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CONTENTS

The present 31st issue of ***Fortell*** that we place before you is a close look at heterogeneity in classrooms that has challenged the monolithic insular prescribed text syllabi in classrooms. Teachers of English are constantly engaged in alternate pedagogies as they strive to bring the language closer to the contexts of L2 learners. They refer to texts that they are familiar with and use idiomatic expressions and narratives in native languages to make the acquired language less intimidating. Innovation is the key as the teacher looks for new material and new processes to make the teaching learning process more effective and interesting.

Though this issue was to be an attempt at highlighting how indigenous texts are engaged within classrooms either in the teaching of their cultural contexts and diversities or in their use in teaching of the English language, the articles in this issue are not just restricted to it but instead take on different routes that are equally relevant. While G Susan Suman Bala explores the Panchatantra / Jataka tales as a culturally relevant resource for L2 development, Anchala Paliwal negotiates with caste / class dichotomies in the classroom. Atiya Khan looks into the needs of vernacular medium students in India, an area often neglected in Language research and development and M.R.Vishwanathan highlights the use of cinema, a medium fast gaining recognition and popularity in teaching soft skills. Sahdev Luhar examines the literary syllabi of various departments of English to pose pertinent questions related to 'cultural hegemony', 'required knowledge', 'canon concerns' and 'cultural and ideological implications' of university syllabi for literary studies. The significance of materials development is highlighted by Dipika S Patel and the need to bring in authentic materials in classrooms is argued by the qualitative study of D Vishwa Prasad and Md Shakil Akhtar. In addition, the importance of feedback in training language learners is well taken up by Santosh Mahapatra. Finally, M Ponmani and S Mekala touch upon the role of semantic functions in learning English prepositions. This issue, much like its focus, is a heterogeneous one. It offers a perspective on several aspects of the teaching of English and we hope that our readers enjoy it as much as we did while editing it. Several good articles did not find space in this issue as we were constrained by limited space but we hope to include many more as and when we go fully online. Your responses encourage us to keep going, so do write to us. As always, we look forward to your patronage and comments.

Happy reading!

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Exploring the Panchatantra/Jataka Tales as a Culturally Relevant Resource to Enhance L2 Development

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Introduction

Teachers when faced with a heterogeneous mix of learners in their classrooms must be prepared to teach all students irrespective of their cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial, and social class backgrounds. The term "culturally relevant teaching" was originally introduced by Gloria Ladson-Billings in 1992. However, other anthropologists, socio-linguists, and teacher educators, who searched for ways to find links between the students' home culture and the school, described this type of schooling as *culturally appropriate*, *culturally congruent*, *culturally responsive*, and *culturally compatible*.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant teaching is a term coined by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) to describe "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes." Teachers create a bridge between students' home and school lives, while still meeting the expectations of the district and state curricular requirements. Culturally relevant teaching utilizes the learners background knowledge, and experiences to help the teacher's in planning the lessons and methodology.

This approach to teaching incorporates knowledge from student's cultural background into the instructional strategies and course content in an effort to improve educational outcomes. One of the primary ideas behind culturally relevant pedagogy is to create learning environments that allow students to utilize cultural elements, capital cultural, and other recognizable knowledge that they are familiar with to learn new content and information in order to enhance their schooling experience and academic success.

Principles of Culturally Relevant Teaching

Ladson-Billings contends that culturally relevant pedagogy has three criteria:

- Students must experience academic success.
- Students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence.
- Students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order.

Academic Success: Regardless of social inequities, students must be provided with the tools to achieve academic proficiency. Furthermore, in order to participate in a democratic society, students need to develop skills in literacy and numeracy and to expand their technological, social, and political abilities. Ladson-Billings maintains that culturally relevant teaching "requires that teachers attend to students' academic needs, not merely make them 'feel good'" and that it is imperative to have students "choose academic excellence." By focusing on the importance of academic success in the world, teachers can foster a desire for intellectual achievement.

Cultural Competence: Teachers, who focus on developing cultural competence, encourage students to learn to maintain their "cultural integrity." In their study of African American students in a Washington, D.C., Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu noted that African American students feared "acting White," which meant they would try not to show interest in and succeed in school-related tasks. Many African American and other non-white students perceive school as a place where they cannot be themselves because their culture is not valued in American schools. Ladson-Billings contends, "Culturally relevant teachers utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning." Teachers who use culturally relevant pedagogy provide students with a curriculum that builds on their prior knowledge and cultural experiences.

Critical Consciousness: Ladson-Billings contends that culturally relevant teachers "engage in the world and others critically," and in order to do this, ""students must develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to

critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities." Simply having individual success is not engaging in citizenship, and Ladson-Billings suggests that providing opportunities for students to critique society may encourage them to change oppressive structures.

Aim of the study To explore the ways in which Panchatantra/Jataka tales could be used in the ESL classroom in order to enhance the linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional literacy skills of young ESL learners(from regional medium background) through tasks designed around culturally familiar content.

Hypothesis of the study As culturally familiar content sustains optimal participation in the enterprise of classroom learning it offers children the linguistic scaffolding required to function reasonably well. So we could hypothesize saying that meaningful interaction with the Panchatantra tales promotes L2 development.

Review of Literature Culturally relevant teaching can be helpful in learning outcomes because it can be intellectually stimulating for students. When students have a prior intellectual or emotional connection to a concept it can make critical connection in content that can lead to improved outcomes. Such connections may be identified by the student or mediated by the teacher, and can serve as a "hook" into new concepts, issues, and knowledge to be learned. Culturally relevant teaching can also shape outcome because it is connected to real life. Students want to know how what they are learning "fits" into the real world, as well as how it fits into their own frame of reference. It actively engages or involves students. Even if a topic or task is not immediately relevant to students, active engagement with it can act as a catalyst to develop personal interest. Hollins (1996) adds that education designed specifically for students from diverse cultural background incorporates "culturally mediated cognition, culturally appropriate social situations for learning, and culturally valued knowledge in curriculum content" (p. 13).

Culturally relevant teachers realize not only the importance of academic achievement, but also the maintaining of cultural identity and heritage (Gay, 2000). Students need not sacrifice or compromise with their own cultural identity in the pursuit of academic excellence. Culturally relevant teaching helps in promoting ethnic and cultural diversity in today's schools. Students from culturally diverse backgrounds continue to make a large portion of today's population, particularly in large urban areas. Finally, culturally relevant teaching is guided by a belief that teaching is an art form and not a science. This idea suggests that teaching is a rich and complex endeavor that is built on a wide range of knowledge and skills about students, pedagogy, culture, and the intersection of each of these domains into a unique approach to engaging students in content. It also operates from a standpoint that teachers must have a firm and authentic belief in students' ability to succeed.

Research Questions

- How does culturally situated cognition increase student engagement, effort, and comprehension?
- How does culturally relevant teaching facilitate better education performance among L2 learners?

Methodology

- **Scope:** This paper examines how Panchatantra tales (the culturally familiar content) can be used to facilitate L2 development with special focus on reading, writing and vocabulary.
- **Setting:** The present study was conducted at the Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies, Idulupaya, Kadapa.
- **Subjects:** 30 learners who secured high scores in the class X public exams but who studied in the regional medium schools were considered for this study. They all belonged to the Basic group of language proficiency at the beginning of the study. After a year they all promoted to the advanced group of language proficiency. Comparison of their linguistic proficiency at these two intervals of time proves that content familiarity enhanced L2 development even among regional medium learners.
- **Tools:** Classroom Observation, Informal Interviews and Field Notes were used. Teaching was carried out online. Tasks prepared by the teachers were supervised and observed. Constructive feedback was provided. Notes were taken as a record of the activities done in the class. Finally, interviews were conducted.

Data Collection

To make data collection easier, learners were divided into groups, thereby ensuring cooperative learning as well.

S.No	Culturally Relevant Principle	Referenced in Content Standards (BASIC)	Referenced in Content Standards (ADVANCED)
1.	Involving learners in the construction of knowledge	Basic vocabulary is learnt by guessing the meaning of the word from the context	Learners feel confident about the basic vocabulary an d do not hesitate to discover the knowledge on their own
2.	Building on Students interests and linguistic resources	Topics of interest such as; Favourite festival, Ambition in life and general awareness topics such as health, sports, politics, social issues...	Slightly complicated topics of interest could be selected for discussion/ debate etc. Essay writing, report writing, note making, study skills etc could be taught.

3	Tapping home and community resource	Learners are motivated to introduce themselves and their families, community.	Educational tours, field trips, picnics etc to places such as factories, reservoirs etc could be carried out.
4	Understand-ing Students Cultural Knowledge	Teacher should be aware about the various linguistic, socio-economic and geographical background the learners come from	Teacher plays the role of a friend, philosopher and guide keeping in view the diversity in the class.
5	Using interactive and constructivist teaching strategies	Teachers prepare tasks based on the constructivist approach and facilitate the teaching-learning process	Teachers' role is confined to that of a facilitator to promote learning and enhance construction of knowledge.
6	Examining the curriculum from multiple perspectives	Teachers understand the heterogeneous situation prevalent in the class and cater to the needs of all the learners	Learner centered learning takes place and each learner actively takes responsibility of his/ her own learning. In other words learner autonomy is promoted.

The data collected from the above table (for various lessons) is collected and analyzed.

Findings : In the areas of reading and writing instructional practices increased students' interest and enjoyment of literature; and expanded their vocabulary, sentence patterns, decoding abilities, comprehension, reading rate and fluency. Further, in the areas of writing CRP enhanced learners' confidence, development and organization of ideas, and clarity of thinking.

Implications

As this approach is very effective in successfully enhancing L2 development, it is applicable in EFL contexts too.

Parents and Community could also be made a part of this study. Their voices could be heard too.

This approach could also be applied to content across the curriculum.

Conclusion Through this study we learn that traditional tales such as Panchatantra/ Jataka are culturally relevant content that has the potential to develop L2 among regional medium learners.

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Teaching and Reading Caste in English

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This paper explores the setting of a First year undergraduate classroom, studying a segment on Caste/Class prescribed as part of their English paper. The aim is to look at the reading strategies employed in approaching two texts in English translation, namely an extract from Omprakash Valmiki's autobiography *Joothan* and Marathi Dalit woman writer Hira Bansode's poem 'Bosom Friend' along with an emphasis on caste as a significant part of the cultural framework.

Valmiki's autobiography was originally in Hindi and Hira

Bansode's poem was in Marathi. As components in an English paper, both these works are in English translation. It is important to point out that the teaching of this paper is not limited to merely literature teaching. As a paper for undergraduate beginners, the teacher is required to incorporate techniques of English language teaching for a more effective and wholesome learning experience for the students. The need for English language advanced acquisition and enhancement in its proficiency also form a twin concern.

In Translation Studies, it is common knowledge that concepts and ideas specific to the source culture are expressed in the source language and pose great difficulty in the translated language. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (1999) in *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* point out that 'Translations are always embedded in cultural and political systems, and in history.' (p. 6). At the same time, translations must also be analysed as interventions in the discourse of the powerful. Saugata Bhaduri (2008) in *Translating Power* argues for 'translation of resistance' where ' . . . its repressive and hegemonic potential notwithstanding, translation can be subversively appropriated towards enablement.' (p. xxiv). Caste is one such characteristic requiring a great deal of challenging and interrogating on all accounts. So English translations of Dalit literature available in many Indian languages is the need of the hour as caste enters the classroom, to be understood as a discriminatory practice.

The emergence of the Dalit discourse in recent years has brought to the fore a long overdue struggle and a very integral factor in the cultural framework of India. Caste as a category is no longer ignored, it is now being confronted and interrogated as a discriminatory practice. In contemporary times, the issue of caste is now included in the official syllabi. The language English is generally regarded as a language bereft of caste markers unlike many Indian languages which contain various derogatory words indicative of biases and prejudices pertaining to caste. In such a way, the language English can be considered to have an emancipatory potential as far as the question of caste is concerned.

In this case, the reader is familiar with the aspect of caste in the source culture because it is a part of their lived experience. So the student is engaging with the text at two related but different levels. At the level of content, the student recognises known prejudices in the fabric of the society and is able to challenge them through their tutored analysis. At the level of language, English is the second or third language for them. In a peculiar manner the familiarity of the context is somehow distanced by slight unfamiliarity with the language. The site of struggle for the student is now at the level of language. However a certain knowledge of the context lends the students an amount of confidence to use the English language. It bears testimony to the fact that they can also convey a 'reality which is their own in a language which is not their own' in a significant and successful way. It is this admission of ability to use a language, which is the aim of a language teaching class. It is at this juncture that the teacher has to step in with diverse pedagogical tools to teach English and indigenous cultures along with a sensitive approach to alert them to an extremely relevant issue of caste.

For proficiency in any language, the skill of reading is an integral element. It is a commonplace observation that reading is 'caught' and not 'taught'. In the Indian context, it is usual to find that most Indian languages are taught with a focus on content. And that is an approach which the student carries within even in an English classroom. For an adult learner acquainted with the second / third language English, the first stage is comprehension in reading, which because of prior knowledge of the language, they are able to achieve partly and rarely completely. The teacher's instructions are required to achieve full comprehension by the students. Once the students develop a joy in reading, the craft of the writer and the modes of narration incite their interest and they display enthusiasm in the exercise of reading. Even though in this case, the end semester examinations demand an intensive reading; the pleasure in the practice of reading keeps their attention intact.

Simon Greenall and Michael Swan (1986) state that 'Effective reading means being able to read accurately and efficiently, understanding as much of a text as one needs in order to achieve one's purpose.' (p. 1) They enlist certain features ensuring effective reading, which include extracting main ideas, reading for specific information, understanding text organisation, predicting, checking comprehension, inferring, dealing with unfamiliar words, linking ideas, understanding complex sentences, understanding writer's style, evaluating the text, reacting to the text and writing summaries. In the undergraduate classroom, I tried to incorporate most of these features to aid the process of reading. The students were encouraged to read the prescribed texts with a keen emphasis on the above mentioned factors to inculcate reading comprehensibly as a preferred quality. However, these aims were not explicitly instructed. These ideas were introduced and instilled during the process of reading the texts in the classroom. As is obvious, these factors were immensely helpful in literary analysis of the texts as well.

I will now discuss the variety of responses by the students on the above mentioned chapters. It will shed light on the multiple manners in which the students approached these texts in English translation through reading. A common factor among all these texts was the familiar social setup of indigenous cultures of India, references to everyday occurrences of 'heat and dust', the local milieu and its beliefs, intimate names of people and places and nuances of colloquial speech patterns.

