming with posters of Old Hindi Films, oozing nostalgia and desire. Several old cinema books bought from NFAI shone through wooden racks, seeking attention of almost everybody who passed by. Talk sessions by Javed Akhtar and Fahrukh Sheikh reiterated

the stories of magical 'Bollywood' industry. While I was engrossed in my usual thoughts looking at the books on the shelves for my college library, I happened to register the word 'roti' in a dialogue that I heard coming from the speakers behind me. Immediately I gathered it was the last sequence of *Uski Roti* a film by Mani Kaul, a rare screening indeed. Soon I was sitting amongst the handful of audience, all thoughts and reflections about syllabus, pedagogy and ideological debates receded to the background, as I sat sharing and absorbing the all pervasive silence and darkness of the film.

Of frames and framers

'I am not sure, I thought of that while making the film!'

-Noted Indian Filmmaker, Osian Cinefan Film Festival, 2009

I

The emergence of Cinema Studies can be traced to a pastiche form of critical viewing wherein the 'reader' of the film-text would borrow from various disciplines including art, critical linguistics, psycho analytics and history to interpret and de-construct the various visual and aural signs whose interplay creates cinema. In fact, the discipline has famously been referred to as the bastard child of Humanities.

Contemporary Cinema Studies, however, emerges from the shadows to bridge the gap between 'film theory' which involved close reading of texts and 'film history' which looked upon film as an archival resource. Today, the discipline boasts of a robust literature and its own analytics that range from description of technical features (shot, line, length, and duration), strategies of representation (absence, presence, mise-en-scène), genre (form, content, technology) and narratives (perspective, orientation, motivation).

Even more rigorous than the rhetorical analyses of literary texts Cinema Studies seeks to critique the materiality of cinematic texts. The haptic, optic and the resultant aesthetic are prolifically being considered and probed. The eye is said to fulfill 'non-optical functions' of sense, texture and immersion and Cinema Studies chronicles these moments of identification and their connotations. Further, objects and cultural artifacts (including production design) as well as creation and

reinvention of physical spaces on screen inform the repertoire of many ongoing studies. The material conditions of the production of a film also form a critical component of its analysis in Cinema Studies. 'Text' and 'context' are especially useful constructs with which to begin/ base one's readings (up)on because genre and content are dynamically derived from and impacted by auteurism and the modes of production and distribution be it animation films, documentaries, multiplex cinema or art house films.

Further, the emergence of digital cultures has had a huge impact on the reception and reading of cinema. Re-mixes have given way to reconstructions and adaptations form a large component of thematic organization. Use of technology while rendering constructedness 'invisible' is, consequently, an important aspect of exploration in Cinema Studies. In addition, genre theory or classification on the basis of stock aesthetics, formats and plotlines has come to recognize auto-documentary and narratives of self as important and legitimate categories of classification and study. This diversification has meant that correlational studies are increasingly more viable and productive as critiques.

II

In a Cinema Studies class, 'film' is not just looked upon as a resource but a source of meanings which are read deeply and differently across audiences. Film interpretation like all qualitative studies therefore adheres to some priori-codes while at the same time allowing space for grounded coding depending on the specific filmic text being studied. These priori codes can loosely be classified as:



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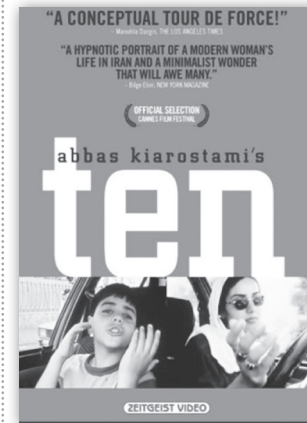
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- **Genre:** Ideological and aesthetic orientation, and orientation to a presentation style
- **Cinematography:** Camera angles, movement and elements of mise-en-scène
- **Distribution and reception matrix:** Film as a historical document vis-à-vis the audiences/ auteurs, technological parameters and distribution formats
- **Thematic analysis:** Tropes and themes, authorial intent, metaphors, symbols and points of view
- **Audio-design:** Diegetic and non-diegetic elements and their interplay
- **Production design:** Art, décor and costume design including location and spaces
- **Editing:** Pace, structure, montages and continuity (conformed or departure)
- **Graphics and CGI:** Aesthetic, thematic and experiential impact

Additionally, it is equally important to identify and examine the sub-texts of the filmic presentation in terms of opposition, reinforcement and even augmentation of meta-structures. Often the presence of other forms of popular culture – posters, music, video games and news media provides a parallel to real life events or ideological resistance to the form itself. A study of these may contribute to the grounded coding and subsequent analysis depending on the constructs one is viewing the film through – architecture, gender, state, auteurism, culture or form.

In his film *Ten* (2002), the Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami literally uses ten scenes to showcase the conflicted relationship between a woman driver who is undergoing a divorce and her young son. A ‘woman in charge of the wheels’ is not just a situational setting but is also perhaps the underlying motivation of the film. Kiarostami’s filmography is experimental and here the series of jump-cuts effectively portrays the socio-economic landscape of Iran and the varied roles that women play. The narrative ‘travels’ as does the woman driver as she questions her son’s rejection of her after her divorce with his father. While the theme of the film lends itself to a gender-based study, the politics of production including the biographical nature of the film, use of untrained actors and videography via consumer video cameras can perhaps broaden the scope of the study. A historical contextualization in terms of form is also possible by exploring similarities with European Cinema (New-Wave) which formalized the use of jump cuts and challenged classical continuity. Analyses can therefore be along varied

axes: characterization, themes, physical path of the journey, space, sexuality, aesthetics, form etc.



Official poster of *Ten* (2002)

III

Cinema Studies is a ‘science of deconstruction’ since film is a source of varied registers of expression, including personal and communal histories. While exploring the historical and ideological associations of the cinematic product networks of creation, consumption and response are also considered. It also not uncommon for theorists to hold comparisons across regional registers when content or aesthetics are counterpoised or found to be comparable. Some even endeavour to delve into the specificities of creative production through reportage of directors’ and actors’ versions of the filmic text.

In the Indian context Cinema Studies has evolved from a study of ideological cinema and the construction of the nation in cinematic spaces to formal analysis of genres such as ‘middle cinema’, cultures of fandom and reclamation of the melodramatic genre. The indigenous movement examines cultural contexts of production of cinema including the global dialogue with Indian cinema in terms of co-production, visual cultures and representation. Memory, migration (national and regional), language, genre and geographies are popular leitmotifs of a number of cinema-studies initiatives. The copy-cat phenomenon and sub-genres is another emergent strand in academia which facilitates cross-industry comparisons and readings. Consolidation of the native Cinema Studies movement is therefore attendant considering how prolific film industries across India are.

IV

However, in addition to these attendant theoretical considerations, there is always the possibility of ‘over-reading’. One of the criticisms of the discipline is the act of imbuing the text greater

significance than originally intended. After all, 'a cigar may just be a cigar and nothing more!' When one is exploring relations of form and content there is always the question of attribution. How does one perceive and link thoughts with performance and perception with intention? The thumb rule would be to at least watch a second screening of the filmic text before retiring to one's desk and letting one's imagination run riot!

While meaning-making is a progressive act from a reception studies point of view, the formalization of the discipline/ subject also places upon the interpreter the responsibility to use a causal and explanatory stance while at the same time identifying and reading for audiences the structures of meaning and influence being created. The role of the Cinema Studies scholar as an intermediary should be enacted keeping in mind that inquiry should be grounded in cinematographic statements while employing ideological frameworks. Though cinematic enunciation cannot be read neutrally, diachronic readings must be rescued from the realm of conjecture and the symbolic should be interpreted as an intersection of technology, form, ideology and narrative. The fine balance, therefore, for any Cinema Studies scholar is between the vicissitudes of theory and the cinematic portrayal.

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Using Literature to Develop Critical Thinking for Multiculturalism

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Introduction

Multiculturalism as a value-response signifies celebrating and respecting cultural, racial, lingual, religious and ethnic diversity that exists in a society. But this also demands citizens who hold the courage of practicing these value-responses. Critical thinking, in this regard, becomes an effective means to sensitize young minds to intercultural concerns and to help them adapt multicultural attitudes. What form of education best engages with the learning of critical thinking for multiculturalism is a question that is answered when we integrate learning with literature education. Most educators agree that values, skills and attitudes cannot or should not be taught directly and thus be inculcated indirectly through literature. Since literature mirrors social realities, by studying the different thematic content available in literary texts, students learn

to analyze, form perspectives and critique socio-cultural issues. In fact, literature can play an instrumental role in preparing students to be tolerant to and appreciative of other cultures. This article is based on the field trial of a literature education lesson to appreciate cultural diversity through critical thinking.

