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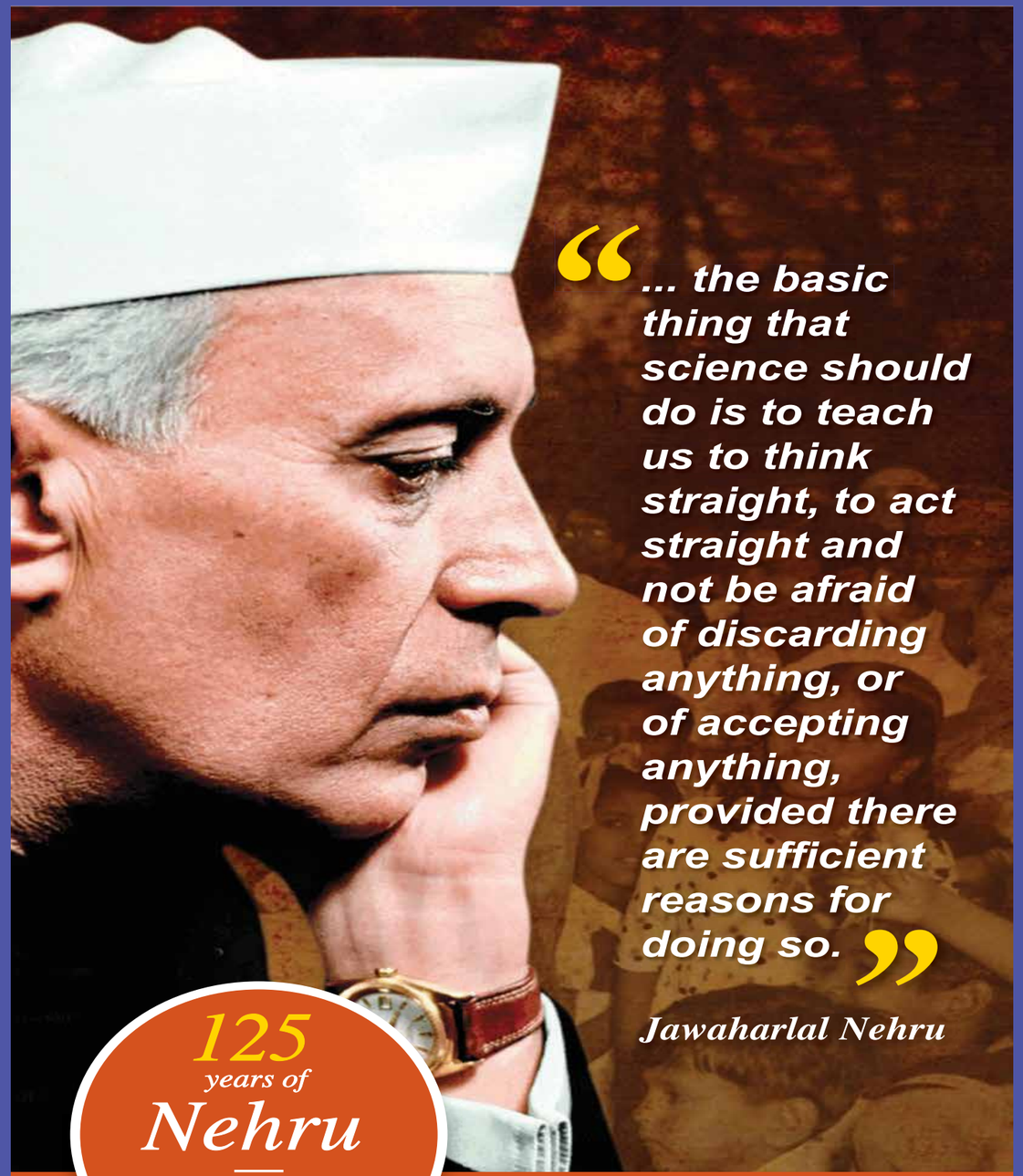

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Dear Readers,

Greetings!

It gives us immense pleasure to bring to you yet another issue of ***Fortell.***

This January issue of the journal is special for many reasons. First, the articles by scholars, both experienced and young, from different parts of the country, published in this issue bear testimony to the growing popularity of ***Fortell.*** We thank our readers for sending us articles for publication on varied language and literary themes and it was primarily our intention to accommodate as many different kinds of papers as possible that we decided to come out with a general issue this time. The thrust, of course, remains on bringing to the fore myriad voices on diverse issues of language and literature learning. In future too we would endeavour to do the same so keep writing to us!