On reading Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan*, after the first few queries about the English translation of the word and concept 'joothan' and a resulting understanding of cultural markers of discriminations and its specific referent words; the students

responded to the stark reality of a life steeped in unfair practices and its ramifications on all aspects of life both in the family and in education. In the prescribed English translation, certain caste specific words have been retained to highlight the extent of caste discriminations. For learners of English, this extract from his autobiography underlines both the importance of education and an even more pressing need to make education available and accessible to all. It is frequently observed as Tapan Basu (2002) points out in the Introduction of *Translating Caste* that 'The coercive aspect of caste power is apparent also in the denial of knowledge to those considered outside the pale of caste power.' (p. xxiii). The language English is read as a medium expressing an immediate, internal experience. As an autobiography, the sense of the self is conveyed through candid conversations between the writer and the reader.

In Hira Bansode's Marathi poem 'Bosom Friend' in English translation, the poetic language brings forward another dimension to language acquisition. 'A stone dropped in the water stirs up things on the bottom' (p. 50). There were various responses to this line which paints a visual image while presenting a thought provoking incident. Such use of language is of special significance in a language classroom. The simplicity of the statement is accompanied with profound meaning. In the context of the poem, this particular line marks the realization on the narrator's part about the latent caste biases of her friend who accepts her invitation to visit her house but finds faults in the presentation of food. Some of the responses to this line were about memory and its role, the invocation of memory not merely about the past but also related to current experience; the far reaching ramifications of a childhood experience and understanding of food as a cultural category. It is interesting to note that indigenous names of certain food items have been retained in the English translation, which maintains the flavour of the source culture.

As an after task induced by these readings, the students were asked to narrate their own personal memories and if they were reminded of events or incidents in their lives. They were encouraged to work in pairs and discuss their subjective experiences, anything which triggers off any remembrances. The students were actively engaged in this task and enjoyed it to a certain degree. An opportunity to express themselves was widely appreciated and accomplishing this task gave them a great sense of confidence. Given below are two responses:

1. "I remember the time when I shared a lunch of *roti* and vegetables with my school friends. It was nice to eat together. Not anymore. In college we hardly eat together. I don't have friends here."
2. "I like coming to college not school and meeting new people. I feel free. School life was strict."

These two responses were selected for their comparative analysis of school and college life. Memory is used as a tool to make sense of the present. Also there is a remarkable use of English language as an expressive medium. The study of indigenous cultures in English facilitates a bond of the individual with their surroundings, removing hesitations in using second or third language. It is also indicative of reading practice lending itself to composition abilities of the language users.

Another aspect of language use which is worthy of attention is that of making the second or third language your own and not constantly imagining it to be the other or that of the other. Conventionally the English language is pre-determined to be a language of the elite and believed to be the domain of the privileged, by the students. However, reading English translations of Indian writings demolish this assumption to a large extent. Neeladri Bhattacharya (2001) states in the Preface of Alok Rai's *Hindi Nationalism* that "When we constitute ourselves through language, we also constitute that language, marking it with the politics of the time. No language comes to us pre-formed, already constituted." (p.viii). This is a realization that the students share and communicate their thoughts in a lucid manner.

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Teacher Professional Development to Support English Language Learning Needs of Vernacular Medium Students in India

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Introduction

English is progressively being deemed as a 'must-know' language in India. It is rather intriguing to observe that in a multilingual country, regardless of official language policies designed to support the use of regional languages in educational contexts, English in fact is used in all areas of everyday living in the country; it is the language of administration and education, and furthermore jobs in India continue to require fluency in English (Gargesh, 2006). As a result, parents in India are more interested in placing their child in a private English-medium school, a school where subjects are taught in the English language, rather than in a regional or native language school (Galab, Vennam, Komanduri, Benny, & Georgiadis, 2013). Due to the poor quality of education in government affiliated vernacular medium schools, even parents from low economic strata want their children to learn English and hence are shifting their kids from government run vernacular medium schools to private English medium schools. Enrolment at vernacular schools is declining drastically. (Masani, 2012).

The English Language Crisis in Vernacular Schools of India:

Only a minority of high-income Indians have the good fortune to be educated in India's elite and expensive private English medium schools. There is still a colossal stratum of the Indian population which attends state affiliated vernacular schools where English is not the chief medium of education and where the status of English is ambiguous (Gupta, 2012). They are deprived of effective English learning and struggle to compete in the job market after formal education (Ramanathan, 2007). It has been observed that vernacular students in India still learn English in traditional ways: rote memorization and drills of repetition (Javalgekar, 2013). The teaching is inappropriate and inadequate as most English teachers teach through the grammar-translation method in vernacular medium schools (Javalgekar, 2013). Jayanthi (2011) argues that there is a gap between what learners of English are taught and what they actually need. Moreover, they deal with English merely as a school subject; English language is not used as a medium of instruction since the vernacular schools emphasize using the regional or native language as the official language for the teaching of all subjects (Pramod & Kad, 2013). Their lingua franca is the regional or native language and they learn English by rote as they do other subjects.

Around 47 million Indians in the 15-24 age range were unemployed, based on the alarming data published in the 2011 Census of India. India's crisis is not just unemployment – but also un-employability of a vast majority of students who are unable to communicate proficiently in English. Students coming from vernacular language schools in India feel diffident, inferior and nervous as they find it difficult to adjust to English medium colleges and universities (Pathan & Shiakh, 2012). A larger supply of confident, English speaking workforce would improve income levels and socio-economic equality in our country. No concrete steps however, are taken by the government to change the situation.

ICT is the Key

The current system of English language education in India is unable to fulfil the emerging wants of people in a competitive and globalized setting (Gargesh, 2006). There is a crucial need for improvement in teaching of English to vernacular medium students mostly from under-privileged socio-economic backgrounds so that they could sustain, flourish and prosper in the real world, as also because there were a lot of dropouts from vernacular schools. Exposing vernacular students to the significance of English language should be an enduring obligation for English language teachers in these environments (Ramanathan, 2007). They should master the various ways of teaching English keeping in mind the teaching-learning needs and contextual constraints.

Recently, the use of ICT as a tool to improve the different English language skills has been foregrounded in India (Chhabra, 2012; Kumaran, 2011; Light, 2009; Light, 2013; Raval, 2014). Perhaps using ICT for teaching English is the answer, but not in the way it is currently being used

nowadays as teachers in India tend to learn and use ICT in a formal and outdated fashion (Chandrakant, 2014). Research on the influence of technology in education frequently reveals that teachers still need to develop their ability and attitude to carry out innovations, that the school culture is not supportive of embracing technology, or that the policies are not relevant to the use of technology (Groff & Mouza, 2008). ICT integrated solutions must be initiated to reduce the disparity faced by children from poor strata due to their inability to communicate in English, then to improve the utilisation of the limited infrastructure and limited teaching staff which exist in vernacular medium schools, and to teach students through affordable technology which makes the English subject fun and easy for them to understand (Kumaran, 2011; Gupta, 2012).

Teacher Professional Development:

Student achievement is not influenced directly by new curricula and materials, or sophisticated ICT infrastructure. Better student outcomes are the end result of better teaching skills (Bolitho & Padwad, 2013). English language teachers, with a suitable ability level and effective resources to cater to the teaching-learning practice, are among the essentials for language learning in any environment and are especially crucial in the case of second language learning (Wang, 2005). The goal of India's education reform is to improve student performance through changes in teaching practices, and changes in teaching practices are likely to result from changes in professional development (Bolitho & Padwad, 2013). Consequently, professional development is one major area, which needs significant changes if quality teachers in India are to become available (Chattopadhyay, 2013).

However, research claims that in-service teachers are seemingly in a constant struggle to reconcile the theory of professional training with the practice of the classroom. Bolitho and Padwad (2013) highlight the problem of sending English language teachers to training workshops that neither meet their needs nor capture their interests, and later result in ill-prepared teachers. Much professional learning should be rooted in the specific contexts in which teachers function (Doecke, Parr, & North, 2008). However, most of the in-service training for teachers in India is reported as one-shot and de-contextualised workshops that are mainly held at schools to meet an urgent need to strengthen teachers' practical knowledge (Padwad & Dixit, 2008). Teacher contributions to their own learning are rarely recognised in India as professional development; teachers' role, responsibility and agency in their own professional development are disregarded (Stannard & Matharu, 2014). As a result, merely officially sanctioned professional development programs obtain recognition and support in India, even if they may not be related to teachers' needs, whereas new forms of professional development based on teachers' own initiatives, needs and interests are not recognised or supported (Bolitho & Padwad, 2013). Teachers end up engaging in formalised learning environments which are separated from their learning needs and outside of their school schedule (Bolitho & Padwad, 2013). As long as this is the case, government funding and resources for vernacular medium schools will continue to be largely ineffective. Schools in India can no longer separate professional development activities from the on-going realities of teachers' work and their workplace. Professional development and teachers' context should be seen as integrated and interdependent by schools and policy makers in India to support change and ongoing improvement efforts towards ICT integrated teaching (Raval, McKenney, & Pieters, 2012). According to Khan (2015), innovative professional development of English teachers in India is achievable with consistent time, school support, and collective participation of teachers.

Recommendations

Based on my review of related literature, a number of factors are important in planning and implementing professional development for English teachers in vernacular medium schools of India. Imported methods of teaching English have been used in a country like India. The language professionals in India have not yet evolved appropriate methods and techniques of teaching English in the Indian context, based on classroom experience, understanding, needs and constraints. We have lived on 'received knowledge' and imported teaching strategies from highly developed countries. But they prove to be ineffective in the context of vernacular medium schools of India which are typically synonymous with overcrowded classrooms, limited infrastructure, low socio-economic student backgrounds, varied curriculum, ineffective textbooks, etc. (Jayanthi, 2011). I suggest a contextual-collaborative approach to improve the quality of teaching and learning English in vernacular medium schools of India. An effective and on-going professional development program, based on the contextual-collaborative approach, should:

1. Identify the vernacular students' needs and constraints of learning English
2. Identify the professional development needs and constraints of English teachers in vernacular schools
3. Design context-based ICT resources within the students and teachers' needs and constraints
4. Engage students and teachers in new pedagogy
5. Monitor and assess implementation
6. Evaluate outcomes
7. Reflect, revise and improve

Conclusion

Teachers in vernacular medium schools have to reconsider their teaching strategies and provide their students with innovative opportunities to deal with English language learning requirements. However, the schools or their English teachers could be hesitant in the beginning or might take time to accept changes in ICT integrated teaching and

professional development based on contextual-collaborative knowledge, theories and methods. Since ICT is not organic to teaching of English in vernacular medium schools of India, it will take extensive time, expert guidance, and school support before the teachers understand its finer nuances, but meanwhile they can learn it well through the contextual-collaborative approach for professional development.

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A Movi(e)ng Experience: Using Films in the Soft Skills Class

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The idea of using films in the second/foreign language classroom is an idea that is nothing to write home about or speak in glorious terms since it is old, tried, *tired* and tested! Teaching soft skills through movies instead of employing dry theoretical appraoches is however a recent discovery that merits discussion since soft skills and their significance have gained importance and loyal clientele in recent years. Colleges specifically advertise for soft skills trainers since companies place a premium on graduates with employable abilities, among them an ability to work in teams and display leadership skills. This paper reports an "experiment" conducted in a National Institute of Technology to see how effective the use of whole length films is in teaching soft skills to students long nourished on a diet of chalk and talk.

Scene 1: A workshop on effective pedagogy for teachers in progress at an IIT. There are a few training sessions which focus on the how, what, when and why of teaching and learning, where invited speakers dwell on their own experiences and that of experts in the area. Much of the presentation is through lecture method and PPTs, leaving the audience bored or indifferent or both. Enthusiasm is on the wane as the hours wear on. The audience is apparently at saturation point.

Scene 2: Postprandial session where more of the same is expected – more lectures and examples of what and what not to do in the classroom. The audience is bracing itself for another round of predictably boring oration when comes a pleasant surprise: a movie on what good teaching is all about, what is expected of a teacher and the transformative impact a fine teacher can have on students. The movie – *Dead Poets Society* – commands the interest and attention of the audience in a manner lectures failed to and holds the watchers spellbound, provoking a series of questions, points and counterpoints about what effective teaching is all about. A teaching point I go back home with.

Introduction One of the challenges of teaching is sustaining the attention of learners for several tens of minutes at a stretch and getting them to learn key ideas, concepts and points as easily as possible while rendering the whole activity very pleasant. The challenge is even more forbidding than imagined in this day and age where gaining one's attention is at a premium as students are familiar with a variety of applications and software - they have them at their fingertips, literally, thanks to mobile phones - that keep them engrossed even as the teacher is waging a futile battle to have a first call on their attention. Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter keep students engaged in a world of their own, leaving the not so tech-savvy teacher totally disconnected and isolated.

Visual aids, video clippings, animations and pictures in particular are relevant in increasing the attention span of the most recalcitrant learner: they keep the learner glued to events as they flash across the screen and enable the teaching of several key points. It is easy for an average learner to visualise in his mind's eye, abstract concepts that otherwise would have not registered in his/her imagination.

The Study The raison d'être for using movies to teach soft skills was born from the IIT trip and subsequently an exercise I undertook on a small scale when teaching soft skills as an open elective to students of third year engineering at National Institute of Technology, Warangal. I used the Internet to show students video clippings from YouTube to illustrate crucial points about teamwork, leadership skills, time management, etc. and was heartened by the response that greeted such visual displays of learning points. It then occurred to me that full length movies instead of short clippings may achieve better purpose since they offer several benefits.

Gebhardt makes a convincing case for teaching that uses movie clippings/trailers:

1. Movies are popular and have universal appeal across cultures, providing current language usage
2. They present visual content in which the dialogue takes

place, action accompanying speech and

3. They show gestures, facial expressions and other body language appropriate to the dialogue (2009, itesl.ej)

Voller and Widdows (1993) have a similar viewpoint when they claim:

> Films *are* fun but that does not mean they don't have pedagogic value too. In fact, because they are associated with entertainment rather than study, they are all the more exploitable as a teaching tool (p.342)

Method I would like to use one movie to illustrate my point. The movie is an excellent example to show leadership skills and team-working skills. It is *The Dirty Dozen- part I*. Tuckman's team building model is best explained using the movie.

In a nutshell, Tuckman model comprises of five stages: **Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing** and finally**, Adjourning**. Each stage builds on the previous one, demands significant adjustment to the team's mind set and the way team members are expected to roll with the punches.

The first stage is when the team forms, with none sure of who their team mates are and what they are good at. This is the "sizing up" stage with members exploring how best they can get along with fellow team mates. The second stage involves identifying resources and gaining control over the situation in order to perform the given assignments. The third stage sees members agree on the happy medium to execute the tasks set for them and find common ground for completing the tasks. The final stage is when members realise the importance of working in tandem and caring for each other. This is where the group establishes an identity of its own and achieves the expected results.