In 1991, Pascarella and Terenzini compiled several definitions, stating that critical thinking 'typically involves the individual's ability to do some or all of the following: identify central issues and assumptions in an argument, recognize important relationships, make correct inferences, deduce conclusions from information provided, and evaluate evidence or authority' (p. 118). Critical thinking is best understood as the ability of thinkers to take charge of their own thinking and in education it calls on students to evaluate their own thought process (Kalman, 2002).

Critical thinking helps in the development of:

Table 1

1. Creative values
to develop:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative problem-solving • Critical analysis • Creative intelligence • Critical consciousness
2. Democratic values
to develop and strengthen:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict Management Skill • Freedom • Equality • Tolerance • Willingness to give and take, readiness to see the other's point of view, ability to adjust and work in a group.
3. Attitudes (Affective)
to combat and remove:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stereotypes • Biases • Discrimination • Over generalization
4. Social Psychological (Affective and cognitive)
to develop and strengthen:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acculturation • Cross-cultural interaction • Inter-cultural communication • Inter-cultural competence • Cultural awareness

Application

The following literary text was deliberately chosen to design multiple interesting tasks with the aim of honing students' critical thinking skills and multicultural understanding.

Apologize !

They closed in on him—three boys and one girl—silently, menacingly slow, with their hands deep inside the pockets of their jeans. The girl spoke first.

'It was him.' She pointed an accusing finger at the boy. 'He kicked me. Purposely, I am sure. He made me spill my lunch all over the place, and ran away leaving me to face the music.'

The boy stared at her, his face a mask of fear and concentration. He hadn't learned much English in the six months of his staying in New York, despite the special language classes for foreign students in the afternoons.

His fists clenched and unclenched nervously as he desperately searched for words. But all that came to him was a confused jumble of Iranian phrases. He backed away. His eyes darted around the empty schoolyard – nobody was in sight, not even the housekeeper.

'Look here, you bully!' The leader's words hit him like a lash. 'Teasing the girls, eh? Come on, apologize.'

The boy drew back.

'Proud? Eh?' another boy sneered. 'Too much to apologize? Proud of what, you potato?' He kicked the gravel, sending a hail of sharp pebbles flying at the boy.

The boy stared at the children, bewildered. 'No,' he murmured, 'no.'

'Apologize,' insisted the leader, jabbing his finger under the boy's chin. 'Come on, apologize.'

The boy's lips quivered. Shielding his face with his hands he retreated further.

'Apologize!' the girl echoed with a cruel smirk. 'Apologize! Or is it against your pride?'

The boy didn't answer. 'Speak up!' The leader struck the boy sharply on the shoulder.

'Apologize!'

Silence.

'Apologize!'

The boy didn't move. The next blow landed on his nose. It stung like a thousand needles. For a moment he thought he would cry. But he didn't. He wiped his face with the back of his sleeve. Anger burnt in him, hot and explosive. That frightened him.

'Come on,' one of them said. 'He's asking for it.'

They fell on him, pell-mell, punching him with knotted fists. Blows rained down on him—left—right—left....

'Hold it! Stop it!' a voice cracked like a whip. Strong hands grabbed the children by their collars and pulled them away. They stood there, shifting uncomfortably, avoiding the eyes of the tall boy in the blue and yellow sweat-shirt.

'What's going on here?' thundered Jackson, the captain of the school's football team. 'Why have you picked on him? All of you? This is not the way to settle an argument.' He looked sharply at the leader. 'Why were you thrashing him?'

'He...He..., 'stuttered the hefty boy 'He...He doesn't want to apologize.'

'You see,' cried the girl, 'he hit me hard. The least he can do is apologize. But he will not.'

The tall lad turned to the Iranian boy, looking at

him with dark, serious eyes.

‘Come on, boy,’ he said kindly. ‘Reach out a hand and apologize.’

The boy didn’t move. He stood there thin and tense, his brows knitted. His lips quivered.

‘Come on,’ urged Jackson. ‘Be a port. Apologize to these wild cats.’

The dark eyes of the Iranian boy filled with

misery. He swallowed hard.

‘Come on, boy, why don’t you?’

A dry sob broke from the boy’s lips. ‘No. No.’

‘Why not ? For God’s sake, why not ?’

‘Because,’ the boy’s voice rose. ‘Because I not know ‘apologize’. I no understand ‘apologize’. I speak little English – very little English. Please forgive!’

Task 1: Analyze the following questions. Give reasons for your answers. (Individual task)

(Note: Column 2 is for the understanding of teachers)

	1	2
	Questions	Types of Critical Thinking Skills
1.	Why did the girl accuse the Iranian boy? Do you justify the reason for accusing?	Observation & Analysis
2.	How did the girl and three boys behave with the Iranian boy? Is this a fair practice?	Analysis
3.	Do you think that the behavior done to the Iranian boy was insulting? Why?	Inference
4.	Why did the Iranian boy find difficult to understand English language? How would you behave to a person who is unknown to your native language?	Prediction, Analysis,
5.	What were the reasons of the misunderstanding between the group of students and the Iranian boy? Is it possible to avoid such misunderstanding and how?	Prediction, Analysis
6.	Do you think that the Iranian boy really wanted to harm the girl?	Analysis
7.	How should we behave with a foreigner or an unknown person?	Inference
8.	Is it fair to insult and ignore someone who does not belong to our culture or language?	Analysis & Inference

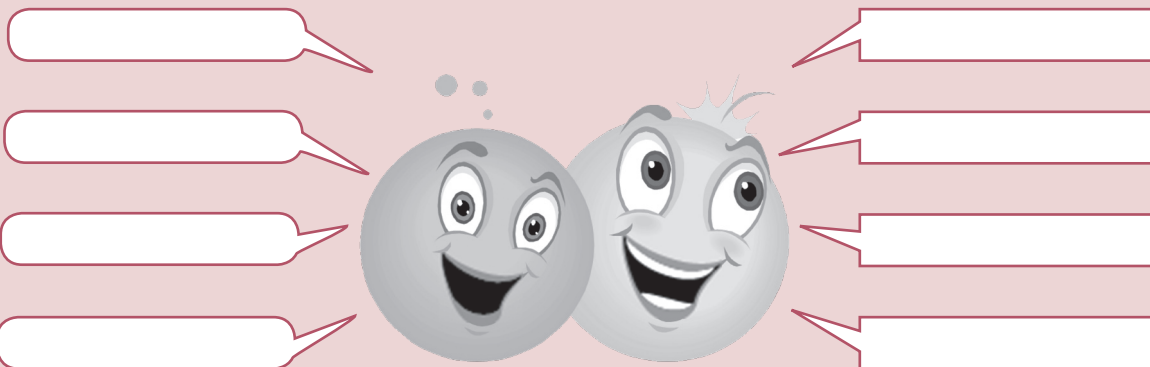
Task 2: Think and Write (Group task)

Given below are some situations taken from the text .Their ‘Cause’ and ‘Effect’ are given. Now, think about the situations and find out what solutions could have been more appropriate in avoiding the effects. Discuss your solutions with your classmates and teacher.

Cause	Situation	Effect	Solution
allegation	‘It was him..’ She pointed an accusing finger at the boy.	fear, shock	
insult	Look here, you bully! The leader’s words hit him like a lash.	indignity, torture	
zero-tolerance	They fell on him, pell-mell, punching him with knotted fists.	conflict, violence	
anger	The dark eyes of the Iranian boy filled with misery. He swallowed hard.	pain, distress	

Task 3 What according to you makes friendship stronger?

Work in pairs. Discuss with your friend and write them in the speech bubbles.



Task 4 Discussion

Recall an incident when you acted as a mediator to solve a problem between two friends with different socio-cultural backgrounds. Share the incident and your role in resolving the conflict with the class.

Task 5 What should you do?

Look at the situations and the behaviors. Tick the appropriate answers. There may be more than one appropriate answer for each.