The second reason which makes this issue special is that it marks yet another transition in the history of ***Fortell*** and the journal is now available in both **print** and **online** versions. We had been thinking of doing so for quite some time in the hope of expanding our reach within India and to other parts of the world in order to facilitate a more fruitful interaction between teachers of English across the globe. Meanwhile, please visit our recently revamped website **www.fortell.org** and our **facebook page**, we look forward to your posts and feedback.

In keeping with this proposed shift, the interview in this issue with Professor Richard Allen from the Open University, UK, highlights the importance of the rapidly expanding distance mode of education. In the Indian context, though the traditional modes of learning seem to be giving in to more innovative methods of teaching and learning; there still appears to be a mental block against off-campus learning. In times of technology, the lines between on-line and off-line learning are blurring and we should take advantage of this paradigmatic shift, both as teachers/facilitators in our educational institutes and as learners. As teacher-learner one can pursue online courses or MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) for skills enhancement. Not only can these courses be used for knowledge advancement but also for in-service teacher training; they could indeed help in life-long learning. We strongly believe that the knowledge and exposure to new ideas will surely be carried forward to our students in the classroom.

So while we wish that you enjoy reading this issue we also request you to contact us in case you have not been receiving a copy of the journal. Please write back to us with your contact details if you or your ***Fortellian*** friends do not get the group mails posted on **fortellgroup** and we will take care of it.

We hope to hear from you soon.

Ruchi and Rachna, Guest Editors

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Facilitating Discourse Construction in Second Language

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K.N.Anandan is consultant to Telangana State Residential Schools Society, Hyderabad. He conceived Discourse Oriented Pedagogy for teaching English for Kerala and Telangana as part of revising the curricula in these states. He has developed various English Language Acquisition programmes under the constructive paradigm. His book Chomskyan Revolution in Linguistics won him the Kerala Sahithya Academy Endowment Award in 2006. His second book Tuition to Intuition introduces his vision of second language pedagogy.

I feel sad and even annoyed when I hear teachers and parents complaining about the poor performance standards of students in English. 'This is unfair,' I would say to myself. 'Have we ever asked those kids to communicate their ideas?' No. All what we have done is teach them bits and fragments of English in terms of discrete sounds, words and sentences. When we ask them a question we expect them to reproduce the information that has been given to them. We don't want them to come out with their ideas; nor do we encourage them to ask us questions, as both involve risk, the risk of making errors. Probably we have taught them hundreds of questions and answers and also have made them do several vocabulary and grammar exercises. We even go to the extent of teaching them nuances of pronunciation. By definition none of these activities provide space for communication, though we may claim that we are following communicative language teaching. I feel annoyed because this is a collective treachery inflicted on the learners as well as the teachers.

As teachers most of us are too obsessed with teaching lessons from the textbook. We don't add anything to them and we don't delete anything from them. This is by and large our notion of 'covering the syllabus.' At the end of the show we take pride in claiming cent percentage results without worrying much whether we have been helping them to learn English or learn about English.

So for a short while, let us not worry about teaching from the textbook. Instead, we will go for a series of activities that can make the learners independent users of English. Since language exists as discourses such as conversations, narratives, descriptions and so on, our objective is to help the learners construct these both orally and in writing. This in turn necessitates a pedagogy that will facilitate language production. This is where discourse oriented pedagogy[1] comes in which intuitively translates the idea that the linguistic experience the learner gets both at the input and the output levels should be in terms of discourses.

How do we begin?

To begin with, we can have a series of activities which I would like to call as 'bridging the gap activities'. The objective is to instil confidence in the learners by helping them construct a few primary discourses such as descriptions, conversations and narratives. This is done through interaction based on a theme picture. Let us see the classroom process for this.