When the model was put before students on the soft skills course, most were confused as some stages seemed a replica of others and they were keen to know if these stages actually happen in real life. One student felt that the distinction between *norming* and *storming* stages was fuzzy and wanted more examples to help clear confusion. Another wondered if any of the stages could be bypassed and if so, when.

Instead of arguing the pros and cons of the model, I showed them a clipping of the capture of Siachen glacier by the valiant Indian troops led by Subedar Bana Singh in 1987. The audacious attack was the culmination of months of planning where the Subedar handpicked 62 men (58 soldiers, 4 JCOs) from the 8th Battalion of the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (8th JAK LI) to launch a concerted attack and reclaim the post under Pakistan's control.

To elaborate the point further, I showed them *The Dirty Dozen (Part I)* after that and the result was satisfying. The movie was chosen since each stage is so clearly delineated and there are sub titles in English making comprehension easy.

The theme is straightforward: Major Reisman, an American major fighting in World War II, is tasked with an unenviable assignment as punishment for insubordination : handpick 12 men condemned to harsh sentences including death by hanging to lead an attack on a chateau occupied by Nazi officers in Rennes, France.

The prisoners include men who are hardened criminals accused of crimes ranging from murder to rape to disobedience and are not easy to befriend, train, or control. These men - Franko, V. R., Vladek, M. , Jefferson, R. T., Pinkley, V. L., Gilpin, S., Posey, S. Wladislaw, T , Sawyer, S. K., Lever, R., Bravos, T. R. , Jiminez, J. ,Maggott, A. J. - are the *dirty dozen* entrusted with the suicidal mission. The major has to assemble a well- trained and heavily armed team from these hardened criminals and he knows as much as his superiors that this is the finest balancing act ever to confront him in his career.

In stage I, Reisman trains the men after briefing them about the mission and the reward awaiting them if they emerge successful: full official pardon and commutation of their sentences after the mission (if they emerge alive). In stage II, after initial skirmishes among team members, everyone takes to saying "we" and "us" from "I" , signalling a "major" victory for the Major. Initially there are instances of racism and open hostility among the men which diminishes by and by. In stage III, the men train themselves to attack the target and help each other cope with the rigours of training. In culmination to their efforts, they have a rehearsal where Colonel Breed's men are outwitted by Reisman's well drilled team of twelve training- hardened veterans, who are now ready to storm the Nazi citadel. They even have a rhyme for carrying out the daring assault.

Down to the road block, we've just begun/ The guards are through/

The Major's men are on a spree/ Major and Wladislaw go through the door/

Pinkley stays out in the drive/ The Major gives the rope a fix/

Wladislaw throws the hook to heaven/ Jimenez has got a date/

The other guys go up the line/ Sawyer and Lever are in the pen/

Posey guards points five and seven/ Wladislaw and the Major go down to delve

Franko goes up without being seen/ Zero-hour – Jimenez cuts the cable, Franko cuts the phone

Franko goes in where the others have been/ we all come out like it's Halloween

At the performing stage, the dirty dozen led by Reisman himself stage an attack on the target and destroy it while losing eleven men in the process. In the event it is a Phyrric victory but crucial for the Allied invasion of France and other occupied territories.

The movie is shown in full and not in segments since the interest of the students is crucial for an understanding of the plot. I wish to present a holistic view and therefore there is no note taking or speaking when the movie is in progress. Instead I ask them to retain as many details as they can

keeping the objective in mind: watch the movie for inputs in soft skills taught that week. I make a point of narrating the storyline in brief before the movie so that students know the background and also what they must watch out for.

This ensures a lively debate on the soft skill being discussed at the moment. This movie shows how teams are formed and the ways to get the best out of team members.

The questions I set for my students are divided into two phases:

Before the movie

1. why is the movie titled "The Dirty Dozen"?
2. What does "dirty" connote?
3. Watch the movie for evidence of team building and leadership qualities.
4. Identify one or two qualities about the Major and the twelve men. (Your observations needn't cover all of the characters, though major Reisman's qualities must figure compulsorily).
5. Did your assumptions about leadership or team building coincide with what you had seen? Explain.

After the movie

1. Identify stages in Tuckman model that are evident in the movie.
2. Is there any stage in Tuckman model that has been omitted or made prominent in the movie?
4. Is team building easy?
5. Can any stage be bypassed in the model?
6. What difficulties do you see/foresee in organising a team?

There are no questions when the movie is being shown i.e. *during the movie*, since I don't wish to rob students of the joy of watching a movie by stopping it midway or every fifteen minutes to ask questions or initiate a discussion.

The method has been successful in that it has evoked keen participation and enthusiasm among students who see the significance and the necessity of soft skills in real life.

Conclusion The rationale for using movies as authentic material to teach any intangible skill is so appositely accounted for by Sherman (2010):

> …, video is today's medium. Print may still be powerful but many people spend more time with audio-visual media; video techniques, discourses and clichés are more familiar to them than the world of books and papers (p.2)

It is both restorative and entertaining to exploit the potential of movies to teach various soft skills. The choice of movies and the type of questions put to the students will determine the efficacy of the methods for teaching.

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Who's Who in FORTELL

Departments of English and Literary Syllabi: Notes on Cultural Reproduction

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Departments of literature in higher education, then, are part of the ideological apparatus of the modern capitalist state. They are not wholly reliable apparatuses ...

(Eagleton, 2003, p. 174-5)

Literary studies has never been a neutral process of imparting aesthetic knowledge but has proved an institutional mechanism of cultural (re)production. Since its inception in the colonial time, English literary studies has been engaged in forming the hegemonic cultural practices in India. Earlier it was a tool of cultural domination in the hands colonial rulers, today it is an institutional stratagem to construct a kind of cultural elitism

(Luhar, 2014, p. 76)

These two epigrammatic standpoints may seem personal discernments but they hint at the pragmatic veracities of the English literary studies in India and abroad. The earlier pronouncement of Terry Eagleton suggests that the departments of literature are the ideological apparatus of modern capitalist state. Whatever text they teach as curriculum has certain *values, meanings,* and *tradition*. They function to materialise the vision of the modern capitalist society and their priorities. The later proclamation alludes to the "fact" that the aesthetic knowledge has disappeared from the literary studies instead it has assumed the form of institutional mechanism for cultural reproduction. Literary studies has been functioning as a cultural apparatus for disseminating hegemony to different social groups – earlier for the colonisers and now for the dominant social-political groups. The present paper highlights how the Indian departments of English reproduce cultural hegemony through their literary syllabi. What are the cultural and ideological implications of university syllabi for literary studies? What is the cultural relevance of what has been sold as "required knowledge"? Who has the responsibilities of designing the best syllabus for the students and how it has been regulated? – these are some of important queries that the university departments are facing today.

The growing 'canon concerns' in the western universities encouraged the Indian universities for the canonical revision of the syllabus. This led to the inclusion of many national canons like American, Canadian, Australian, Indian, etc., along with gender-caste-region-based canons into the syllabi of English at postgraduate level. Notable changes have been introduced, at the postgraduate stage, in the syllabi of English in last three decades. A study of the selected departments of English of Indian universities suggests that the departments of English have engaged themselves with formation of different canons. In the last three decades, the MA (English) curriculum has undergone a drastic change. It has offered a variety of papers. The papers which were offered earlier have been replaced by more thematic, innovative and skill-oriented papers. Here, an attempt is made to study the relationship between university syllabi and canon formation using instance of the Indian English fictions.

The analysis of the fourteen Indian universities[1] suggests that in the university departments of English, the concerns for the 'region', where they are located, have increased. Many university departments have introduced the regional works in English translation to make the students aware of regional literary output. For instance, Kakatiya University which is located in Warangal (Andhra Pradesh) has introduced Annamayya and Vemana as well as *Bhakti* tradition of Nayanars and Alwars, Virasaivism and its contribution to social reform, Vaishnava Bhakti, Haridasa movement etc. in paper named as "Indian Classics in Translation". Similarly the University of Kashmir, Kashmir has introduced Kashmiri writers such as Shaikh-ul-Alam, Lal Ded, Mahmood Garni, Rasul Mir, Qurat-ul-Ain Haider, Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din, HK Bharati, and HK Koul in the paper called "Translation and Translation Theories". The same is the case with other universities as well. To make the students competent, the university departments have introduced papers like "Language Management and Communication Skills",

"Classroom Applications", "Fundamental of Information Technology", "Writing for Academic and Professional Purposes", "English Grammar and Writing", "Communicative English", and "Modern English Grammar and Usage."

The university departments of English have also decanonised some of the subjects. The study of Indian Aesthetics is gradually vanishing in the departments of English. Similarly in the 1980s, Dalit Studies has emerged out as an emerging area of study. However the analysis of these fourteen university syllabi suggests that the dalit studies is ignored intentionally or unintentionally. Many universities have showed their concerns for the Black literature or Afro-American literature but the dalit literature which is home-grown literature is ignored with no reason. However, one must appreciate the inclusion of the papers such as "Children's Literature", "Literature and Film", "Cultural Studies", "Literature and Philosophy", "Environment and Indian Writing in English" in the syllabi of MA (English). But these papers are not offered by all the universities.

It appears that the university departments of English have engaged themselves in elite culture formation. The post-1980s Indian English fictions which appear in the syllabi of the selected universities substantiate this fact[2] If one divides the prescribed authors in Hindu and Non-Hindu categories, he/she would certainly observe that the majority of the Hindu writers (around 50%) who are taught in MA (English) classroom are Brahmins. Remaining 50 per cent are occupied by those non-Brahmin writers who are upper-caste westernised Indians. Salman Rushdie, the hero of 1980s, is the only Muslim writer introduced in MA (English). Bapsi Sidhwa and Rohinton Mistry are the Parsi writers, the first lives in the USA and the other in Canada. Apart from these three writers, all are upper caste Hindus.

Stuart Hall holds that the (cultural) hegemony can be maintained by "winning and shaping consent so that the power of the dominant classes appears both legitimate and natural" and it can be sustained so long as the dominant classes "succeeds in framing all competing definitions within their range" (Durham, 2001, p.150). Even if this hidden agenda fails, it anyway ensures that the presence of the subordinate groups in an 'ideological' arena which does not appear *ideological* at all. Such hegemonic control, perhaps, is reminiscent of what Barthes calls 'mythology' which performs the functions of naturalisation and normalisation. These assertions lead to an essential facet of hegemony that "it has to be won, reproduced, sustained" (Ibid: 151). Precisely the same apparatus was employed by the Brahmins to maintain their superiority over the 'other' castes. An 'intellectual' space that the Brahmin writers have formed for themselves is in fact the consequence of their shrewdness which came to them through the colonial transaction. They realised that teaching of Sanskrit to the Indian masses would distort its vitality and would pose challenges to them. They did not want to lose the *culture capital* that they have attained through long-standing pedantic-hegemonic practices. They thought that the socio-religious capital which they had earned through selling the Sanskrit; similarly they could also acquire newer emergent culture capital through learning English. During the colonial epoch only, they could envisage the formation of English as a global language and took up the opportunity to rule over the masses. They were the masters of Sanskrit, the language of Gods, and wanted to be the master of English, the language of the rulers. Both the languages kept them close to power – religious and colonial. Since the formation of the caste-system, they knew it well that educating the masses imparts the power to control them, hence the Brahmin as a community, first of all, learnt English only to teach the 'other' masses and to maintain their hegemony. But the colonial era was the time of cultural insurgency when it was not possible to entice the majority Indians masses only through teaching. They realised that they must integrate the national flavour in their teaching; it had to be made more social and easily acceptable. The increasing caste-consciousness in the colonial era indicated to them that the shifting wind wanted them to cast off their Brahminical self and this was the only way out to win the consent of the ruling the masses. This led to the process of de-Brahminisation which was again a stratagem of reproducing and sustaining their Brahminical hold. Prof. V. K. R. V. Rao opines that "the de-Brahminised Brahmin may no longer be a caste, but his new ways, being in tune with the forces of change, are likely not only to ensure his survival but felicitate his retaining a position of high status and authority" (Paranjape, 2000, p.57). The de-Brahminisation was a policy to embrace a newer-secular identity without giving up hereditary caste-based privileges. One can easily find this ideological apparatus still present in the contemporary Indian society and these selected fictions points towards this fact. This is the reason why the post-1980s Indian English fiction seems more Brahminised, elite or upper caste.

Out of these twenty one selected fictional works, sixteen have won some literary prizes or at least have been shortlisted for the prizes. These are introduced in the syllabi of more than two universities. Those fictions which are not awarded any award or prize are introduced once only. This tendency suggests that the university departments of English are fascinated by the award-winning fictions or writers. Awarding prizes do not reflect over the quality of the text or by no means have they hinted at standardised practice, they only show the influence of the west. Whatever the west stamps as good by awarding prizes are warmly welcomed by the university departments of English. The valuation of literary texts through awarding prizes does not guarantee aesthetic value. Terry Eagleton believes that "value is always 'transitive' – that is to say, value for somebody in a particular situation-and … always culturally and historically specific" (Huggan, 2001, p. 28). Similar to other cultural forms, a literary text does not have intrinsic value – its value is contingent. Hence the award which is announced on its contingent value does not emerge as a locus of immanent value. Most of the Indian English fictions are published by the foreign publishing companies. Thus, the foreign company still dominates the taste of the Indian readers. The common

man is forgotten in the syllabi of the selected universities. Those who write Indian English fiction live abroad and the culture they depict is not real but is memory's truth.

Thus, the MA (English) syllabus of the Indian universities is more inclined towards the west. It has created the western cultural outlook in India. The cultural implication of the syllabus may prove fatal to the national and indigenous cultural artefacts of India. The Indian universities still sell or disseminate the westernised cultural forms.

Notes

1. This paper is based on the analysis of the fourteen Indian universities' syllabi for MA (English programme): Andhra University, Kakatiya University, Bharathiar University, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Osmania University, Gurunanak Dev University, Karnataka University, North-Eastern Hill University, Punjab University, Punjabi University, Calcutta University, University of Jammu, and University of Kashmir.
2. It is observed that Indian universities are influenced by certain writers and their post-1980s fiction dominates Indian English studies. These writers are: Amitav Ghosh (*The Shadow Lines, The Hungry Tides, Sea of Poppies*), Anita Desai (*Clear Light of the Day, Fasting Feasting, In Custody*), Anita Nair (*Ladies Coup*), Arundhati Roy (*The God of Small Things*), Bapsi Sidhwa (*Ice-Candy Man*), Chitra Banerji Divakaruni (*Sister of My Heart*), Githa Hariharan (*Thousand Faces of Night*), Namita Gokhale (*Gods, Graves and Grandmother*), RK Narayan (*Tiger for Malgudi*), Rohinton Mistry (*A Fine Balance, Such a Long Journey*), Salman Rushdie (*Midnight's Children, The Moor's Last Sigh*), Shashi Deshpande (*A Matter of Time, The Binding Vine, That Long Silence*) and Shashi Tharoor (The Great Indian Novel).