1. When people from different cultures meet, they may find difficult to comprehend the characteristic of the one another's culture. This kind of situation is
 - a. common
 - b. problematic
 - c. natural
2. When a person is unable to understand our language. We should
 - a. avoid the person
 - b. try to make him understand patiently
 - c. understand that the person is unfamiliar with our language.
3. When a person does not know our native customs. We should
 - a. make fun of the person
 - b. try to make the person aware of it
 - c. be broad-minded and understand his/her ignorance
4. If a person differs with our thinking. We should....
 - a. also try to understand the person's view point
 - b. fight with the person
 - c. try to talk and help the person understand our thoughts
5. When a person is of another religion. We should....
 - a. try to accept the difference
 - b. try to create awareness about the person's religion
 - c. hate the person because the person is from a different religion

Types of Critical Thinking Skills

The following types of critical thinking skills are integrated with the tasks designed around the piece of literature described in this article.

Table 2

Types of Critical Thinking
Observation
Analysis
Inference
Prediction, Analysis, Inference
Inference
Clarification
Probing Assumptions
Probing Reasons
Viewpoints and Perspectives
Probing Implications
Questions about Questions

Conclusion

The above lesson is merely a sample to elucidate the theoretical premise of my paper. Teachers can select any literary piece and design various tasks integrating types of critical thinking skills with them. The nature and difficulty level of tasks can be modified according to the need and aptitude of the target group. But I reiterate that teaching to think critically and sensitizing students to socio-cultural issues can be interestingly and effectively done through literature.

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The Story behind Words

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Words, words and more words – words have always intrigued me. Searching new words and tracing their origin is indeed very interesting. Words are symbols of ideas that originate from our thought. They are symbols of knowledge that help to accentuate our thinking. Vocabulary plays an essential role in facilitating language production. Vocabulary is the core element in language proficiency.

Increasing one's vocabulary doesn't mean merely memorizing a large number of obscure unrelated terms – one needs to follow an order, a rational thought and work properly, intelligently and systematically towards its acquisition. The urge to learn must come from deep within us; it remains dormant in many learners and needs titillation now and again. ESL learners from vernacular background do not have enough vocabulary to use in appropriate context – they grope for appropriate words trying to put a message across.

Vocabulary should be placed at the very centre of language teaching. Vocabulary acquisition can be made simple, interactive and interesting, keeping the ESL learners in mind. Successful people have rich vocabularies. They are intellectually alive, articulate and successful in their professional lives. Speaking is an art, and language needs to be rich in its variety.

Some of the interesting strategies that can help learners in vocabulary acquisition are

- i) Going through the history of words and getting a fascinating picture of how a word has developed
- ii) Learning the etymology or root of words and prefixes showing how these can go together to form many related words.
- iii) Reading is another important means of acquiring vocabulary as it can bring learners close to a host of new words

Finding out the story behind a word gives learners the key to unlock the meanings of a great number of words. Here are a few stories and myths associated with different words – let us unfold some and find out how their meanings have changed and developed through the centuries.

Bohemia: The word 'Bohemia' meaning 'a gypsy of society' comes from French 'bohemian' and the country named Bohemia. These 'gypsies' were believed to come from Bohemia or to have entered the West by that route. In 1848, William Thackeray used the word 'bohemian' to describe Becky Sharp the anti-heroine of his satirical novel

Vanity Fair and her parents 'both Bohemians by taste and circumstances' – the word came to mean people of unconventional habits.

Gordian Knot: The sentence 'He cut the Gordian knot' implies solving an intricate problem in a bold and drastic manner. It comes from Gordius, King of Gordium in Phrygia, who once tied an extremely intricate knot on his chariot. It was prophesied that whoever undid the knot would rule Asia. Alexander the Great solved this problem by slashing through the knot with his sword.

Hobson's choice: A Hobson's choice is a free choice in which only one option is offered. You have no option but to accept the thing offered to you. Thomas Hobson, the owner of a livery stable in 17th century England loved his horses and made it a point to see that each horse was hired in turn. Hobson gave no one any choice at all. To rotate the use of his horses, he offered customers the choice of either taking the horse in the stall nearest the door or taking none at all. As a person may refuse to take an option the choice is between taking the option or not.

Laconic: A laconic person is a person of few words. He is known for his brevity of speech. This characteristic of using few meaningful words to convey the intended meaning was common with the Laconians of Greece, the district around Sparta. When Philips of Macedon threatened them with 'If I enter your city, I will raze it to the ground' the Laconians merely said one word, 'If'. This single word was full of implication.

Nepotism: The word 'nepotism' implies favouritism in business shown to relatives and friends regardless of merit. To trace the history of this word we are reminded of the early church. People holding high position in business and profession are apt to favour their relatives with jobs. This habit is known as nepotism and derives its name from the practice of the early Popes, who since they had no children conferred special favours and ecclesiastical offices upon their nephews and in Latin 'nepos' or 'nepotis' means 'nephew'. 'Nepotism' however no longer refers to 'nephew'; it has now widened to include all relatives.

Paraphernalia: In medieval Rome, whatever a bride possessed was called her 'bona paraphernalia' or goods besides the dowry. These were the 'bride's goods' that she brought along with her and the law of the land proclaimed that they were her exclusive property. The elements of

the word 'paraphernalia' ultimately comes down from Greek 'para'- beside and 'pherne' – 'dowry', the pherne part deriving from 'phero', 'carry' or 'bring' hence something the bride 'brings along'. 'Paraphernalia' has now come to mean apparatus or equipment which usually includes a wide variety of miscellaneous articles.

Spinster: A spinster again is one who spins, from the old word 'spinner' as spinning was a common practice for unmarried girls to while away their time. From the 17th century down, any unwed lady was a spinster, if she happened to be a woman past her marriageable age. In fact the spin-house in England was a house of reformation for many wayward ladies and the name thus acquired a slightly immoral flavour.

These stories are interesting but they will not seem too fantastic once we realize that sixty percent of English words are derived either directly from Latin or from Latin through Old French. The Latin prefixes and roots or the Old French roots are so valuable that you can hardly write an English sentence without using one or more of them. For many centuries Latin words poured into the English language. Greek contributions to English have largely been in Greco-Latin or have been scientific and scholarly. Derivation is therefore a basic way of creating and learning new words.

Suppose we take a single basic root word like 'aqua' meaning 'water'. Aqua is a Latin root from which can be derived words such as aquatic and aquarium.

Similarly 'loquor' meaning 'to speak' is the root of words such loquacious (talkative), colloquial (informal speech as in conversation), eloquent (forceful, expressive language), grandiloquent (grand, high flown language), circumlocution (circum-around, loquor- speech i.e. round about way of saying something).

'Scribo' meaning 'to write' is the root of words such as 'describe', 'inscribe', 'scribble', 'manuscript', 'postscript'.

'Malus' meaning 'bad' gives rise to words such as 'malice', 'malady', 'malfunction', 'malevolent', 'malnourishment'.

Again the Greek root 'anthropos' meaning 'a man' is the building block of words such as 'anthropology', 'philanthropy' and 'misanthropy'.

New words can also be formed by using English, Latin and Greek prefixes. The prefix 'pre' (before) or 'post' (after) if joined to words such as mature, arrange, occupy, script can form new words as premature, prearrange, preoccupy, postscript etc.

Latin prefixes like 'ambi' (both), 'bene' (well), 'de' (down) 'extra' (beyond) form words like ambiguous, benevolent, benefit, descend, dethrone, extraordinary, extravagant. Again Greek prefixes like 'anti' (against), 'auto' (self), 'pan' (all), can create words such as antisocial, antagonist, autocrat, autograph, pantheism, panacea, and many more.

By this natural and logical method, learners will be able to make lasting contact and relationship with hundreds of words. While it is difficult to remember more than five isolated words a day, it is not hard to remember twenty to fifty even hundred related words in a few sessions.

There is an intimate relationship between reading and vocabulary. The most important thing is to read something which we really enjoy be it stories, magazines, novels, newspaper, non-fictional texts etc. Sometimes with serious reading comes the temptation of ignoring unfamiliar words that we come across. We must be aware of new words, underline them or write them down in a note book. We may look up a dictionary or try to figure out its meaning from the context or from its etymological root or prefix if it contains one we have studied. We must find opportunities to practice and use new words, be it through speech or email. It must be remembered that people with rich vocabularies are voracious readers. Learners must be good readers, in the look out for new words they will notice a word occurring again and again, in other reading too and gradually having seen it in a number of varying contexts they will get enough of its connotation and flavor to understand its meaning. In this way learners will develop alertness to more and more unfamiliar words and their vocabulary will keep growing.