Picture Interaction for producing a description in the whole class (Grades 3 to 8)

- *Display the chart containing the picture (e.g., **a railway platform**) ensuring its visibility to all in the class.*
- *Put children in small groups (of three or four).*
- *Draw a margin on the blackboard and ask questions to elicit the names of the things /people /animals they see in the picture (E.g., **platform, ticket counter**, etc.). Each group can say one idea at a time. Try to involve all the children in the process.*
- *Now elicit a few action words (such as **walking, standing, eating**, etc. And write these words on the right side margin.*
- *Now go on asking questions to elicit the actions done by the people animals, etc. as depicted in the picture.*

1. What are the people doing in this picture?
2. What is the woman near the train doing?
3. What is the woman at the counter doing?
4. Who do you see on the platform?
5. Where is the train?
6. What is this place?

The teacher is not supposed to supply any ideas. Instead, she may ask supporting questions and an even interact with the learners using mother tongue to elicit ideas. Children need sufficient time to come out with their own ideas. The process continues:

- *Elicit eight to ten ideas in this manner through negotiation with the whole class. If students are saying the idea in mother tongue put it in English with the help of the other learners.*

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- *All the sentences may be written down on the board/ chart.*
- *Call the groups to the front of the class and ask them to read the sentences. Each team may read only one sentence at a time. Involve all children in the reading process.*
- *When the reading is over, interact with them in the following manner:*

1. These sentences are related to the picture. What is the picture about?
2. What name do you want to give to this picture?

- *Elicit their ideas and write the title on top of the blackboard.*
- *Let them re-sequence the sentences giving a number to each sentence.*
- *Ask the children to write down all the sentences in their notebook without writing the number. They have to write down the title and the date.*

Picture Interaction for producing a description in the groups

Another picture (say, the picture of **a bus stand**) can be used for interaction.

- *Ask them to observe the picture carefully. A few questions may be asked to elicit certain words related to the names of things and the actions (if you think they may not know them) and write these words on blackboard.*
- *Let them sit in groups and say similar sentences related to the things they see in it and the actions of the characters depicted in it. You may supply them with specific vocabulary they may ask for.*
- *Let each group present what they have written in their notebooks. They can write the same on a chart that can be displayed before the whole class*
- *Present your version of the targeted discourse. This also is to be displayed before the whole class.*
- *Ask them to read this and identify ideas which they have not written.*
- *Edit one of the group products by negotiating with the learners to address the errors in it.*

Editing is not for teaching grammar explicitly. It is just to know how they make use of their intuitive knowledge of language. Each sentence is to be taken up for editing. Questions such the following will be useful:

Syntactic editing

Are there any missing words in this sentence?

Are there any excess words?

Is the sequence of words all right?

Morphological editing

Is the word form alright? Do you want to make any change in it? This will take care of errors related to tenses, aspects, affixation, and PNG agreement markers. Only after this the errors related to writing conventions (such as punctuations, spelling, capitalization, etc.) are to be addressed.

There are a few linguistic elements that affect both syntax and morphology. Examples are the Passive (be- en), the Perfective (have – en) and the Progressive (be –ing), which have disjoint morphemes. We can take up the first component in these morphemes for syntactic editing and treat the other component (which is a bound morpheme) under morphological editing, if necessary.

- *Let each group rewrite their description including ideas from the teacher's version and from the other group products.*

Picture Interaction for producing a description – individual work

- *Let each child select any picture (either in the book or elsewhere) and write a description individually*
- *Ask them to refine their work with the help of suggestions from others.*

You may sit in groups. Take turns and read out what you have written to others. Make necessary changes in your writing with the help of others.

Interaction based on the picture for producing a conversation

- *Show Picture I once again for eliciting the conversation between any two characters and write the exchange on the board. For this create the context as suggested below:*

What is the woman at the ticket counter doing?

What is the woman saying to the man?

What is the man saying to the woman?

- *Elicit a few exchanges and write them on the blackboard maintaining the format of conversations.*

Woman and clerk

Woman: Ticket, please!

Clerk: Where do you want to go?

Woman: To Hyderabad.

Clerk: How many tickets?

Woman: Just one.

- *Ask a few pairs to read the conversation aloud. Let all of them write it in the notebook*
- *Ask them to observe the picture closely. Interact with them in the following manner:*

Developing a Conversation in Groups

- *You may interact with the learners as suggested below*:

A few other pairs in the picture are also talking. Can you identify them? (E.g. the man at the tea shop; the man at the book shop etc.)

- *Elicit the names and write them on the board:*

Now select any pair and write the conversation between the two persons in groups.