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Significance of Materials Development in Language Teaching

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Introduction

Most countries attribute the English Language to be the global language. As a result, English is used in international communication both orally and in written communication, for general as well as specific needs. English teachers usually teach their students by using available textbooks. However, such learning materials which are ideally suitable for the needs of the students are not always available. This situation should not discourage teachers as far as they have the objectives of the teaching. By having objectives of the teaching/learning or being familiar with the needs of the learners, the teachers can develop their own materials for the learners to achieve the objectives or to fulfil the learner's need.

A decade ago, a collection titled 'Materials Development in Language Teaching' edited by Tomlinson (1998) made little reference to the contribution of computers, apart from a discussion of corpus data and concordances and Alan Maley's observation that man stands on the threshold of a new generation of computerised materials for language teaching. The absence of a focus on computer-assisted language learning materials in that collection was remarked on (Johnson 1999, Levy 2006), as an indicator of the divide between CALL and the wider field of language teaching. In the decade since Tomlinson's book, opportunities for language learning and teaching have been further transformed by the rapid development of a wide range of technology mediated resources, materials, tasks and learning environments. The place of these developments in the field of language teaching has been the subject of debate. Coleman (2005), for example, argues that current research and practice in CALL has the potential to enhance our

understanding of language learning and teaching, but that it remains in a relatively marginal position.

I. Materials Development

Language teaching has five important components: students, teachers, materials, teaching methods and evaluation. Nunan (1992) states that teaching materials are often the most substantial and observable component of pedagogy. In addition, Cunnings (Richards, 2003) summarized the role of materials (particularly textbook) in language teaching as a resource - for presentation materials; activities for learners practice and communicative interaction; for learners on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation stimulation and ideas for classroom activities; a support for less experienced teachers

Generally, teachers tend to use all guidance provided by a textbook. However, it is a fact that a textbook does not always meet the variety of conditions in a language class (Ur, 1996; Richards, 2003). Sometimes, teachers need to explore teaching materials outside textbooks and modify them in order to be relevant to the need and demands of particular group of students. Teachers' experiences and understanding of their students is very important in materials development, so that the students are motivated in learning the target language. According to Tomlinson (1998) materials development refers to anything which is done by writers, teachers or learners to provide sources of language input in ways which maximize the likelihood of intake. In doing so, materials developers, including teachers, may bring pictures or advertisements in the classroom, compose a textbook, design a student worksheet, read a poem or an article aloud.

Principles in Developing Materials

Tomlinson (Richards, 2001) suggests some basic principles in conducting materials development for the teaching of language:

- Material should achieve impacts, help learners to feel at ease & to develop confidence
- What is being taught should be perceived by learners as relevant and useful?
- Materials should require and facilitate learner self-investment, provide the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes.
- Materials should take into account that positive effects of instruction are usually delayed, learners have different learning styles and differ in affective attitudes
- Materials should permit a silent period at the beginning of instruction, should not rely too much on controlled practice and should provide opportunities for outcome feedback

In addition, Crawford (Richards-Renandya, 2002) states that materials obviously reflect the writer's views of language & learning and teachers (and students) will respond according to how well these match their own beliefs and expectations. Some points to be considered in providing effective materials:

- Language - is functional and must be contextualized; should be realistic and authentic; requires learner engagement in purposeful use of language
- Classroom materials will usually seek to include an audio visual component
- SL learners need to develop the ability to deal with written/spoken genres
- Materials need to be flexible enough to cater to individual and contextual differences

Characteristics of Teaching Materials

Littlejohn & Windeatt (1989) argue that materials have a hidden curriculum that includes attitudes toward- knowledge; teaching/learning; role and relationship of the teacher/ student, and values and attitudes related to gender, society, etc. Materials have an underlying instructional philosophy, approach, method, and content, including both linguistic and cultural information. Clarke (1989) argues that communicative methodology is important and is based on authenticity, realism, context and a focus on the learner. Most people associate the term teaching materials only with course books because that has been their main experience of using teaching materials. However, in fact, the term can be used to refer to anything which is used by teachers or learners to facilitate the learning of the language. Related to that, materials can be classified into some types as follows:

Printed materials: Textbook, student's worksheet, pictures, photographs, newspapers & magazines

Audio materials: cassette & compact disc

Audio visual: video compact disc, film

Interactive teaching materials: web based learning materials, computer assisted instruction.

Authentic materials refers to the use in teaching of texts, photographs, video selections, and other teaching resources that are not specially prepared for pedagogical purposes.

Created materials refer to textbooks and other specially developed instructional resources.

Edge (1993) uses the term "teacher-produced materials" and "student materials" to refer to how the materials are produced or used during the process of teaching/learning in the classroom. **Teacher - produced materials** play an important role to bridge the gap between the classroom and the world outside. In doing so, teachers might produce their own worksheets for their students.

Student-produced materials

Teachers can ask the students to produce simple maps that they know as the basis for an activity. In this way, students are then using their own knowledge & personal background to produce learning materials for their classmates.

Students as materials

When we see the learners as materials, we can also use our methods to make learning enjoyable. In doing so, teachers could, for instance: ask a student to close his/her eyes & describe what someone else is wearing; describe what someone else is wearing until the rest of us can recognize

that person; divide the class into pairs and ask each pair to do one the above

II. Materials Evaluation

Tomlinson-Manuhara (2004) use the term "materials evaluation" as the activity which measures the value of a set of learning materials by making judgments about the effect of the materials on the people using them. It tries to measure, for example: appeals of the materials to the learners; materials validity/flexibility; materials ability to interest the learners; materials potential learning value; delivery & assessment.

Evaluating Textbook

When teachers open a page in their textbook, they have to decide whether they should use the lesson on that page with their class. If the language, content and sequencing of the textbook are appropriate, the teacher might want to go ahead and use it. If, however, there is something wrong with the textbook, the teacher has to decide what to do next. Therefore, when evaluating the quality of a textbook's exercises or activities, four key questions should be answered (Garnier, 2002):

- √ Do the exercises and activities in textbook contribute to student's language acquisition?
- √ Are the exercises balanced in their format, containing both controlled and free practice?
- √ Are the exercises progressive as the students move through the textbook?
- √ Are the exercises varied and challenging?

Adapting Materials

Edge (1993) stated that materials exist in order to support learning/teaching, so they should be designed to suit the people & the processes involved. Most teachers are not creators of teaching materials but providers of good materials. For that purpose, teachers may conduct materials adaptation in order that they can provide good materials for their students. Materials adaptation involves changing existing materials so that they become more suitable for specific learners, teachers or situations.

Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004) suggest that the most effective way of conducting material adaptation is to:

- Have a large bank of categorized materials that you can readily retrieve for adaptation.
- Have colleagues with whom you can share resources and who are willing to go through the adaptation process together; have colleagues who are happy to give you feedback on your adapted materials.
- Be in an environment in which materials evaluation, adaptation & development are encouraged & teacher's time and efforts are acknowledged.
- Revisit adapted materials and improve them.

Conclusion

This article has emphasised the significance of materials development in language program. Though there are five elements in language teaching and learners should be the centre of teaching. However, materials often control the teaching, since teachers and learners tend to rely heavily on them. Materials that are appropriate for a particular class need to have an underlying instructional philosophy, approach, method and technique which suit the students and their needs. Teachers need to look for good materials, both commercial and non-commercial, all the time. When the teachers decide to adapt authentic or created materials, it means that they are bridging the gap between the classroom and the world.

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Use of Authentic Materials in the English Language Classrooms of Secondary Schools: A Qualitative Study

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Introduction

India is a vast country with different languages in different parts of the country. These regional languages differ from each other so much so that it is not possible to communicate with the people of other regions of the country. English is important in India due to the following reasons:

i. There are more than sixteen hundred languages in India. English bridges this gap and connects people of one region to the other.

ii. English is important for international relations, trade and commerce and is the language of diplomacy.

iii. Most of the books of science and technology are written in English. Therefore, English is a key to learning and acquisition of scientific knowledge.

iv. English promotes tourism and propagates our cultural heritage.

v. English is a window to the world of internet.

vi. It puts forth our views strongly before the world and makes us world citizens.

vii. It offers a lot of avenues for employment.

Materials Used in English Language Teaching

The teaching of any subject is usually based on an analysis of the nature of the subject, teaching and learning principles rooted in research and theory related to psychology of education and philosophy of education. Any teaching-learning enterprise deals with syllabus, approaches/methods, materials and evaluation. In this article we shall deal with teaching-learning materials. Materials play an important role in teaching any subject. In teaching a language, two types of materials are used: Materials for Classroom Teaching: These materials are exclusively prepared for teaching a language, for example textbook/s etc and Authentic Materials such as pamphlets and brochures, which are meant for purposes other than teaching but are also used in a language classroom.

Materials for Classroom Teaching: These materials are prepared by the English language experts to fulfill the needs of learners. They provide standard information but there are monotonous. They fail to motivate the learners and promotes teacher burnout and nor do they provide contextual/ situational or real world language. Hence, it is necessary for the English language teachers to develop their own materials according to the needs of learners and societal demands.

Authentic Materials: Authentic materials have real language. In order to achieve the objectives of English language teaching it is important for the English language teachers to exploit other materials around them according to the needs of learners and to create interest in them. These materials are effective and easily available.

Authentic materials provide resources for ELT teachers and offer them the opportunity to expose learners to materials produced for real life and out of classroom contexts. The focus is on the message and means and context are often used to help to communicate it. If teachers use authentic texts sensibly, they provide learners with alternatives to learn real English usage.

Sources of Authentic Materials: There are a lot of sources for authentic materials, which are economic and easily available every time and everywhere. They are: Agony Columns, Audio Cassettes, Brochures, Cartoons, Comics, Currency, Directories, Greeting Cards, Images, Internet, Invitation Cards, Advertisements, Journals, Magazines, Maps, Menus, Movies, News Papers, Notices, Post-Cards, Pictures, Product Labels, Puppets, Recipe, Songs, Stamps, TV Programmes, Tickets, Wall Papers, Weather Reports etc.

Advantages of Using Authentic Materials

There are a lot of advantages of using authentic materials in English language classrooms. They provide situational language and students are exposed to real discourse. Not only are they interesting for learners but are also very helpful

in developing social language skills. Authentic materials develop creativity among teachers as well as learners and are highly motivating. They provide knowledge of real situations of life and make the learners aware of these situations. They develop ability of interpretation and are very economic and easily available everywhere. These are helpful in minimizing the level of hesitation among the learners and not only can the same material can be used to teach different classes but also encourage the learners to read for pleasure.

Research Methodology: This is a qualitative study. It uses percentages to draw conclusions.

Objectives: The objectives of the study are to find out if the teachers are aware about authentic materials and whether they use such materials in the classroom. What kinds of materials are used and the difficulties faced in using these materials.

Research Questions:

1. Do the English language teachers of secondary schools of Hyderabad know about authentic materials?
2. Do they use them in English language classrooms? If yes, what kind of authentic materials do they use in teaching English? Give examples.
3. Which type of authentic materials do they find more useful and motivating in teaching English?
4. When and how do they use these materials?
5. What kind of difficulties do they face in using authentic materials?
6. What is the reaction of the Head Master, when the teachers use these materials?
7. What is their opinion about authentic materials after using them?

Tools: The study uses open-ended questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire has eight questions.

Sample: 30 English language teachers were selected from 19 secondary schools. The teachers were selected on the basis of simple random sampling.

Analysis and Interpretation: The analyses are done in a sequential order.

Question 1

What do you know about Authentic Materials?

In response to this question, 50% of the total teachers affirmed that they were aware of authentic materials.

Question 2

Do you use them in English language classroom? If 'Yes', what kind of authentic materials do you use in teaching English? Give example.

In response to this question, it was observed that 30% of the total teachers were using news papers, 10% of them use magazines and news papers, 10% use pictures, 3.33% use T.V. News, 3.33% use Audio Tapes, 3.33% use story books while 3.33% use story cards.

Question 3

Which type of authentic material do you find more useful and motivating in teaching English?

In response to this question, 26.67% opined that news papers are more useful and motivating, 3.33% favoured pictures, 3.33% favoured audio-video tapes, 3.33% story books while 3.33% opined that T.V. News are more useful and motivating.

Question 4

When do you use these materials?

36.67% teacher informed that they use it during teaching while 10% of the total teachers use authentic materials after teaching, 3.33% use it any time.

Question 5

How do you use these materials?

In response to this question, 10% of the total teachers mentioned that they use articles from magazines and newspapers for reading. 3.33% give projects based on authentic materials, 6.67% show pictures and ask the students to explain them while 30% teachers' views were not clear about it.

Question 6

What kind of difficulties do you face in using authentic materials?

3.33% opined that it is time consuming, 3.33% felt due to technical problems it becomes difficult, 26.67% opined that it is very difficult for learners with poor language background while 3.33% opined they didn't face any difficulty in using authentic materials.

Question 7

What is the reaction of the Head Master / School Manager, when you use these materials?

46.67% of the total teachers responded that the Head Master / School Manager appreciate and encourage it while 3.33% teachers' views were not clear about it.

Question 8

What is your opinion about authentic materials after using them?

43.33% of the total teachers' opined that if authentic materials are used properly, it can be very useful for English Language Teaching. These materials improve the speaking skills and make English Language Learning interesting.

Conclusion

The following research was done for the survey of use of authentic materials by the English language teachers of secondary schools of Hyderabad. The following conclusion can be drawn from it:-

1. It has been found that only 50% of teachers are aware of authentic materials.
2. Most of the teachers use news papers as authentic materials.
3. It shows that it is more beneficial for those students whose educational background and previous knowledge is better.
4. The school administration has a positive attitude towards authentic materials.
5. According to the teachers using authentic materials, authentic materials are causation of co-operation and motivation among students.
6. These materials promote ability of conversation and explanation of the students.
7. These materials make the teaching learning process interesting.