The above discussion reveals that words are vibrant with life, their meanings growing and evolving over time. Building up their vocabulary will help ESL learners unlock a treasure house of words that will not only build a self-assurance and ability to express their thoughts well but will also fill them with a sense of discovery and wonder.

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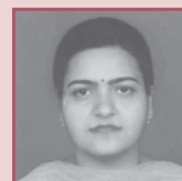
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Teaching Letter Writing to ESL Learners

Sarika Khurana

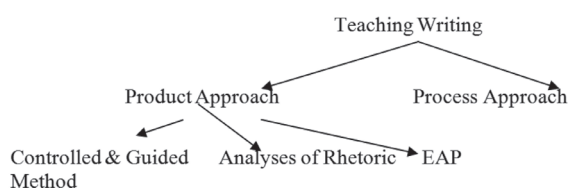


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Letter writing forms an essential part of all business and management related courses in our schools and colleges and is a very useful skill required throughout one's life. If we go through the research in the teaching of composition/letter writing, we find that there are two approaches to teaching this skill: one is called the 'product approach' and the second is known as the 'process approach'. As the names suggest, product approach focuses on the 'product' of writing and does not attach importance to how that product is arrived at. On the other hand, the process approach emphasizes the 'process' or the procedure of writing. Hence, this approach seeks to take learners through the process of composing the writing task.

Under the product approach, we have three methods of teaching: Controlled and Guided method, Analyses of Rhetoric technique, and English for Academic Purposes. Teaching writing can thus be shown in a tree-diagram as below:



But how letter writing is taught in school and college classrooms can never be known for sure as it is very difficult to ascertain what really goes on between the teacher and the students in the classroom. The classroom is a black box and any attempt to have a peep at it destroys the reality. A researcher sitting at the back of the class as an observer makes the teacher and the class conscious of an outsider and so does not serve the purpose. Eavesdropping is unethical and so is the use of electronic device unless the teacher is taken into confidence and informed about the device. Even then the teacher consciously or unconsciously puts on a guarded role and so what we get is not the true picture of what usually happens in the class but an artificial one. Hence, the only way to learn how teachers teach letter writing is to talk to students and go through their notebooks to get some idea of how letter writing is taught in the class.

Interactions with students reveal that teachers in our classrooms, both in schools and colleges, generally adopt analyses of rhetoric approach that is, the use of a model, under the product approach shown above - if at all they take up teaching composition/letter writing. It is believed that imitating a model piece of writing is the best way of learning to write. It is surprising that although the concept of 'imitation' as a way of language learning has been discarded, it is still widely followed when it comes to teaching of writing. This is very much true even today in our schools and colleges. Under this technique a model piece of writing is chosen and it is discussed and analyzed and learners are exhorted to follow the model for producing a parallel piece of writing. The usual sequence is –

- (i) Selecting a model usually written by an experienced writer,
- (ii) Analyzing and discussing the selected model, and finally,
- (iii) Advising the learners to write a parallel text based on the given model.

But, unfortunately, in our classrooms teachers do not bother at all to take the learners even through these usual steps. Instead, students are advised to read and memorize the model given in the prescribed textbook, if there is any, or simply left to take the help of guidebooks so easily available in our bookshops. In lower classes, the model is reproduced by the teacher on the blackboard and from there the students copy it in their notebooks to mug it up for exams. It is hoped that repeated encounters with the model through rote-learning and reproducing it in the monthly/quarterly tests will help learners learn the skills involved in composition/letter writing. Many scholars and teachers have written on how to exploit a model fruitfully and interactively in ESL classrooms so as to make this method of teaching composition writing a learner and learning-centered technique.

However, my intention is not to expatiate on how this can be done. The objective of this article is to describe some tasks and activities under the 'controlled and guided method' (one of the techniques under the 'product approach') that can be easily and fruitfully practiced by teachers in

their classrooms for teaching letter writing. Under controlled and guided method, the following are some of the well-tried and tested activities that teachers can explore in their classrooms to involve students in learning and practicing letter writing. These tasks are designed to achieve one or the other aspect of letter writing – format, task achievement, style, cohesion and coherence, sentence structure etc. Hence the teacher has to select and grade the type of activity s/he ought to try according to the level of the learners in the class.

1. **Gap-filling activities:** A letter with gaps/ blanks is given and the words/phrases/ sentences that need to be fitted in are given in a separate list. Students are asked to fit in the given words/phrases/sentences at the right places. (The list may contain one or two more items than are needed to fill in the gaps).
2. **Reordering:** Jumbled layout/sentences/ paragraphs of a letter are given and learners are advised to reorder them to produce the original letter.
3. **Substitution:** A letter is given and students are asked to write another letter on a similar topic making certain changes e.g. a letter ordering some stationery is given and students are asked to write another letter ordering certain books.
4. **Matching:** The sentences of the body of a letter are broken in two parts and given under two columns 'A' and 'B'. Parts under column 'B' are jumbled and students are asked to produce the body of the letter by combining the two parts of the sentences and writing these in the right order.
5. Students are given bare layouts of two letters containing addressees, salutations, and their subject lines but the contents of the two letters are jumbled together. Students are asked to separate the two contents so as to produce the original ones and write these in the layouts of the two letters.
6. **'Odd man out':** A letter is given with certain words/phrases that do not fit in the letter. Students are asked to find and delete words/ phrases/sentences that do not fit in the given text/letter.
7. **Comparing:** Two or three draft letters are given on a certain topic. Students are asked

to compare the letters and select the most suitable one for the given task.

8. **Guided writing task:** Students are given a topic to write on and hints for completing the task are given to guide them.
9. **Elicitation technique/oral preparation:** This technique of teaching involves interaction between the teacher and the class. The teacher tries to elicit from the learners the right responses that are required to complete the given task. There can be more variations on the activities given above. The list of the activities, too, is not exhaustive but only indicative of the types of activities and tasks that can be planned to give learners controlled and guided practice in letter writing particularly to students receiving instructions through regional medium. The activities listed above can be planned as individual tasks and/or as pair and group activities to be done through interaction and discussion or designed as interesting games for school level students to give learners not only practice in writing letters but also in soft skills, spirit of working in a team, imbibing confidence and leadership qualities, thinking and problem-solving attitude, traits that are extremely necessary in life.

Since it is not possible to give examples to illustrate each of the above activities in this short article and so we are giving below only two illustrations (one each of activities at No. 3 and 9 in the above list) to show how these tasks are designed :

I. Illustration of Reordering Task (s.no.3)

Question: Your management has decided that the accounts of all its branch offices will be henceforth operated jointly by two officials: the Director/Branch Manager and the Accounts Officer and not by the Director alone as at present. Write a letter to the bank intimating them of this change.

Task: An official drafted the letter as given below. The first and the last sentences in this letter are in their right order but unfortunately other sentences of this letter got jumbled up and need to be reordered. Try to reorder them to get the draft letter in its right order.

Discuss your rearrangement of sentences with others in the group and help finalise the draft to be handed in to the class teacher.

Dear Sir/Madam

1. We have a current account with your bank – account No.1257.
2. A certified copy of the Resolution of the Board of Directors is enclosed for your record.
3. Accordingly we are writing to inform you that w.e.f. 1 July, 2012 our current account No.1257 with your bank will be operated jointly by two officials - Director/Branch Manager and the Accounts Officer.
4. At present this account is operated under the signatures of Mr.K.K. Singh, who is our Director.
5. We request you to take note of this new arrangement for the operation of our current account with you.
6. Our Director is Mr.K.K.Singh and his specimen signatures are already with you as the authority to operate this account at present vests in him.
7. The Board of Directors of our company have now decided that the accounts with the banks of all our branches will henceforth be operated jointly by the Director/Branch Manager and the Accounts Officer of the respective branch office.
8. Our Branch Manager at present is Mr. K.K. Nigam and the Accounts Officer is Mr. J.K. Jain and the specimen signatures of these officials are given below duly attested by our Director, the authorized signatory.
9. Please let us know if you want us to complete any other formalities to give effect to this new arrangement w.e.f. 1 July, 2012.

Yours faithfully

(K.K.Singh)

Director

Specimen Signatures of Mr.K.K.Nigam

1. 2.

Signatures attested

Director

Specimen Signatures of Mr.J.K.Jain

1. 2.

Signatures attested

Director

II. Illustration of Guided Writing Task (s.no.9)

Question: You are interested in doing a part-time training course. Write a letter to the Principal of a training institute in your neighbourhood. In your letter

- Describe the type of training course you want to do and indicate the timings that suit you.
- Explain why you want to do this training course
- Ask questions to seek details of the course

Write at least 150 words. Under-length answers will be penalized.