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The Role of Semantic Functions in Learning English Prepositions

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Introduction

The essential requisite of a successful written text is to employ the language effectively in a given context. So it becomes necessary for English major students to master the nuances of the language system. In fact, students find it difficult to learn the function words rather than content words. Function words such as prepositions show the relationship between groups of words. Carmen (2004) opines that ESL students do not possess the knowledge and awareness related to the function of prepositions. The function and usage of prepositions are perennial constraints for ESL learners. Though the students have learnt grammatical aspects for many years, they still struggle to employ prepositions in English sentences. Their inappropriate use of prepositions generally affect the understanding of written texts, as prepositions are stressed and audible in written communication. According to Collins (1991), three out of ten most frequent words of the English language are prepositions. Prepositions are more significant in language use, as they belong to active parts of speech in English. Besides being significant structural elements, prepositions also serve as essential discourse markers and basic components in producing written texts (Carmen, 2004). The learners find it difficult to systemize English prepositions, due to their sheer number and polysemous nature. In English, there are almost 100 prepositions attributed to multiple meanings. The meaning of prepositions varies according to the context. The learners are not able to comprehend the contextual and syntactic meaning of prepositions and use it in relevant places. In this respect, this paper examines the cause for difficulty in incorporating appropriate prepositions in their writing. Further, it attempts to find out the prepositions that are misused by learners.

Theoretical Framework

Preposition is a word that shows the relationship between noun or pronoun and the other words in a sentence. It is always used before a noun or pronoun and it links nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence. The word or phrase that the prepositions introduce is called the object of a sentence. According to Lyons (1968), the term preposition is employed to refer to a class of invariable words, which has a grammatical or local function and which tend to occur immediately before the noun or noun phrase they modify. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) state that a preposition expresses a relationship between two entities; one being represented by the prepositional complement of various types of relational meaning. These relationships include those of time, position, direction and various degrees of mental and emotional states (Castro, M.C.S.A, 2013). Thomson and Martinet (1986) state that prepositions never change their form regardless of the case, gender etc. of the word they are referring to.

Types of Prepositions

On the basis of syllable, prepositions can be classified into simple and complex prepositions.

Simple prepositions are monosyllabic and unstressed whereas complex prepositions are polysyllabic and stressed. For example,

Simple prepositions – in, on, at, for, with, from etc.

Complex prepositions – Two words: because of, due to, instead of, etc.

Three words: in spite of, on behalf of, as far as, etc.

Irrespective of this, prepositions can be categorized on the basis of their functions. They are:

1. Prepositions of Time – in, on, at, etc.
2. Prepositions of Place – in, on, at, etc.
3. Prepositions of Direction – to, towards, through, etc.
4. Prepositions of Agent – by, with, etc.
5. Prepositions of Instrument – by, with, on, etc.
6. Prepositional Phrase – listen to, look at, consist of, etc.

Apart from these types, Biber et al. (2000) have differentiated preposition on the basis of their meaning and context. They are,

Free Prepositions – They have an independent meaning and do not depend on any specific words in the context.

Bound prepositions – They have little independent meaning and do depend on other specific words (often the preceding verb) in the context.

Prepositions have been called the biggest little words in English. They are usually quite short and insignificant looking but they have very important functions (Mus, 2012). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) have asserted that prepositions are generally troublesome to learners, for whom English is a foreign or second language. It implies that in spite of having good knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, ESL/EFL learners seem to have difficulties with the correct usage of prepositions. Dulay & Burt, 1972; Tucker & Scott, 1974; and Hamdallah, 1988 have revealed that it takes a long time for the learner of English as a second/foreign language to acquire prepositions. So, it necessitates analysing the learners' errors in prepositions.

Research Questions

The study aims at finding the answer for the following questions:

1. What are the most common errors in prepositions that are committed by students?
2. Why do students commit those errors?

Methodology & Participants

The study was conducted with 51 second year B.A English Literature students of Sri Bharathi Arts & Science College for Women, Pudukkottai. These students were expected to be proficient in English and were supposed to express their thoughts and subject content in error free sentence structures. All homogeneous (female) students had passed higher secondary level of examination. Most of the students had regional medium of instruction (Tamil) during their schooling. All students had Tamil as their mother tongue except one student. The girls were from both rural and urban backgrounds and had studied English as a subject for more than ten years in school. In spite of that, most of them were not good at writing and their proficiency in English was very low.

Diagnostic Test

In order to find out the students' ability to use English prepositions a diagnostic test was conducted. Gap-fill exercise was assigned to the students. Seven monosyllabic and four polysyllabic prepositions were tested. The students were asked to fill the appropriate prepositions in the given 32 blanks.

Results and Discussion

The students' errors in employing appropriate prepositions in the given blanks were analysed.

Table 1. Correct and Wrong Usage of Prepositions

Total	Correct Use	%	Error	%
1632	624	38.24	1008	61.76

Table 1 shows that the number of incorrect usage of prepositions is 1008 out of 1632 English prepositions and the percentage of errors is 61.76% to the total use of prepositions. It implies that the learners are not aware of the function and usage of prepositions.

Research Question 1

In order to find out the most common errors in prepositions that are committed by students, frequency of errors in simple and complex preposition were calculated.

Table 2 Frequency of Errors in Simple and Complex Prepositions

Prepositions		Use Target Frequency	%	Error Frequency	%
Simple Prepositions	In	510	31.250	265	26.29
	To	306	18.750	201	19.94
	Of	204	12.500	169	16.77
	At	153	9.375	99	9.82
	For	153	9.375	85	8.43
	From	51	3.125	22	2.18
	With	51	3.125	26	2.58
Complex Prepositions	Into	51	3.125	50	4.96
	Over	51	3.125	34	3.37
	Across	51	3.125	28	2.78
	After	51	3.125	29	2.88
Total		1632	100%	1008	100%

It is observed from table 2 that most of the students committed errors in using simple prepositions. In particular, the students found it difficult to employ the prepositions such as **'in, to, of, at** and **for'**. The error frequencies of the prepositions are as follows: **'in** (26.29%), **to** (19.94%), **of** (16.77%), **at** (9.82%) and **for** (8.43%)**'**. In spite of the common use of these prepositions, students were not able to apply it correctly because of the polysemous nature of prepositions. Polysemy is a semantic characteristic of words that have multiple meanings (Koffi, 2010). For example, it was found that the preposition **'at'** has seven different meanings under different instances (Hudson, 1979). Driven (1993) exemplifies how the usage of the preposition **'at'** is usually perceived in terms of 'space' and 'time' but it can be extended to 'state', 'area', 'manner', 'circumstances' and 'cause'.

1. Place : at the railway station
2. Time : at an early date
3. State : at work
4. Area : good at guessing
5. Manner : at full speed
6. Circumstance : at these words
7. Cause : laugh at

This study confirms that students' most common errors occur in polysemic prepositions.

Research Question 2

The students commit errors in prepositions due to the unmarkedness nature of it. A preposition which encodes seven or more than seven meanings is considered to be unmarked prepositions, while those with less than seven meanings are considered marked prepositions. In the diagnostic test, prepositions like **'in, to, of, at** and **for'** are unmarked prepositions, whereas **'from, with, into, over, across,** and **after'** are marked prepositions. The percentage of errors was substantially high in unmarked prepositions than marked prepositions. It is inferred that learners have found it difficult to learn prepositions that have multiple meanings. The learners often use the following prepositions erroneously: **'in** instead of **at'**, **'to** instead of **for'**, **'of** instead of **in'** and vice versa due to its unmarkedness nature.
For example,

in
Palaniappan lives ~~at~~ London.

to
I wrote a letter ~~for~~ my mother yesterday.

for in
I have arranged a room ~~to~~ you ~~at~~ my home.

at of
My house is located ~~in~~ the foothills ~~in~~ the Vindhya Range.

These sentences indicate that in spite of frequent, regular and common use of prepositions such as **'in, at, to, for, of,'** students find it difficult to use them because of its multiple functional meanings. Prepositions that have many semantic functions are comparatively difficult for the students.

Conclusion

Though the use of prepositions is listed in common usage, they pose great challenge for ESL learners. The use of appropriate prepositions is essential to achieve communicative competence, as prepositions facilitate all circumstantial relations in the given context. The ability to use correct prepositions avoids misconception in the language usage. Especially in any written context, prepositions act as discourse markers in comprehending the text cohesively. In spite of frequency and familiarity in learners' language data, they find it difficult to systemize prepositions that have many meanings. In this study, the learners have committed considerable number of errors in using prepositions such as: **'in, to, of, at** and **for'** having multiple semantic functions. It is inferred from this study that polysemous nature or unmarkedness of prepositions are the challenging aspects of comprehension and are considered as significant constraints in the use of prepositions for learners in their academic writing.

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Training Language Learners to Use Feedback: An Action Research at BITS Pilani, Hyderabad

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This study is based on the researcher's own experience of finding a solution to a pedagogic problem related to the use of feedback by students. It is often observed that even if teachers learn to provide constructive feedback to students, it does not yield great results in terms of student achievement. Students often do not utilize the feedback the way the teacher would like them to. There could be many reasons behind it. But the important ones could include lack of learner training in using feedback, absence of any follow-up activity and an unfavourable institutional belief about the role of feedback in learning. In this connection, the researcher made an attempt to train his learners in *Advanced Communicative English*, a course on academic communication skills, at BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus. The aim was to raise their awareness about how to utilize the feedback given on their presentation skills and enhance the same skills in the process.

Learner Training and its Impact on Learning

Learner training is an essential step towards promoting learner autonomy in the classroom. According to McCarthy (1998), it can help 'improve learning'. Brown has quite appropriately called it *strategy-based instruction*. Research on *learning strategies* also focuses on learner training and its impact on learner achievement. The impact of training on learners has been often found to be positive (Cohen, Weaver & Li, 1998; Rossiter, 2003; Kirkwood, 2005). However, any such success entails meticulous planning and focused execution. The teacher should try to prepare students to self-reflect and develop students' metacognitive awareness - an awareness about their own thinking - so that they become independent learners.

Role of Feedback in Language Learning

Formal instruction remains incomplete without feedback. Merrill (2002) gives it strong position in instructional design theory and asserts that it leads learner guidance. Feedback can be explicit or implicit, oral or written, negative or positive, form-focused or meaning-focused. It is the teacher who decides aspects related to 'when', 'how', 'what', 'how much', etc. of feedback. However, for young adult learners, an interactional approach to providing feedback (Gass and Varonis, 1994) has been found quite effective. Mackey (2006) calls it 'noticing' and finds it useful for second language learners.

Research Methodology

Action Research: Often considered to be an aid to reflective teaching in ELT, action research involves addressing an instruction-related problem through a planned intervention, which is later evaluated after careful documentation of the entire process. While conducting an action research, the roles of the teacher and researcher get integrated and students, who also play the roles of subjects, are involved in the process. Moreover, the process of research may continue even after getting results from the initial study. The current study adopted action research because the researcher, who was also a teacher of students who participated in the study, observed that the students did not make use of his detailed oral and written feedback on their presentation skills.

Research Questions: The study addressed the following questions:

- How does learner training in using feedback influence students' presentation skills?
- How do students respond to learner training?

Sample: Though the class in which the study was conducted had 70 students from B. Tech., B. E. and B. A. (Economics), only 10 students, who were regularly present in the classroom, were included as the sample of the study. The students were a heterogeneous group and studying in the either second or third or fourth year of their course. The selection was based on the availability and willingness of students to undergo the training provided by the researcher.

Tools: Three research tools were used for collecting the required data for the study. They were:

- Pre- and post-tests to assess students' ability to make effective presentations
- Voicethread: It is a Web 2.0 tool through which feedback was provided. On this web platform, one can upload and share audio, video and pictures. The people, with whom it is shared, can post written, audio and video comments on it. It is a wonderful tool for promoting collaborative learning and peer feedback. For more information, visit www.voicethread.com.

- Informal interview with students to find out about their experience

Data Collection The data for the study were collected in stages. In the first stage, the students were asked to make academic presentations on a mutually-agreed upon topic. The duration of the presentation was between 4-10 minutes. The students were aware of the assessment criteria which comprised the following components:

- Introducing the topic and stating the purpose and plan of the presentation (5 marks)
- Execution of the plan (4 marks)
- Conclusion (3 marks)
- Use of correct sentences and pronunciation (3 marks)
- Appropriate body language (3 marks)
- Proper pace of delivery (2 marks)

The students' performance was scored by the researcher and a record was maintained. After analysing students' performance, a detailed plan was made to train the students in using the feedback given on their individual presentation. The researchers offered both written and oral feedback on the *Voicethread* platform. As per the plan, the researcher had a question- answer session with students in each class. Some of the questions were: '*Why were you speaking so fast in the middle?', 'What was my suggestion?', 'I know you tried but you were a little too fast. How do you plan to tackle this in your next presentation?',* etc . Efforts were made to bring students' problems and the researcher's corresponding suggestions to their notice and make them address their problems. As a part of the plan, students were asked to respond to teacher's feedback with at least two comments on *Voicethread.* Also, students were asked to analyse and rate video recorded presentations made by students from other colleges and universities. They continued to make presentations but those were not scored.

A few informal interviews were conducted with all the participants. The researcher tried to obtain information about the students' experience with *Voicethread* and how they felt about question-answer and video-analysis sessions in the classroom.

In the last stage, each student made an academic presentation , uploaded them on *Voicethread* and those presentations were graded using the same set of criteria used earlier. The pre- and post-training presentations were compared both quantitatively and qualitatively. The students were part of this process of comparison too. Changes were evident in several aspects of oral presentation skills.

Findings

How does learner training in using feedback influence students' presentation skills?

The students unconsciously developed their own presentation skills while undergoing training in which they analysed and commented on others' presentations. The employment of Voicethread kept students interested and gave them easy access to the feedback, which was available online below their recorded presentation on screen. Their acquaintance with most of the typical problems faced by people while making presentations enabled them to focus on selected problem areas which, in turn, helped them address the problems more efficiently. Some of the sample comments and corresponding changes are mentioned in the following table:

Teacher's Comments (transcript of oral comments)	**Observed Changes in the Second Voicethread Presentation**
*Hi XX, Just watched your presentation ... (*at first, good things about the presentationlike good English, appropriate gestures, etc) … *I believe you can make it a much better presentation if you change a few things. You need to sound a little more formal and academic. Think about changing the vocabulary and the tone. The introduction of the topic is good but you need to state the purpose and plan. Also, highlight the main points while concluding the presentation.*	XX did not use many informal words like 'guys', 'cool', 'bucks', etc. but could not change the informal tone on some occasions. May be, the meaning of 'informal/formal tone' needed a little more explaining. He stated the purpose and plan a little more clearly. The conclusion, however, could have been better, though he tried to quickly summarise the main points.
Hi XY,... (starting with good things like effective introduction, good use of academic vocabulary, excellent pronunciation, etc., about the presentation.)…*You should state the purpose of your presentation a little more clearly. It can be done by stating why you wish to talk about 'cell theory'. Refer to the BBC website shared on the CMS* (course management system of the university). *Your language is good and the pace of delivery is quite smooth. You look confident and the body language is appropriate. However, I believe you should control your hand movements and not let the hands move beyond your shoulder. Just one more thing! It sounds a little clichéd if you say- 'I would like to conclude by saying that…'. Refer to the BBC website I shared with you to learn about better ways.*	XY introduced the topic well and made use of the BBC materials to improve her introduction and conclusion. In conclusion, she started with 'So in this presentation, I talked about three important things:…'. Her hand movements were, to a great extent, controlled.