(Hints: Types of training courses could include Web Designing, Nursery Teacher Training etc. Your reasons for doing it could vary from doing it as an add-on to your qualification or pursuing it for professional reasons etc. Some of the questions you could ask include course details and duration, placement possibilities, fees structure and so on and so forth).

Most school teachers would be familiar with the types of activity I have described in this article and I hope using these for teaching letter writing can make the learning of this skill a fun-filled activity.



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An Interview with Dr. Saugata Bhaduri, Chairperson at Centre for English Studies, Jawahar Lal Nehru University

Dr. Saugata Bhaduri is the Chairperson at Centre for English Studies, Jawahar Lal Nehru University. He has published extensively on wide ranging areas like literary and cultural theory, popular culture and translation studies amongst others. Here in an interview with Rachna Sethi he shares his thoughts about various issues in higher education concerning English studies in India, including language and literature teaching, decanonization and popular culture.



Rachna Sethi (RS): The debate between language teaching and literature is an old one; time and again ‘death/end of pure literatures’ has been proclaimed. In the face of increased pressures in today’s globalized commercial scenario to teach ‘functional English’, do you think literature centred courses will slowly fade away? How do you respond to it, especially as CES is part of School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies?

Dr. Saugata Bhaduri (SB): There are two issues raised in this question, both extremely pertinent to the discipline of English Studies. I will take them up one after the other.

To the question whether English departments should be teaching English language or English literature, the answer is obviously ‘both’. However, the problem arises when there is a conflation of these two very different mandates

of an English department. As much as literature may have been historically used to teach English language, language teaching and imparting literary responsiveness are altogether different projects. The objective of the former is to arm a student, with little or no proficiency in the language, with instrumental (more often than not, non-literary) working skills in English, while the objective of the latter is to equip a student, already in command of the language, with aesthetic and critical sensibility, which may run completely contrary to the normative instrumentalization presumed in the former. A department of English has to perform both these tasks, but neither displace one with the other, nor confuse the two as being part of the same exercise and aimed at the same audience.

Regarding the second question about ‘death/end of pure literatures’, if by ‘literature’ we refer only to printed matter, we must understand

that printing is a very recent, less than 600-year old, phenomenon. 'Literature', as a process of mass-circulated narrative discursivization, pre-existed print technology (otherwise Kalidasa and Homer should not be considered literary) and will continue to survive, in spite of the imminent 'end' of print in the digital age. In fact, 'literature' has become even more relevant in these information-driven times of ours, because now we are surrounded and guided by discourses more than ever before. It is just that the media of articulation of these ubiquitous discourses are different from the temporary medium of print that we often erroneously associate 'literature' solely with.

Both the issues referred to above are, as has been rightly presumed in the question, of special relevance to our Centre, located as it is in the School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies. The existence of 'culture studies' within the scope of our School entails that the study of English here is not restricted to printed literature alone, the second problem addressed above. And, it being located within the School of 'languages' also includes English language teaching within our purview, the first of the two problems. Our Centre fulfils the dual mandate of imparting literature and language successfully by running two parallel programmes, so to say – the usual literary and cultural courses for students already proficient in the language and who instead need to be inculcated into critical thought and aesthetic sensibility, and the very successful Remedial English programme for all students of the University, who are deficient in the language and would rather require language skills – resulting in there being two departments of English, as it were, in JNU: the CES which imparts knowledge in literature and culture in English, and the English Language Cell, administered jointly by our Centre and the Centre of Linguistics, and located directly under the central university administration, which imparts English language training.

In short, it is first, in a recognition of the dual mandate that English as a discipline has in India and the realization that there needs to be a separation of the two – in terms of target groups, resource persons involved, and pedagogic strategies engaged – and secondly, in the acceptance that literary studies historically has not been – and cannot be all the more now – restricted to print media alone that one can do real justice to the two very different issues raised in the question.

RS: The English Department of JNU was perhaps the foremost in the country to question the British

canon in teaching of literature and in breaking and creating of new canons through its syllabi. How is this progressive outlook carried out today in terms of courses conducted at the Centre?

SB: While you are right in recognizing our Centre as having been the at the vanguard in questioning the erstwhile canon of English Studies in India, the fact that your question also charges us with 'creating new canons' points out the problems inherent in such an exercise. The objective of critical thought cannot be to displace one canon with another, but rather to keep the flame of criticality so alive that it can depart from and alter what it itself advocated earlier, when the latter may seem itself to have become the commonsense and the norm.

The decanonization process that our Centre may have initiated into English Studies from the mid-80s onwards primarily branched out in five directions – the introduction of critical political thinking to literary studies ('Literary Theory' or 'ideology-critique' in short), the introduction of literature in other Englishes (Indian, American, African, Australian, Canadian, Caribbean, etc.), the introduction of literature in Indian languages (read primarily in English translation, though), the introduction of classical Indian linguistics and aesthetics to English Studies (like Bharata, Pāṇini, Patañjali, Bhartṛhari, etc.), and the introduction of culture studies ('non-literary' modes of articulation, like folklore, film, performance, visual culture, etc.) within literary curricula. More than a quarter of a century down the line, the radical import of these shifts seem a little jaded, with these changes having become the new academic commonsense, the basis of what you have rightly called the 'new canon' – every English department in India now does exactly these five things! If our Centre has to retain what you have called its 'progressive outlook', it has to thus question the normativization of what it once critically stood for, and challenge its own foundations.

Needless to say, that is precisely what we are striving to do. The problem with the first of the five branchings mentioned above is that 'Literary Theory', in its commonsensical avatar at least, reduces literature to having nothing but an ideological function (that too primarily in the domain of the usual suspects – race, class, gender), at the cost of not only its hermeneutic and aesthetic functions (of cognition, of enjoyment, say), but also its excessive, transgressive and subversive roles, and its connection to overlooked means of disempowerment (caste, disability, ecology, etc). There are two problems with the second, third and

fourth directions that our erstwhile decanonization took. First, universities started neglecting British literature and the erstwhile canon, resulting in a complete lack of reference to what the criticality in the radically restructured syllabi was aimed at. Second, what governed much of such restructuring was a Manichean postcolonial commonsense, which failed to recognize the complex and hybridizing matrices of colonial contact and also the fact that we (and English language and literature, indeed) have moved on from the horizon of erstwhile colonialism to the domain of globalization and new-imperialism. The problem with the fifth and final re-orientation was that new media developed radically in the last twenty years or so into cybernetic and telecommunicational modes, which the art-folklore-film-performance routine of old-media driven culture studies just could not cope with. If these be the problems, corollarily, the recipe to critique our own creation and continue to lead the need for evermore decanonization therefore lies in: first, focusing on domains like Dalit and Tribal Studies, Disability Studies, Ecocriticism, etc. (modes of ideology-critique under-represented in erstwhile 'Literary Theory'; second, returning to 'canonical' British literature with vengeance; third, realizing that the position of English and discursive production in the language today has little, if not nothing, to do with erstwhile colonialism and the resultant postcolonial syndrome of 'writing back to the empire' in 'national allegories'; fourth, that cyberculture and the new media have become more appropriate objects of 'literary' study today; and finally, in bringing back the element of fun and enjoyment into literary studies, not necessarily in an old deferential way which only considered high culture, with its enlightening and ennobling liberal humanist objective, worth studying, but in a disruptive, subversive inclusion of the profane and the popular into the classroom. These are some of the directions that our programme of English Studies and courses being currently offered at the Centre have consciously taken.

This semester, three of the nine MA courses on offer are directly on British literature – Renaissance drama, Gothic fiction, and literary Modernism; three courses – on Gandhi, on Disability Studies, and on the rhetorical construction of racism and communalism in India – bring in ideology-critique but from the perspective of altogether different contradictions, and the three courses which are ostensibly on what has been defined as the horizon of the erstwhile decanonization – Indian Writing in English, American Literature, and Nāṭyaśāstra – also shift their focus to include, beyond the

postcolonial commonsense, texts in Indian English from the nineteenth century and contemporary genre fiction, literatures of ethnic minorities of America, and aesthetics viewed from a comparative perspective, respectively. Also, I am offering this semester an MPhil course in popular culture, which focuses majorly on cyberculture and the new media. All this, I believe, is symptomatic of our Centre's fresh criticality vis-à-vis its own earlier decanonizing exercise.