As you can see in the above table, some of the suggested corrections were accurately carried out. However, some other suggestions could not reach the students. Thus, it is necessary to give feedback with sufficient information about what, how and why to change, and reference materials.

How do students respond to learner training?

The students' response to learner training was encouraging in the beginning though they reported during the interview that they did not know about any training. The researcher, however, had to make extra efforts to keep them involved the process. On occasions, they were a little too worried about their scores and did not participate in classroom interactions and video-analysis sessions. For such students, the researcher posted oral questions on *Voicethread.* Most of the students responded to those questions, though they took a little extra time.

Conclusion

The current study made use of the available resources and the institutional freedom to address a relevant and recurrent problem often faced by ESL teachers. Though the study was conducted with a privileged group of students in an elite institution, the findings are nonetheless quite encouraging. In addition, it can be replicated in other professional colleges and universities across India. It is hoped that the study will aid teachers in improving their students' language ability by training them (students) to utilize their (teachers') feedback.

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Jackie Van Tilburgh

Mukti Sanyal in conversation with Jackie Van Tilburgh

Mukti Sanyal

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Mukti Sanyal, Associate Professor, Bharati College, University of Delhi has been active in ELT over three decades as materials producer, teacher trainer and teacher.

Mukti Sanyal: Thank you Jackie for doing this interview for FORTELL. What is the English Language Fellow Program? Why did you want to participate in it?

Jackie Van Tilburgh: The EL Fellow Program is a collaboration of the U.S. State Department and Georgetown University. Its goal is to send TESOL educators around the globe to work with students, teachers, and teacher educators to improve English instruction and promote better cross-cultural understanding.

I joined the program because I thought it would be a great opportunity to teach overseas and visit a new country. I've traveled a lot and have been teaching for over fifteen years, but I'd never taught overseas, and I'd never been to India prior to my placement here. It's been a fascinating opportunity, and I think I've learned much more than I've taught.

MS: How can other Indian schools and universities get involved with the EL Fellow Program?

JVT: If a particular school or college would like to work with an EL Fellow, a principal or other leader at the

institution should submit a formal request, outlining a specific plan for the work that he or she would like the Fellow to achieve, to the RELO office in New Delhi.

MS: What has been your impression of how we teach English in Indian colleges and universities? What do you make of the divide between language and literature in the teaching of English in Indian academic circles? What has been your experience?

JVT: I think that it is a shame that there can't be a place for both language and literature. There is definitely more value placed on the study of literature, while language study is seen as a more remedial endeavor. The discussion and analysis of literature provides a basis for critical thinking, which is an important lifelong skill, no matter what the future occupation. However, with less than 25% of the Indian population speaking English and with various degrees of proficiency, I think there is a real need for an increase in language courses. While most will never need to discuss the major themes in *Pride and Prejudice*, the vast majority could benefit from basic communicative English language practice. Whether we like it or not, English is the language of 21st century commerce, and if Indian students want to compete in the globalized marketplace, they need to be proficient in speaking English. If literature classes were to be more discussion-based, both critical thinking and communicative language needs could be met simultaneously, bridging the language/literature divide.

MS: Why is it that, in spite of our best efforts, we are not able to get our students to speak, as opposed to read and write?

JVT: People, in general, like to do what's familiar; they don't like to be out of their comfort zone. Reading and writing are the skills that are practiced most often in Indian schools, so it is difficult to change this pattern in an eighteen-year-old college student who has grown up in such a system.

Additionally, reading and writing allow for more time for self-correction. If verbal errors are made, however, everyone knows it immediately. Students like reading and writing more because their mistakes are not as public. While no one likes to make mistakes, I've noticed that Indian students are particularly hesitant to take the risks necessary to improve their spoken English communication. Teachers, unwittingly, can contribute to this lack of confidence by over-emphasising form over meaning. For example, during a recent conversation that I was having with a student, her professor interrupted her mid-sentence to point out grammar errors. This interruption made the student more self-conscious and encouraged her to speak less, not more. As teachers, I believe that we need to focus on building confidence first and foremost.

Another obstacle is that teachers are more comfortable with reading and writing practice. They may not have strong skills themselves, and listening and speaking activities expose their own vulnerabilities. Thus, they emphasize reading and writing tasks and perpetuate this cycle.

MS: Is it to do with the situation in India, of having a common L1 that students can comfortably fall back on, as opposed to the U.S., in a class of 45, there might be 45 different L1s?

JVT: While a common L1 and class size do indeed contribute to the problem, in my opinion, the biggest obstacle is the classroom design: Rows of difficult-to-move desks, windows open to loud street traffic, and noisy fans. These all contribute to making conversation and discussion extremely difficult. In my classes here, I've had to rearrange desks daily, shout to be heard over fans and street traffic, and constantly ask students to repeat their responses in louder voices. This makes a teacher's already tiring job exhausting. But, I've also found that once students get into the habit, they will automatically group desks, and, tiring of having to repeat themselves, they will begin speaking louder. It can be done.

MS: How can EL Fellows gain more from their exchange programs? How could we structure our hosting situations to better the Fellow experience?

JVT: The EL Fellow program schedule (late August to late June) is a poor fit with the Indian academic calendar. Since Fellows are already starting well into the first semester, it would be best to have as much pre-planning done before their arrival. Having a concrete class schedule and definitive list of student participants would be ideal. In addition, it would be extremely advantageous to give some sort of time compensation (fewer classes, etc.) to the host institution's primary point of contact. This person has a lot to coordinate, so adequate preparation time is needed to ensure that the host institution is fully benefitting from the Fellow's presence.

MS: What has your work been like here?

I've been really fortunate in that I've had the opportunity to work here in Bharati College, as well as in a government university, and for a non-profit organization. Each experience has been unique. Here at Bharati College, my focus has been on teaching eight-week intensive courses on academic reading and writing. I've gotten to know my students well and see their progress over time. While Indian students do a lot of writing, the focus tends not to be on the *process* of writing. My experience has been that students write an assignment the day before it is due, without any thought to an essay's organization and without time for revision. When students are forced to spend the time making

outlines, revising drafts, and editing their work, they are quite pleased with their final products and see the advantage of spending more time with their writing. It's exciting to see them put their newly-learned skills into practice and develop more confidence as writers.

In my other university assignment, I conduct writing workshops for larger groups and meet with individual students to discuss their writing. While the larger numbers and less frequent meetings have not allowed me the opportunity to get to know students on the same level as here at Bharati, I have enjoyed the greater diversity of a co-ed campus with both undergraduate and postgraduate students. I have seen that students, no matter what the level, really crave one-on-one attention to help them improve their writing skills. It's really a shame that large class sizes make this type of interaction difficult here.

Although my time has been spent primarily with academic reading and writing, my NGO work has allowed me to focus on creating communicative activities to help young girls from underprivileged backgrounds gain more confidence in their speaking abilities. I have enjoyed this less-academic, more fun pursuit, and it has been a delight to meet these very motivated young ladies.

MS: Which group of learners to you find most satisfying?

JVT: Isn't that a bit like asking a parent who her favorite child is? I really love all my students. However, if you really twist my arm, I would have to say that I particularly enjoyed the two-week language workshop that I just finished with a group of mumukshus/Jain nuns-in-training in Rajasthan. They truly loved to be in the classroom and had a real eagerness to learn; their zeal was infectious. I truly appreciated their inquisitiveness and playfulness… of course, it may be that it's the most recent experience that I've had, so it's fresher in my mind. It may also have to do with the fact that I had the opportunity to team-teach with another Fellow there. I always find it exciting to work with other innovative teachers.

MS: The time you spent with the library staff at Bharati has been much appreciated, and your workshop with the non-teaching staff was a big hit. Would you like to talk a little bit about that? I don't mind confessing that though I have helped organize several workshops for English teachers from other institutions, we have never attempted anything for our own non-teaching staff.

JVT: I love working with classes of non-traditional students. The non-teaching staff workshop was so much fun! Those who have been out of the classroom for some time do not take a minute of learning time for granted. They showed such appreciation during our week together, and their participation was fantastic. They really took the opportunity seriously, and I think they made a lot of progress in their English skills in just that brief week. It would be great if it could be made a part of their regular professional development.

MS: All of us at Bharati will miss you, Jackie! It's wonderful to see how friendly you have been. I'm looking forward to the workshops you will be running for teachers early May. Would you like to speak a little about that?

JVT: In order to have an impact beyond the ten months that I am here, Principal Varma has requested that I train other English teachers in conducting intensive reading and writing courses of their own next year. I'm hoping to have an interactive session where I show teachers what I did this past year, and we brainstorm ways to tailor it to fit their own teaching styles.

MS: How do your teaching duties here differ than your duties in the U.S.?

JVT: I think that there are more possibilities for collaboration in the U.S. I work a lot with my colleagues there to design engaging lessons, brainstorm solutions to dealing with difficult students, and create cross-curricular programs. We have the luxury of office space, and use it to our advantage – lots of coffee-fueled discussion! In addition, my class sizes are smaller in the U.S., so I am able to meet with individual students more often. During a semester, I may have individual writing conferences with students three or four times during the semester. Here, I was only able to have two conferences per semester.

Also, the idea of office hours is much more common in the U.S. I have set periods of time every day when I am in my office, with the sole purpose of meeting with students to address questions and doubts. Here, although I set aside time, only a handful of students come to see me. I have to work hard to convince them that they aren't bothering me; I really do want them to come to me with their questions!

MS: What impact do you hope to have here?

JVT: I'm not naïve enough to think that I can make huge changes in a ten-month time span. However, I do hope that my students have a bit more confidence in their skills after our time together. In addition, many of the students that I've taught here want to be future teachers. If I have in any way helped to show them that FUN and LEARNING are not mutually exclusive ideas, and they become teachers who make their own classrooms spaces of creative student engagement, then my time here will have been spent productively.

Please note: The views and information presented are the English Language Fellow's own and do not represent the English Language Fellow Program or the U.S. Department of State.

On Syllabus Making

R.W. Desai

Professor R.W. Desai, a renowned academician and a scholar of Shakespeare Studies, has served the Department of English, University of Delhi for many years.

This is with reference to a report published in the last issue of *Fortell* on Professor Harish Trivedi's Annual Lecture at Maharaja Agrasen College. That "Prof. Trivedi's scholarship and erudition received a standing ovation from the large audience at Maharaja Agrasen College" (37) does not surprise me. Had I been present I would have joined in the applause. Having known him as colleague and friend in the English Department of the University of Delhi for over twenty-five years, I have witnessed at first hand his vast knowledge and fine sensitivity to both the English Language and its Literature from the medieval period to the modern and the postcolonial, the last two being his areas of specialisation for the past twenty years or so. As a specimen – one amongst many – of his acuity of insight and controlled felicity of expression, consider the opening sentence of his book on Jane Austen: "Of all the English novelists, Jane Austen seems to be the most securely, even snugly, great" (11).

Accordingly, I reject outright Professor Trivedi's recent disclaimer "that English literature was not, and never could be, my literature" (*India* 256). Having read many of his publications and sat with him as an expert member of numerous selection committee meetings for the appointment of faculty in Departments of English of several colleges of the University of Delhi, listening to his probing and wide-ranging questions, I am convinced that Gertrude's remark on the Player Queen in *Hamlet*, "The lady doth protest too much, methinks," is an appropriate comment on Professor Trivedi's disclaimer.

An interesting parallel may be seen in the Irish resentment towards England, similar to that of many Indians during the colonial period. Kept in servitude for seven hundred years by England, the spirit of Irish nationalism in Yeats expressed itself thus, "No people hate as we do in whom that past is always alive . . . . Then I remind myself that . . . I owe my soul to Shakespeare, to Spenser and to Blake" (519). As in Yeats' divided loyalty, I detect in Professor Trivedi a similar conflict. In his review of Gauri Viswanathan's *The Masks of Conquest* he raises a challenging question, "Was English literature introduced in India as an act of genuine liberal munificence by our then rulers, or was it a devious strategy for consolidating and perpetuating their rule?" and goes on to address the question by suggesting that the study of English Literature "did not provide the firm brain-washed foundation on which the Raj could forever rest." In other words, "how English literature was actually received in India" is more to the point than Viswanathan's simplistic assumption that Indian students were mere passive recipients of the putative intentions of the foreign rule, thus "shut[ting] out at a stroke all Indian sources" (Radical 4).

Having confined myself over the last forty years or so to the study and teaching of English Language and Literature, first at Hindu College and then the Department of English at Universityof Delhi, my scope of reading is dwarfed by Professor Trivedi's far wider horizon embracing, besides English Literature, the components of his "*panchadhatu* syllabus" described in his *Colonial Transactions* which includes, in addition to English Literature written in English in England, literature written in English in India as well as Anglophone countries and elsewhere, literature not originally written in English but made available in English translation from various languages of the world, a study of literature written in a local Indian language, and a study of a classical literature which could be Sanskrit, Persian, Greek or Latin (242-45). Proposed by Professor Trivedi twenty years ago, and reaffirmed and implemented by him as his "one-point agenda" when he was Head of the Department of English at the University of Delhi from 1997 to 2000, he declares gleefully, "As a result, I can now spend a whole semester teaching a 1st century AD Sanskrit play, a 4th century Tamil epic, a Hindi poet from the 14th century and an Urdu poet from the 19th, not to mention a couple of trenchantly postcolonial Hindi novels" (*India* 256). A syllabus of such dimensions, obviously, far exceeds the boundaries of the English Department. Surely its rubric needs to be radically changed so as to accurately reflect its altered purpose.