RS: Inter-disciplinary studies have been the thrust of CES long before it became a buzz word in academia. Please tell us how this is encouraged at the Centre.

SB: At CES, interdisciplinarity is fostered not only through the courses that we ourselves offer – as some of the courses discussed above would indicate – but, more importantly, by encouraging students to take courses from other disciplines – history, sociology, political science, arts & aesthetics, and linguistics, for instance – and reciprocally welcoming students from these disciplines routinely into our courses. Of course, we are fortunate that JNU has a curricular structure that allows, and in fact encourages, students to opt for courses in other disciplines and experiment in an interdisciplinary way.

RS: Apart from traditional approaches of disciplines of history and philosophy for study of literature, popular media is increasingly being used for comparative studies. What is your opinion on the use of popular culture in literary studies?

SB: Popular culture and media studies comprise the very ontology of literary studies in today's post-print mediatized environment. Texts circulated on the new media – digital literature, cybercultural productions on social networking sites and blogs, interactive chats and messages, role playing games, fan fiction – have become not just tools, but the very object of literary studies in general, and English Studies in particular, today.

RS: Cinema Studies is increasingly gaining acceptance as part of cultural studies in India. Can you please comment on the independent stature of the discipline and not just as an auxiliary in terms of looking at screen adaptations of literary texts?

SB: Film Studies has been a mainstream discipline for some time now, so much so that many universities, including JNU, have full-fledged programmes in Film Studies. Film Studies has its own theoretical presumptions, vocabulary, and methodological universe, and it will be dangerous for an English teacher to foray into the

field without adequate knowledge of the medium. That being said, one must also realize that cinema is an old medium, and now more and more people view films on other media like television, DVD players, laptops, handheld devices, improvised projection screens, etc., rather than in the theatre. And, that brings us back to the relevance of new media studies to English today, with films being just one of the several kinds of messages that have been adapted for and appropriated by the digital and cybernetic media.

RS: Could you please elaborate on how Cinema Studies can be used to develop critical perspectives towards contemporary social sciences?

SB: I think it is a very interesting and thought-provoking question if we ask how the medium of cinema can make one become critical of social sciences as it is practised today. To my mind, there are two problems that beset contemporary social sciences – first, that, in its bid to become a ‘science’, it is often too empirical and relatively rare on ideas and fundamental thought; second, in its instrumentalist bid to come to social ‘use’, it ends up being rather austere and serious (read boring), at the cost of overlooking the (often comic) deep fissures and ruptures that underlie its very disciplinarity. Cinema – especially of

the popular over-the-top potboiler sort – as an entertainment medium, can deflate, in its perfectly wasteful extravaganza, in its sheer subversive transgression of austere utility, in its foregrounding of the pleasure principle, the vain claim to observable reality and demonstrable utility that social science often makes.

This is of direct relevance to English Studies too. There are attempts to reduce this field – whose greatest value lies in its capability to promote disruptive and transgressive thought, Dionysian pleasure, to become a gay science, as Nietzsche would have it – to either a vocationalized utility-driven discipline, aimed at equipping a budding labour force with the tools of serving the normative new-age order, or to an instrumental hand-maiden of ideology, that can only study the victimological basis of such interpellation. Cinema, and popular culture in general – qua the popular, the excessive, the pleasurable – can definitely critique and expose such Apollonian and utilitarian presumptions of social sciences, which certain forms of English Studies also, unfortunately, has taken.

RS: Thank you Dr. Bhaduri for a stimulating interview. I am sure your reflections will provoke more thought and discussion on these pertinent issues.

Workshop on English Language Courses at the BA Programme Level

Dr. Pramodini Varma and Dr. Mukti Sanyal

Bharati College in association with the Department of English, Delhi University organized a one-day workshop to review the English Language Courses being taught to the B A Programme students on Thursday, 19th January 2012. A large number of teachers across many colleges of Delhi University attended the workshop held at Bharati College to formulate guidelines for the review and revamping of these courses.

Five main areas were identified where it was felt that intervention was required. Each area was introduced by one resource person who made a presentation before the house. These were Dr Mukti Sanyal on Streaming, Dr Hany Babu on Levels and Course Structures, Dr Pramodini Varma on Materials, Dr Anjana Neira Dev on

Teacher Training and Prof Rama Mathew on Evaluation.

After the presentations, the house broke up into subcommittees to consider the implications in detail and to make recommendations. The recommendations of each committee were as follows:

Subcommittee on Streaming:

1. The present system of placing students in Streams A, B and C is ineffective and should be replaced by a placement test. Allowing students to choose their own stream was rejected because often students cannot make an informed decision about the course that best suits their level of competence and needs. Teachers agreed that the best option would be



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to make sets of tests available to colleges to be administered at their convenience.

2. Most also agreed that the test should take no more than 30 minutes, have a multiple choice format which would be easy to mark; be non-threatening to take and should not take more than 10-15 minutes to correct. The format of the test would consist of 50 items on reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, usage, spellings, etc followed by a short writing task. The initial suggestion of having a face-to-face speaking test was dropped because it would be time-consuming and would not yield rich data on the students' level of competence compared to a writing task.
3. A Language Testing Cell and Team should be formed in the University which will be responsible for the preparation of reliable and valid placement tests. It can advise teachers and colleges on how to handle the very many problems and situations that may arise out of this new system.

Subcommittee on Levels and Course Structure:

The committee noted the following problems with the existing structure:

1. It is mechanical as it based on number of years of English and does not help to stream students according to their language ability.
2. There is an imbalance, as the classrooms of the A stream account for almost 80% of the total strength.
3. It is hazy, as the level of proficiency at each level is not clearly defined.
4. There are many overlaps as the lower level of B may overlap with C, and the higher level of B with A, which leads to redundancy and quite often replication of material.
5. It is reticent about the proficiency level at the exit.

The following structure was recommended: A cline of six (or more) courses to be offered: Lower Basic; Higher Basic; Lower Intermediate; Higher Intermediate; Lower Advanced and Higher Advanced. A student with 'low' level of proficiency starts with E-1 in the first semester, the 'mid' level one starts with E-2 and the 'high' level one starts with E-3. A student will move from a lower to a higher level after the successful completion of each semester. Just as students enter at different points, they may exit

also at different points. (i.e. a student with 'low' proficiency finishes at E-4 in semester four, 'mid' level at E-5, and 'high' level at E-6). At the upper end of the cline (i.e. E-5 and E-6), a student should be able to tackle academic English that is required for advanced studies in Social Sciences and Humanities, while at the lower end (i.e. E-1 and E-2), she should be able to handle English at the most elementary level of use. The proposed model can be enriched by adding more levels of proficiency and by building in provisions for skipping levels in case the student performs well at a lower level. The levels could be defined in terms of grammatical structure and function, choice of (familiar/non-familiar topics), command over style, figurative and literary use, ability to make inferences and deductions from language use, and ability to handle different types of language use like narration and argumentation.

The committee also felt that the University could make use of the professional expertise available outside the University of Delhi (like the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad).

Subcommittee on Teacher Training and Orientation:

A major reason why we have not succeeded in improving the proficiency of our students is that most of us are not professionally trained as teachers – our expertise consists in having studied literature for a number of years and except for a very few teachers, we have not had the opportunity to attend in-service programmes tailor made for language teaching. We have also not been able to leverage the vast amount of research that has been done in the field of language acquisition and second language learning. An additional problem is the bias towards literature in not only the framing of syllabi at the undergraduate level but also in recruitment practices and precedents.

The committee recommended that every English teacher who enters the profession should be asked to attend an orientation programme that would focus on training teachers in areas like language acquisition and learning and pedagogy. For in service teachers, Refresher courses could be organized periodically and these could be held at different venues covering a cluster of colleges. In addition to the training of existing teachers there is felt need to create a resource pool of potential teachers and researchers and this would be possible only if papers on language (theory and pedagogy) form part of the B A and M A syllabi.

The committee also recommended that every aspect of teaching should be included in this training, that is, not only classroom practices but also evaluation and assessment.

Subcommittee on Materials and Texts:

The committee felt strongly that there should be prescribed books for the students and these should consist of a workbook for students and a manual for teachers. The workbook should consist of reading passages, activities, exercises and ideas for the teacher to utilize in class. The committee toyed with idea of preparing loose-leaf worksheets so that the material could be reviewed and revised at frequent intervals because books, once printed and bound, took on a life of their own which could not be interrupted. However, considering the large numbers involved, this was not considered feasible. The committee still felt that the books should be prepared by teams of teachers and should be revised every 3-5 years. When the report was presented to the entire house one of the suggestions that came was that the teachers who would work on the production of materials should be trained and work under the guidance of experts in the field. It was also felt that new media, like film clips, YouTube and the internet could also be

successfully incorporated in the materials prepared for the language courses.