It seems to me that Keats's sonnet "To Homer" well captures the spirit of Professor Trivedi's ambitious syllabus, when viewed from my limited perspective: "Standing aloof in giant ignorance, /Of thee I hear and of the Cyclades,/ As one who sits ashore and longs perchance / To visit dolphin coral." Already in existence at Delhi University are the actively functioning Departments of Comparative Literature, Modern Indian Languages (MIL), and Modern European Languages (MEL), all three covering in their scope some of Professor Trivedi's areas of interest and expertise. I suggest, therefore, that the English Department of the University of Delhi revert to its original limits with its focus on English Language and Literature written in English in England, India, and other countries throughout the world; and that, in addition to the several Departments mentioned above, new Departments, as outlined by him, be created for postgraduate students who have an Honours degree in English or in any other Indian

or Foreign Language and Literature course: namely, separate Departments of World Literatures, Indian Literatures in the Original and in Translation, Classical Literatures in the Original and in Translation, Translation Studies, and Cultural Studies.

In several Universities abroad and in India – in JNU for instance – this last named has been established in addition to an already existing Centre for English Studies, thus preserving the latter's distinctive status. While welcoming the proliferation of new Departments offering a rich variety of syllabi, I would expect the framers to refrain from treating the borders of the English Department as infinitely elastic to accommodate the vast spectrum of literary writings emanating from all parts of the world, from the classical to the modern. It is, of course, common knowledge that in all disciplines – to mention only Engineering as an example – there are separate Departments for Mechanical, Electrical, Automobile, Aeronautical, Computer Engineering, etc., in which such specialisations are studied and taught. Likewise, the identity of the Department of English needs to be protected from becoming the umbrella for a host of diverse disciplines that should develop their own strategies of academic advancement in accordance with their individual identities.

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Memories of cracks, Cracks of memory

The Occult by Naiyer Masud, tr. Muhammad Umar Memon. Penguin, 2013, Pp 240, Rs 399.

ISBN- 978-06-700869-9-3

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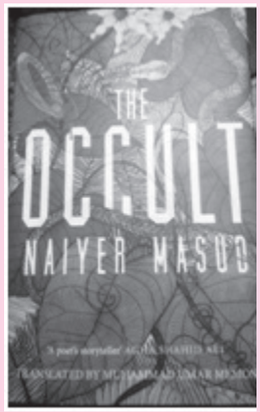
Between fear and fervent desire
Is a crack in the wooden door
The voyeur watches with cold fire
Only to augment dark desire
A little more.

In all the stories in Naiyer Masud's collection of short stories, *The Occult,* there is a hunter, a hunted and the



voyeur. The voyeur could be the narrator, who could transfer his role to the reader; or the voyeur could be a character, who could become the subject of gaze a little later. In short, the three roles are interlocked, mesmerized, afraid and desirous of each other.

It's difficult to pin down Masud's stories, as this vain attempt shall be too. He's been called the Kafka of Lucknow, it's been said that he is Borgesian or Marquezian, but each of these descriptions falls short of his art. For Masud is novel and pathbreaking; he knows his traditions – Kafkaesque, Urdu Dastangoi, Arabian Nights – and yet he transcends them all. It's a pity that Masud got fame only as a septuagenarian, and has been translated widely only in the last ten years. Even now, you can read him in English translated largely by Muhammad Umar Menon, but not in Urdu, and not even in Lucknow, where he has spent a lifetime. The range and accuracy of Masud's descriptions betray the fact that he has never left Lucknow. The 'adab' of Lucknow is lost in Memon's translation, though he does capture the soul of each story deftly.

All the five stories in this collection have a nameless first person narrator – who on a couple of times is revisiting his youth – and nameless characters except one: Nusrat. She appears in the story, 'The Woman in Black.' All stories in the collection are intriguing, but this one is particularly so. The prejudice may come from the fact that this is the only story with a name to a person. Nusrat wears only white, and

has beautiful feet, which have been crushed by a car. The narrator is frantically caught between two stories – one of the outer room where the 'bad woman' in black clothes is being tried by the elders, and the courtyard where an old hakim is trying to cure Nusrat. In a flash, in the next scene, all the jury members and all the family members are dead, and the narrator is left to roam the house of nothingness. Nusrat comes back, her feet perfect, without a scar. Here is a sample from this moment that gives an idea of Masud's esoteric mystical intensity that operates on dense metaphors:

"After a few days," I began, "you won't even remember the terrible pain you had to endure. The scars would have been a reminder."

"But I *shall.*"

"That's what everyone imagines in the beginning. Without scars, though, one couldn't remember – neither the pain, nor even the old surgeon." (p. 54)

Nusrat leaves with a scar, and returns in black clothes, her feet crushed again. The tale leaves the voyeur – the reader – stunned and haunted at the end. The thick metaphors about pain, memory and circularity operate through easy narration, and uneasy feeling in the reader.

The story, "Obscure Domains of Fear and Desire" begins almost as a raunchy tale of illicit love between a young man and his distant aunt, but turns dark as soon as one gets complacent with that thought. The aunt leaves, the man leaves to wander as a building inspector, and realizes that every house has a spot of fear, and one of desire. Masud maps the hidden rooms of Lucknow's lavish dilapidated houses in such detail and with such quivering that it leaves one astounded. The sexual desires of a conservative, contained society spring forth with all passion and consummate darkness in this story. The narrator ends up making out with the voyeur, without being able to see her. That life and memory operate through such metaphors, and that representation flattens it out of fear, is something very visibly seen in the narration of Masud. "The Resting Place" is another intriguing tale about a man who comes and stays in a corner of house – the owner wants him along with his curios – but unfortunately he is alive to be with them. "The Snake Catcher" is just a story about snakes, their victims, the snake catcher and his apprentice, the narrator. It seems to be about nothing more than this and yet when one reads it, one is caught in the predator-prey-voyeur lock. The title story "The Occult" has no real occult in it, but people's perception that protagonist is an occultist. It's a long drawn story with such brooding and dark imagery, and complex metaphors that one is left wondering for a long time after reading it.

This barely captures what Naiyer Masud's artistry with memory and words is. Like his standard narrator, Masud is slowing down in his eighties, and his memories are daring to disturb the universe.

LGBTQ

(Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) Identities in Select Modern Indian Literature by Kuhu Sharma Chanana.

Suryodoya Books, 2015, Pp 346, Rs 800 (library edition). ISBN-13: 978-81-925702-4-2

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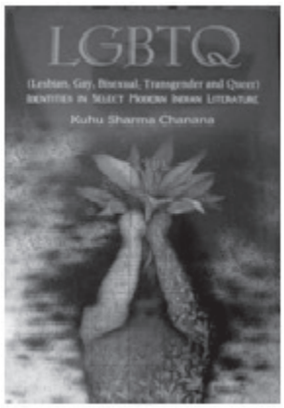
2015 can be called a historic year for the LGBT cause: Ireland became the first country to legalize gay marriage by popular vote, India got its first transgender mayor from the Dalit caste and also the first College principal from transgender community. A recent advertisement of a clothing brand in India depicting lesbian couple has gone viral and is being appreciated for being inclusive and bringing the issue into the mainstream. It is important to look at academic intervention in this scenario; while Queer studies has developed and consolidated in the West since the 1990s, it is still in nascent stage of analysis of queer Indian literature. In the light of lack of critical material in this area in India, *LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) Identities In Select Modern Indian Literature* by Kuhu Sharma Chanana becomes an important book to look at.



The book is a collection of seven essays with an introduction. It critiques and interrogates queer literature coming out from India in different languages vis-à-vis developments happening at societal level in and out of LGBTQ community. The first, third, fifth and sixth essays explore lesbian identity, lesbophobic anxiety and plurality of lesbian existence. The first chapter tries to show the fault lines in the resistance of the Indian women writers against patriarchy/heterosexuality by taking a radical lesbian feminist approach and trying to resolve powerful/subversive structures of heteronormativity. The third chapter on poetry of Suniti

Namjoshi questions the motive of the creation of the fables in the sub-title itself, "A Tool to familiarize or a means to escape?" and powerfully critiques it. The fifth chapter explains the multiple levels at which lesbian existence is defined by three different writers who adopt contradictory positions in their explanations. At one level it is defined as a pathological illness, at another level it is shown to be a result of coercive or compulsory heterosexuality for procreative sex. It also discusses the titillating sensations which a male writer can create by entering women only spaces and how queer literature can easily move to homoerotic. The sixth chapter challenges the absence of lesbian existence in queer academia and society. The writer exposes the lesbophobic anxiety of the society and regards "injunctions against lesbianism are also part of a wider framework of regulating feminine sexuality that threatens heteropatriarchal structure".

The chapter on *hijras* brings to fore one of the most marginalized identity in LGBTQ, and through writings of major literary writers depicts anxiety and violence. This economically, politically, socially excluded community bears the maximum burden of Section 377. Crossed between the binaries of male and female sexuality, *hijras* themselves are not comfortable with their identity. In order to create a sexual identity, they go through painful sex-change operations. The chapter tries to expose the cultural biases associated with the third gender which have resulted in the anxious lack of a specific identity and sexuality in the community. The chapter can be said to be a ground breaking critical analyses in explaining *hijra* identity.

The fourth chapter deals with "Polyvalent Power Structures" in Gay community, and homosexuality being a marginalized one transgresses the boundaries of class, caste, colour and creed. It exposes how the market forces shape an individual's sexual orientation; greed of money and charm of success at times forces young men to change their sexual preference. The chapter also talks about the "patriarchal notion of masculinity" which divides the gay couple into active and passive or simply explained a "masculine" and "feminine". The power structures defined by Gay community are such that even the heterosexual women come below them, the marginalized of the marginal.

The seventh and the last chapter is an interesting essay as it highlights the creation of homosexual spaces by invading heterosexual spaces through the Queer writings. This act of invasion can be considered as an attempt of redrawing the boundaries of "heteronormativity" and changing it into "homonormativity".

The writer through the Indian writings has drawn attention to peculiar problems of Indian LGBTQ. The book tries to rupture the hegemony of western queer canon and provides the much needed Indian intervention. The work is of significance in terms of using new theoretical tools like queer spatiality, concept of fantastic queer and amalgam of lavender lexicon with *hijra* terminology. It is also one of the very few literary studies of non-normative sexuality that is exclusively located in Indian texts. With the academia taking charge and busting the myths of LGBTQ, the change in the societal consciousness does not seem to be far away.

Common Language Games for Effective Vocabulary Building

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Tarika has taught language and literature at various national and international organizations including various colleges in the University of Delhi and University of California, Davis.

The following Language exercise is conceptualized on the same paradigm as the 'builder's exercise' discussed by Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations*. According to this exercise, bare minimum, 'primitive' form of language is used between a builder and his assistant. For them to be able to achieve their work, they need only nouns like 'block', 'pillar,' or 'beam.' The builder calls for these things and the assistant understands that he needs to give them to the builder. The next stage is the introduction of words like 'there', 'here' etc. This, Wittgenstein calls primitive language and according to him, represents one of the simpler forms of language activity in which language users participate.

The basic relationship of signification and representation are established in this manner. These include gestures as well, which are semiotic practices additional to 'language' as well as focus on grammar, which is the conceptual framework which lays down the rules of how these signs should be used.

The following is a game which is based on the socially shared space within which the signs and the process of signification exist. Simply put, the students are able to understand the various words in the game because they share the process and values of signification.

Dumb charades

This is an easy enough game and the best part is that most of the students are already aware of its basic principles. It is usually played using the names of slightly unusual movie names but the game is versatile enough to be used as a tool for enhancing vocabulary in an English language classroom for young adults.

Level: Beginner and/or intermediate (depending on the words which are used)

Time required: 30–45 minutes

Objectives: To help students express and define various objects which range from the commonplace to those which are specific to a particular context.

Skills required: Speaking and listening.

Preparation required: Think of the names of a couple of objects which the students would definitely know of. These should be things which would need some explanation. A good example might be a 'bus ticket'.

Pre-activity discussion: Ask the students common ways and parameters of defining things. These can include shape, size, location where different objects are found, the kind of people who use them or the various uses any object is put to.

Procedure: Divide the students in small teams. To begin with, have a couple of words ready on small chits of paper. Once the students understand what they have to do, they will be able to come up with words on their own but in the beginning they may need help.

Important: Some basics should be written down on the board for easy access and reference. For example

1: Noun (Every time they get a word which is a noun, they can just show the number one to their team mates so that they know that they have to guess words which are nouns)
2: Verb
3: Adjectives

Step 1: One person from each team will come to the front of the class and will be given a word by the teacher. S/he will have to explain the word to the other team members only through actions.

Step 2: The team members get points for guessing the correct word within the given time, which could range from 30 seconds to about 2 minutes depending on the level of the vocabulary as well as the level of proficiency of the students.

Step 3: Once the students understand what they have to do, they can suggest words for the other teams in a circular fashion. For example, if there are four teams, A, B, C and D. A can suggest a word for B, B for C and so on.

Whichever team scores the highest after three rounds will win the game.

There can be theme-based variations to this game as well. The students can be asked to suggest and guess words which cater to a particular theme under discussion like travel, health, professions etc. This will help students think about the associated vocabulary as well.

Another variation to this activity can be more writing-oriented.

Level: Beginner and/or intermediate

Time required: 20 minutes

Objectives: To help students practice their writing skills.

Skills required: Writing.

Preparation required: The students should be made aware of this exercise before they do the previous exercise so that they can focus and try to remember the various developments of the dumb charades game. If need be, they can take notes as well.

Procedure: Depending on the proficiency of the students, this activity can be carried out either in groups or individually.

Step 1: If working in groups, divide the students and ask them to write a diary entry about the activity Dumb Charades in class. Give the students the proper grammatical parameters for writing the diary entry like it should be addressed to the diary in the second person. (This will be a good place to revise the verb formations with second person.)

Step 2: The students should finish the entry in about 20 minutes.

Step 3a (optional): The evaluation can be done later by the instructor or it can be made a peer-evaluated exercise. This way, the aspect of reading can also be incorporated in the game.

Step 3b (optional): The diary entries can also be read in class thus including reading as part of the exercise or as a post exercise activity.

Readers' Response

"The conversation between Ruchi Kaushik and Prof. Richard Allen (in FORTELL Issue 30, Jan 2015) discusses the extremely pertinent issue of distance learning, its increasing popularity as well as challenges, especially in the Indian context. The conversation is thought provoking and enables one to visualize how technology can be made to serve the cause of quality higher education and thus empowerment of the masses in India. I would like to appreciate FORTELL for generating discourse, through its timely publications, around extremely pertinent issues around not just literature, but also language, not just mainstream but also alternative learning programs, not just pedagogy but also methodology."

Dr. Sapna Dudeja Taluja, Assistant Professor, University of Delhi, Sapna.dudeja@gmail.com

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"The Jan 2015 issue of Fortell covers a vast canvas: classroom strategies, communication skills, interpreting texts from different genres etc. Most of the articles deal with emergent issues that we face as communicators and researchers in the Academic world. Perhaps it would be a good idea to focus on particular teaching/classroom experiences where the challenges encountered by academics are negotiated with. In other words, more practical working knowledge and less theorising would be appropriate."

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From India to Manchester: Report on the 49th IATEFL Conference held at Manchester UK from 11 to 14 April 2015.

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I represented FORTELL India, an associate of IATEFL at the 49th IATEFL Conference held at Manchester, UK from 11 to 14 April 2015. Associates' Day was on 10th April 2015 where representatives of different associates across the world were invited to interact and network with global counterparts.

The day began with a warm welcome by Les Kirkham, the outgoing IATEFL associates' representative. This was followed by an announcement of the 2014-2015 award winners. The categories were IATEFL training award, Projects Award and Associates Award. Attending associates were also encouraged to apply for these awards. In addition, IATEFL's online events were highlighted and members were asked to motivate other members to participate.

Professor David Crystal, Patron of IATEFL addressed the attending representatives. He spoke on the topic 'World Englishes: Where next?' identifying a trend in English speaking nations that were subjected to colonial rule wherein they continue to adopt and adapt the language as per their circumstance. This, he argued, leads to the development of new 'Englishes' with characteristic variations in spellings and pronunciation etc. He further added that English is a stress-timed language whereas in countries like India the register is syllable-timed. This too is an increasingly pre-dominant trend.

The afternoon session was about representatives displaying their posters, materials and engaging in an interactive discussion. The hot questions on a pleasant Manchester evening were 'Can we become members of this association?' and 'Can we write for this journal?' The day came to a close with a formal welcome to the incoming IATEFL Associates' Representative Lou McLaughlin.

During the conference each representative of associations under the IATEFL umbrella was given a dedicated slot to interact with participants at the conference and the wider audience. These sessions were in the Exhibition Section of the conference. Fortell India was allocated dedicated time on 13 April 2015 from 11:35 to 13:40. Attendees were very keen to learn about ELT in India and how Fortell contributes to the professional and academic development of members. There were several inquiries about membership and the journal was widely appreciated. It was a proud moment for me to be an ambassador for Fortell India.

Attending the conference was also an enriching experience. I am particularly appreciative of the space it provided for exchange of ideas. I was happy to share my experiences from India, a multi-lingual country with many 'Englishes', while learning from people in other countries. I learnt some new and interesting approaches and discussed several ideas to improve the experience for teachers and learners. I was pleased to contribute some unique strategies that were welcomed by other participants.

It was reassuring to learn that there were commonalities in the major challenges faced by ELT practitioners across

borders. I was happy to observe that there was convergence over strategies to address these challenges. The discussions rejuvenated my enthusiasm for the work I have been doing in the area of teacher training and curriculum development. I consider it my good fortune to have interacted with colleagues from across the globe such as Czech Republic, Ireland, Romania, Angola, Venezuela, Serbia, Korea, Egypt, Nepal, Lithuania, China and Mexico.

The conference included all aspects of ELT ranging from teaching English to young learners to Business English as well as approaches to assessment. In addition to five world-class plenary sessions, there were about five hundred sessions including signature events, talks, workshops, forums, paper-presentations and an interactive language fair. I too presented a paper titled – 'Hand-holding for effective formative assessment and better teaching learning outcomes' at the conference. The conference aim of linking, developing and supporting English Language Teaching professionals worldwide was emphatically realised!

Lecture Series at Shaheed Bhagat Singh Evening College

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Kalyanee Rajan teaches as Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Evening College. Her research areas include English Language Teaching, Shakespeare Studies, Translation studies, Indian Writing in English, Classical Indian Poetics and Dalit Literature.

Carpe Diem, the English Language and Literature Society of Shaheed Bhagat Singh Evening College in collaboration with the Forum for Teachers of English Language and Literature (FORTELL), kick started its Lecture Series with the inaugural lecture delivered by Professor Rama Mathew, an eminent academic, former Head of Department and Dean, Central Institute of Education (CIE), University of Delhi on 4th Feb 2015. The lecture was titled "How Do I Learn to Learn?"

Prof. Mathew has previously taught at the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad. She has also coordinated a project on mentoring in collaboration with the Open University, UK, under the UKIERI scheme. She is presently overseeing the English Language Proficiency Course in which loose-leaf materials meant for adult learners have been developed and students take proficiency tests at three levels that assess all the skills of the language. Her current research interests include teaching English to adult learners, teacher education, and proficiency assessment including online assessment.

Several Fortell members, including the FORTELL President, Dr. Vijay K Sharma, and Principal, Ram Lal Anand College, University of Delhi attended the lecture. Dr. P. K. Khurana, Principal SBSEC presided over the event and Dr. Sabina Pillai, Teacher-in-charge, Department of English, SBSEC introduced Prof. Mathew. Teachers from other departments of the college also attended the lecture along with a large number of students from across disciplines.

The hour-long lecture focused primarily on learner autonomy and the lecture addressed both teachers and students on how to become strategic learners and take charge of their own learning. Prof. Mathew used a lucid, comprehensible and interactive power point presentation to discuss in detail various aspects of learning. She pointed out how the current emphasis on LSRW (Listening/Speaking/Reading/Writing) the four skills fundamental to language learning acquisition placed a lot of importance on teacher support and seemed to make learners overly dependent on external factors for learning.

Prof. Mathew emphasized the need to review L1 and L2 in classroom situations and the need to reconsider as well

as mobilise existing knowledge about the native language/ mother tongue to aid in L2 acquisition. She discussed smart learning strategies meant to reduce the over-dependence on teachers and to equip learners in becoming self-reliant and responsible towards their own progress and learning. A checklist titled "What sort of a language learner are you?" was distributed to the large number of students present in the audience. It had ten statements like "Do/Did you get good scores on your grammar test?", "Do you have a good memory for new words", "Do you dislike making mistakes", "Do you enjoy being in a class" and so on to which the students had to respond between four options namely, "Usually/Sometimes/Almost never/Don't Know". Thereafter, they were given a self analysis key bearing descriptions of different kinds of learners like "Not Sure/Relaxed/A Mixture/Analytic", and suggestions for their improvement. The activity generated a lot of interest in the students and they were keenly responsive to questions and suggestions invited thereafter. The activity was meant to lead the learner to discover for himself/herself strategies in accordance with their learner type that would suit best to use in a non-competitive setting.

Prof. Mathew concluded the enriching session by playing out a video story that emphasized individual differences of learners and the unique qualities each possess that need to be identified, nurtured and valued by all— the parents, the teachers and most importantly, by the learners themselves. Prof. Mathew summed up the valuable takeaways from the session and underscored the importance of "noticing" for the learners, while maintaining the essential fun quality of the entire teaching-learning process. The lecture proved to be useful, constructive and full of practical tips on how to tackle the whole process of learning. It was warmly appreciated by the wide ranging audience of faculty and students.

Three-day International Conference titled

'Yeats and Kipling: Retrospectives, Perspectives'

on 10th , 11th & 12th March 2015 at Bharati College (University of Delhi)

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An inter-disciplinary international conference was organized from 10-12 March, 2015, by the Department of English, Bharati College to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of William Butler Yeats and Rudyard Kipling in collaboration with Saurashtra University and The Oberoi Cecil, Shimla. The first chapter of the conference was held in Delhi, the other two in Shimla and Rajkot. The session started with the welcome address by the Principal, Dr. Pramodini Varma. Ms. Malabika Sarkar, former Vice Chancellor of Presidency University delivered the keynote address titled "Yeats, Kipling and the Haven Finding Art" in which she discussed and compared poems such as "Sailing to Byzantium" by W.B. Yeats and "Gunga Din" by Kipling. Subsequently, the session was inaugurated by the Vice Chancellor of University of Delhi, Professor Dinesh Singh. He talked about his relation to poetry and shared his knowledge of the writings of Yeats and Kipling.

The next session was titled "Yeats and Kipling: Notes on an Unlikely Pair". The chairperson for this session was Prof. Rupin W. Desai. Papers were presented by Dr. Alexander Bubb (Department of English, King's College, London) and Prof. Harish Trivedi (formerly) Department of English, University of Delhi. The next session titled "Kipling: the epistemic Raj", was held on the second day of the conference and was chaired by Prof. Rajiva Verma. The paper presenters were Dr. John Lee (Department of English, University of Bristol) and Prof. Christel R. Devadawson (Department of English, University of Delhi).

The post lunch session focused on papers by Prof. Prashant Sinha (University of Pune), Prof. Peter Schulman (Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Old Dominion University) and Dr. Naina Dey (Department of English, Maharaja Mahindra Chandra College). A paper by Prof. Mythili Kaul (formerly) Department of English, University of Delhi was read in absentia by Dr. Jyoti Bajaj Desai.

12th March 2015 was the third and the last day of the conference. The session was chaired by Professor Robert S. White and it started with a Skype presentation by Professor Ruth Vanita. She presented her paper titled "Self-Delighting Soul: A reading of Yeats' 'A Prayer for My Daughter' in the

light of Indian Philosophy". In the next session, Ms. Indrani Dasgupta (Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, presented her paper followed by Dr. Sengupta's (University of Burdwan) paper, focussing on some of Kipling's short stories following the Great War, written between 1915 and 1932. The next paper was presented by Mr. Chetan (Bharati College).

The last session of the Conference, had a paper presentation by Prof. Robert S. White. (Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, University of Western Australia.) The next paper was presented jointly by Ms. Ipshita Nath, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, and Mr. Anubhav Pradhan, Department of English, University of Delhi. The last paper of the session and the conference was presented by Prof. Rupin W. Desai. The title of his paper was "Yeats and Kipling: Parallels, Divergences, and Convergences". At the end of the session, Dr. Promodini Varma gave her vote of thanks.

Through the course of the conference there were enactments of two plays of W.B Yeats and a spoof on Kipling. Yeats *Purgatory* was performed by Shaw's Corner and directed by Dr.Vinod Bala Sharma (former faculty member of Mata Sundari College, Delhi University). Yeats' *The Words upon the Window Pane* was performed by the students of "Chilman", Bharati College Dramatic Society. It was directed by Dr.Sonali Jain, faculty member of the English Department, Bharati College. The spoof on Kipling, *Never the Twain Shall Meet*, was performed by the students of the Department of English, Bharati College and was directed by Mr.Anubhav Pradhan.

Call for papers

for

Fortell

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Articles/research papers are invited for publication in *Fortell*, a peer-reviewed journal of the Forum for Teachers of English Language and Literature (FORTELL) with a focus on the innovative pedagogical practices and teaching of English language and literature.

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The contributors should clearly indicate their name, email ID and phone number. Contributions should conform to the sixth edition of the APA style sheet in format, citations and bibliography. **Contributors should give a declaration that the paper is original and does not violate the copyright law and it has not been published elsewhere before**. Please look up the website http://www.fortell.org/ regarding guidelines for submission of the manuscript**.** Contributions from the members of FORTELL are solicited.

Guest Editors: Mona Sinha & Tasneem Shahnaz
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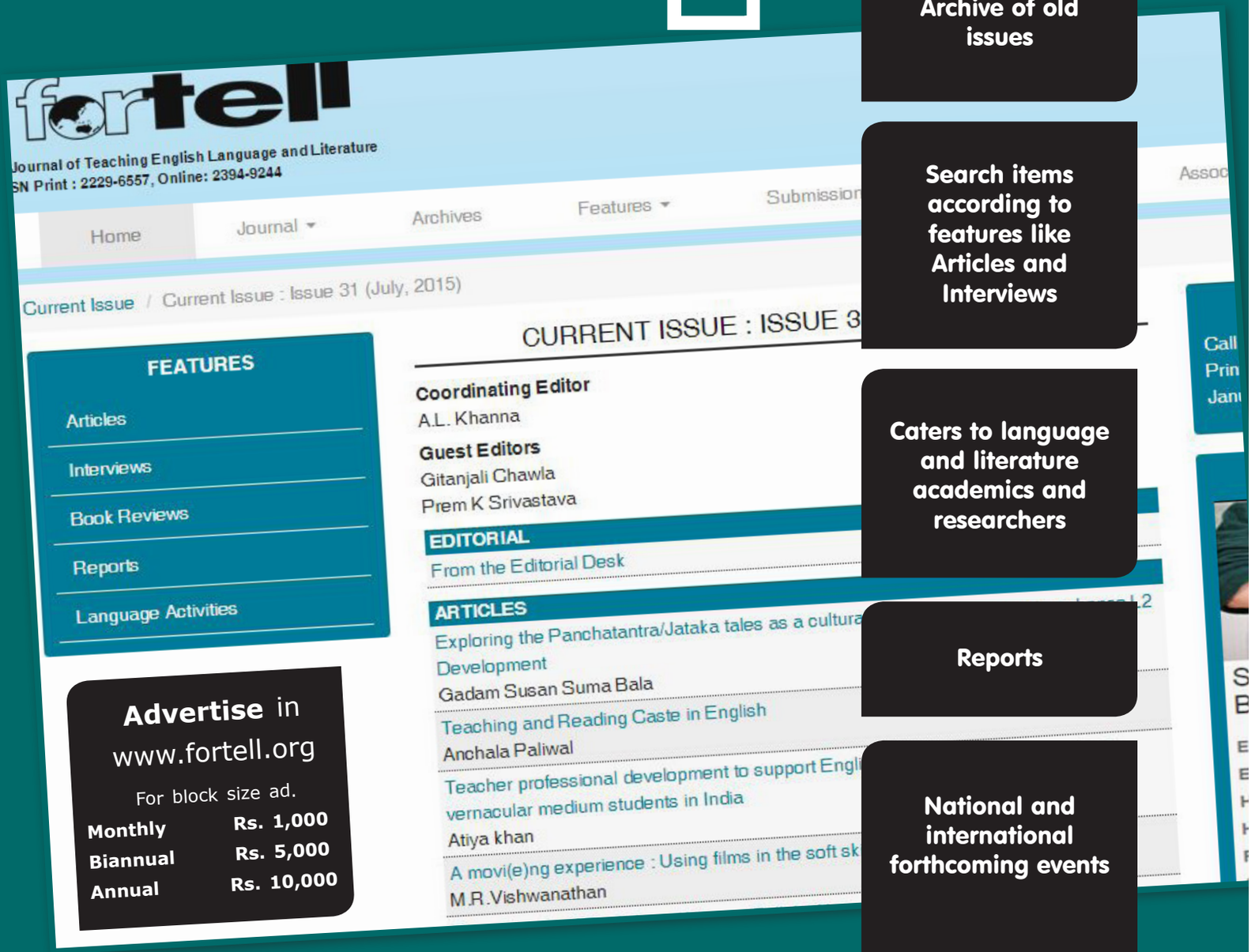

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