Subcommittee on Assessment

The committee felt that the final test or end semester test needed to test all the 4 skills i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing. The 75 marks could be distributed as follows:

Listening-15; Speaking- 20; Reading- 20; Writing- 20.

It was also felt that the 25 marks of the Internal Assessment could be broken up as follows:

Attendance- 5; Mid- Term test- 5; Presentation based on group work – 5; Project- 5 and Portfolio – 5.

A 3 day workshop/ orientation on assessment for all college teachers who teach ABC streams is required. This can be part of the general orientation provided there are three days set aside for assessment issues.

A strong need was felt to create a testing team of 10 to 15 teachers and consequently a Central Item Bank from which items can be drawn as and when necessary.





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A Report on English Language Writing Workshop

Tullika Prasad

A writing workshop for English language students was conducted on 19 March, 2012 at Satyawati College (E) in collaboration with *FORTELL*. It aimed at helping students improve their proficiency in speaking, reading and writing English as well as dealing with the English paper in their exams.

Dr Mukti Sanyal, who teaches in the department of English at Bharati College, Delhi University and has specialized in designing textbooks on English as a second language served as the resource person for the event. She conducted the workshop with much enthusiasm and the students participated in it with equal fervor and made the workshop a great success.

Dr Sanyal began the session by inviting students to write a short paragraph on what college meant to each one of them. And needless to say, the answers were diverse and thoughtful. She emphasized on the need to read extensively and motivated the students to read as much as possible (both qualitatively and quantitatively)

as a first step towards improving their command on the English language and also as a way of increasing their vocabulary. Having stressed on this fundamental aspect of learning any language (here English), she moved on to discuss how to handle the English language paper in the exams, something that worries almost every student. Here, she dwelt on each section (with sample questions) and gave suggestions and tips on how to deal with essay, unseen comprehension passage, letter writing and so on.

Her approach remained communicative and participatory since the aim was also to wean away the hesitation that students often feel while reading, writing or speaking the language. And in order to do that she conducted some on- the- spot writing and speaking activities and exercises for the students.

The workshop continued for more than two hours with a lot of interaction, participation and serious discussion together with practical strategies to become both fluent and proficient in the language.

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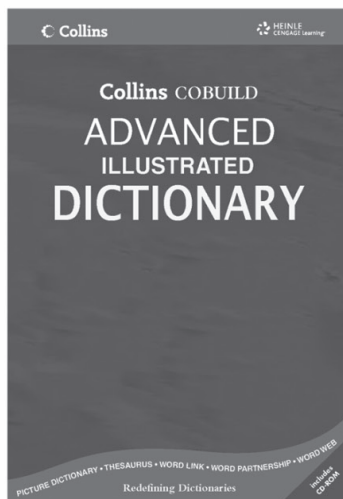
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great 338

Word Web greenhouse effect

Over the past 100 years, the average **temperature** around the globe has risen dramatically. Researchers believe that this **global warming** comes from added **carbon dioxide** and other **gases** in the **atmosphere**. With **water vapour**, the gases form a layer that holds in heat. It acts like the glass in a greenhouse. Scientists call this the **greenhouse effect**. Some natural causes of this warming may include increased **solar radiation** and tiny changes in the earth's orbit. However, human activities, such as **deforestation**, and the use of **fossil fuels** seem to be an important cause.

Word Link *est = most: greatest, kindest, latest*

great /greɪt/ (greater, greatest) ■ ADJ BEFORE N You use **great** to describe something that is very large. □ ... **great columns** of ice. ■ ADJ **Great** is used to emphasize the large amount or degree of something. □ She had **great difficulty** in keeping her eyes open. ■ **greatly** ADV □ He will be **greatly missed**. ■ ADJ You use **great** to describe someone or something that is important, famous, or exciting. □ ... *the great novels* of the 19th century. □ ... *the greatest scientist since Einstein*. ■ **greatness** N-UNCOUNT □ No-one doubted his claim to **greatness**. ■ ADJ If something is **great**, it is very good. [INFORMAL] □ I thought it was a **great idea**. □ It would make a **great film**.

Usage

Great, big and large are all used to talk about size. In general, **large** is more formal than **big**, and **great** is more formal than **large**. **Big and large** are normally used to describe objects. If you use **great** to describe an object, you are suggesting that it is impressive because of its size. □ The **great bird** of prey was a dark smudge against the sun. You can use **large or great**, but not **big**, to describe amounts. □ He noticed a **large amount** of blood on the floor. □ The coming of tourists in **great numbers** changes things. **Great** is often used with nouns referring to things such as feelings or ideas. It is the only one of the three words that can be used in front of an uncount noun. □ It gives me very **great pleasure** to welcome you to the town. Remember that **great** has several other meanings, when it does not refer to size, but to something that is remarkable, very good, or enjoyable.

Thesaurus *great* Also look up:

ADJ. enormous, immense, vast; (ant.) small ■ ■ distinguished, famous, important, remarkable ■ ■

greed /grɪd/ N-UNCOUNT **Greed** is a desire for more of something than is necessary or fair. **greedy** /grɪdi/ (greedier, greediest) ADJ Someone who is **greedy** wants more of something than is necessary or fair. □ ... *greedy bosses who award themselves huge pay rises*. ■ **greedily** ADV □ She ate the cakes **greedily**.

green /grɪn/ (greener, greenest, greens) ■ ADJ & N-VAR Something that is **green** is the colour

greyhound

of grass or leaves. □ ... *green olives*. □ ... *a paler and softer shade of green*. ■ ADJ A place that is **green** is covered with grass, plants, and trees. ■ **greenness** N-UNCOUNT □ ... *the lush greenness* of the river valleys. ■ ADJ BEFORE N **Green** issues relate to the protection of the environment. □ ... *the power of the Green movement in Germany*. ■ N-COUNT A **green** is a smooth, flat area of grass, for example the area around a hole on a golf course. → see **colour, golf, rainbow**

greenery /grɪnəri/ N-UNCOUNT Plants that make a place look attractive are referred to as **greenery**.

greenhouse /grɪmhaʊs/ (greenhouses) N-COUNT A **greenhouse** is a glass building in which you grow plants that need to be protected from bad weather. → see **barn**

'greenhouse effect' N-SING The **greenhouse effect** is the rise in the earth's temperature caused by a build-up of gases around the earth. → see **Word Web: greenhouse effect** → see **ozone**

greet /grɪt/ (greets, greeting, greeted) ■ V-T When you **greet** someone, you say something friendly such as 'hello' when you meet them. ■ V-T If something is **greeted** in a particular way, people react to it in that way. □ The move was **greeted with disappointment** by union leaders. ■ V-T If you **are greeted** by something, it is the first thing you notice in a place. [LITERARY] □ Customers are **greeted by wonderful smells** from the kitchen.

greeting /grɪtɪŋ/ (greetings) N-VAR A **greeting** is something friendly that you say or do when you meet someone. □ He raised a hand in **greeting**.

grenade /grɪneɪd/ (grenades) N-COUNT A **grenade** is a small bomb that can be thrown by hand.

grew /gru:/ **Grew** is the past tense of **grow**.

grey [AM GRAY] /greɪ/ (greyer, greyest, greys) ADJ & N-VAR **Grey** is the colour of ashes or of clouds on a rainy day. □ ... *grey trousers*. □ His hair is a dark shade of **grey**.

Word Partnership Use **grey** with:

N. **grey eyes, grey hair, shades of grey, grey sky, grey suit, go grey, turn grey**

greyhound /greɪhaʊnd/ (greyhounds) N-COUNT A **greyhound** is a thin dog that can run very fast.

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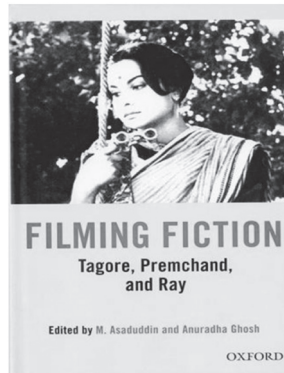


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Advocating Adaptations: Filming Fiction; Tagore, Premchand and Ray

Anubha Anushree



Edited by M. Asaduddin & Anuradha Ghosh.
Oxford University Press, New Delhi, Pp 265,
Rs. 695 (Hardbound)

Critical theory around film adaptations have been historically a little under emphasized and easily misunderstood. For its easy appeal to queasy politics of polarized up-manship (is the film better or the work on which it is based?) or its inability to stake a claim to the originality factor, adaptations and its critical sources are slightly belated in their transition to the postmodern turn of intellectual engagement with cinema. Further, the terms of this discourse has been very Eurocentric. While several reasons can be hypothesized about the glaring absence of adaptation studies in Indian or even South Asian cinema; one can trace two most significant and discomfiting factors contributing to it- first, adaptation as an institutionalized genre is almost non-existent in pan-Indian cinematic culture and then South Asian cinema itself is a very recent phenomenon in serious critical parlance.

The appeal of the book, *Filming Fiction: Tagore, Premchand and Ray*, edited by M. Asaduddin and Anuradha Ghosh, lies in the way it tries to connect the two mediums of aesthetic articulations- film and literature in an Indian context through three of its greatest artists- Rabindra Nath Tagore, Premchand and Satyajit Ray. The volume engages with specifically Satyajit Ray's cinematic take on Tagore and Premchand's novels and short stories. Set in an extremely readable hard bound volume with snapshots of Ray's classics for chapter headings, the book is a crucial intervention in adaptation studies. It is inspiring to read a host of well known figures amongst others like Meenakshi Mukherjee, Vijaya

Singh, Sohini Ghosh, Brinda Bose, Frances Pritchett and Jasbir Jain to name a few under one heading.

Interwoven in this disparate range of essays are several thematic engagements with Ray's approaches to Tagore's *Ghaire Baire* and *Noshto Neerh* and Premchand's *Shatranj ke Khiladi* and *Sadgati*. The opening essay of the volume, Meenakshi Mukherjee's 'His Films, Their Stories,' is an attempt to understand Ray's evolution as a director. But at a deeper level it is also about Indian cinema's negotiation with its critical environment and its attempts to establish itself as a serious idiom. Similarly Vijaya Singh's essay foregrounds different technical elements that make an adaptation possible as a shift in the tonality and vocabulary of different mediums. Anuradha Ghosh fascinatingly forays into one of the most neglected aspects of Indian cinema- the language of the films that gives a very specific spin to the experience of an adaptation. There are at least three essays that deal with Ray's rendering of history. Both Tagore's *Ghare Baire* and Premchand's *Shatranj ke Khiladi*, though located in different chronologies and geographies highlight the insidious and subtle nature of colonial politics. Jasbir Jain's essay argues for a more nuanced and complex approach to the negotiations that take place between Tagore and Premchand's literary classics and their cinematic adaptations by Ray. Frances Pritchett and Tarini Pandey discuss Ray's cinematic articulations from polemical point of view and the creative asymmetry that Ray's unfamiliarity with Hindi produced in the movie *Shatranj*. However, the collection would have benefitted hugely if it had more insights on Ray's rather extraordinary and brave sortie into Hindi films and the political dimensions of mainstream north Indian culture with Premchand's *Sadgati*. *Sadgati* remains linguistically and stylistically a very un-Ray movie for its minimalistic aestheticism.

This book is a holistic interpretation of a genuinely understudied genre. The collection highlights the ways in which cinema studies in India needs further contextualization and specialization. It is definitely a thoughtful contribution to the potential that Cinema Studies has in Indian academia.

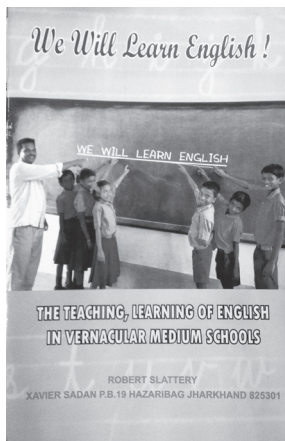
We Will Learn English

Dr. A.L. Khanna



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A.L. Khanna retired as Associate Professor from Department of English, Rajdhani College, University of Delhi.



I have read through the book from cover to cover and find it a very useful guide for those who are teaching in the vernacular medium schools in other states of India. It will be equally useful for those who are into the business of preparing teaching materials at the primary classes for various SCERTs in different states

of India. I'm sure the book can also be a great help to those who are engaged either in teacher training or are thinking of conducting research to understand why most children studying in vernacular schools are unable to acquire any degree of proficiency in different skills of English despite having put in so many years in the learning of English. The syllabus for classes 1-5 given at the end can be very useful for the teachers and the materials writers. The book, however, needs some copy editing and better lay out to make it look professionally more attractive. Although the chapters are numbered in the Contents page, they should have been numbered even as individual chapters to increase their accessibility to the reader.

Language Game

Manu Gulati



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Out of the four language learning skills, listening and speaking grouped together as 'aural-oral' skills, form the edifice on which reading and writing depend. Hence, the focus on the development of listening and speaking skills should be laid from the very beginning, i.e. at the primary school level. Given below is an interesting language activity for strengthening children's listening skills.

Task 1 – Listen, number and discuss

Language function: Seeking permission

Level: Primary

Skill involved: Listening

Objectives:

- The learners get an exposure to the key vocabulary and expressions regarding seeking permission in different situations.
- To evaluate learners' listening comprehension in relation to function seeking permission.

Material required: A tape recorder, recorded tape (with 8 conversations), students' worksheet.

Type of participation: Individual.

Procedure –

1. An exemplar conversation between two

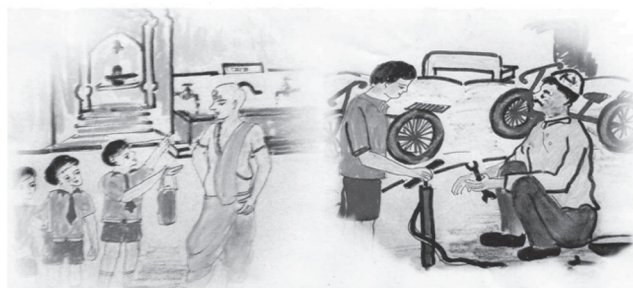
persons is played for the learners. The learners are asked to guess the relationship between the two persons in the conversation.

2. After this, a recorded tape which has eight other conversations regarding the function 'seeking permission' is played to the learners.
3. A worksheet with eight pictures (each picture depicting a conversation of the recorded tape) is given to the learners. The learners are asked to number the pictures in the order in which conversations are played in the recorded tape, after listening to the recorded tape the second time.
4. The worksheets are evaluated and analyzed and discussion is held in the class regarding who sought permission from whom and who granted or rejected it in the conversations heard by the learners.

Conversations in the recorded tape

- Teacher – Have all of you understood multiplication?
Students – Yes madam.
Student – Madam, may I ask a question?
Teacher – Yes Mantsha, you may ask.
- Librarian – Please maintain silence in the library. Those who wish to borrow books can come to me.
Student – Madam, may I get this book issued?
Librarian – No, you cannot get this book issued. This is only for reference.
Student – Madam, may I read it here?
Librarian – Yes you may.
- Children – Pandit ji, may we drink water from the temple tap? There is no water in the school.
Pandit ji – Yes, you may.
- Priya – I can hear a balloon seller's voice. Mom can I go out and buy a balloon?
Mother – Yes, you can go.
- Lady – Can my daughter try this pink dress?
Salesman – No, she cannot because there is no trial room in our shop.
- Child – Bhaiya, can I use your air pump to fill air in my cycle tube?
Cycle mechanic – Yes, you can use it.
- Children – Maali Uncle, may we play football in this park?
Gardener – Yes, you may.
- Poonam – Can I go and post this letter mummy?
Mother – Yes Poonam, you can. But before that, remember to fix postage stamps on it.
Poonam – From where will I get stamps mummy?
Mother – You will get them from the post office.
Poonam – Sir, may I have a 5 rupee postage stamp? May I, also, have glue from you?
Post office Master – Yes, you may.

WORKSHEET



WORKSHEET



USP: Recordings, if related to learners' real life, provide a rich input of real language of the kind learners will need to use themselves. This results in a natural motivation for the learners to process that language. The recordings in the task mentioned, included conversations between learner and teacher, learner and librarian, child and cycle mechanic, child and mother and so on. These recordings are related to learners' real life and hence intend to create learners' interest in listening to them.



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The Guest Editors for the issue will be Prem Kumari Srivastava and Gitanjali Chawla.

The last date for receiving contributions for this issue is 30th June 2012.

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