- *Let the groups present their conversations.*
- *Present the teacher's version and edit the products.*

Developing Stories / Narratives

- *Use Picture 1 for the whole class activity to help them write a story / narrative.*
- *Ask children to think on what is happening in the picture, what would have happened before that and what would happen next. You may ask questions like the following for interaction.*

In the picture you see the woman buying tickets.

Where was she before this?

What was she doing then?

Who were the others with her?

What were they doing?

What were they saying / thinking?

What happened after that?

In this manner a series of events and dialogues can be elicited and written on the blackboard which will make the text of the narrative.

- *Read the narrative with voice modulation*.

As was done with the whole class description, children have to read the narrative, and write it down in their notebooks.

The next step is to ask children to work in groups so that they can develop a narrative based on another context as suggested in Picture 1 (e.g. the man buying a book from the bookstall). Follow the process of giving feedback, editing, presentation of the teacher's version and refining the group work with the help of the new input. Once this stage is over, children can individually develop more narratives based on other contexts they get from the picture or any other picture.

The activities suggested above make use of interaction as a pedagogical tool. Interaction does not mean asking questions and eliciting ideas from the learners. The teacher has to build up on the responses so that dialoguing takes place in the classroom. A few linguistic devices may be used for dialoguing with the students. These include,

- Reporting the responses of the students (*Maya says that the woman is buying tickets*.)
- Seeking agreement (*Do you agree with Maya*?)
- Asking for opinion (*Does anyone have any other idea*?)
- Seeking confirmation (*She is coming from home, isn't she?*)
- Asking for explanation (*Why is she going to Vizag?*)

Once the learners gain confidence in producing language it will be easier for us to lead them through the reading passages. At the pre-reading stage a picture can be used as a trigger to develop theme-related constructs in their minds and to help them make predictions on what they are going to read. Reading is to be attempted individually, which can be followed by collaborative reading where the learners can share what they understood, what they were not able to understand and the parts of the text they like the most. The teacher can supply necessary information to address any residual issues at the end of collaborative reading. This can be followed by extrapolating the text with the help of a few analytical questions. The reading experience can culminate in the production of some discourse which is to be written individually, refined in groups and edited.

Let us stop transmitting information loaded in the textbooks; instead let us learn the pedagogical craft of asking questions that can help the learners think and develop their own constructs.

Notes

[1]For more information on discourse oriented pedagogy refer to Kerela Curriculum Framework 2007 at http://www.ssamis.com/web/downloads/KCF%202007.pdf

Critical Thinking and Technology-mediated Collaborative Learning: An Interface

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Introduction

21st century has seen globalization, IT boom and the Internet shift the world focus from an industrial economy to a knowledge-based society impacting the ELT paradigm across the world. In the light of rapid pace of socio-economic development and the emergence of information age, demand has arisen for 'knowledgeable workers' and 'smarter graduates' equipped with a set of new skills and attitude

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towards work.

Understanding Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is not a new concept and has always remained one of the main goals of education in developing and improving student thinking. However, in the last decade there has been a growing concern that graduates at all levels do not demonstrate higher thinking abilities (Cromwell, 1992). Lack of critical thinking not only affects students' academic success, but is also likely to affect their personal growth when they start working. It is a core life skill, which every individual requires to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (WHO, 1999). Critical thinking is an intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning or communication as a guide to belief and action. In short, it is thinking, which is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective (Paul and Elder, 2006). If inference has to be drawn, it would amount to higher order thinking skills stated in the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001). Today, ICT has made information easily accessible, but the difficulty lies in acquiring thinking capabilities to deal with such information. Critical thinking thus, needs to be developed so that learners can explore, criticize, reason inductively-deductively and infer conclusions. However, a teacher's dilemma lies in incorporating these abstract intellectual processes in instructional strategies. To integrate critical thinking in class the questions that seek to be addressed are:

1. What should teachers teach?
2. Which methodology should teachers adopt?

This paper advocates that cognitive thinking skills of learners can be developed if teachers in the classroom use technology-integrated collaborative methodology guided by a constructivist framework.

The Constructivist Framework

Constructivism is a theory of learning, which posits that students learn by actively constructing their own knowledge (von Glasersfeld, 1996; Fosnot 1996; Duffy and Cunningham 1996)**.** According to von Glasersfeld (1995), concepts cannot be simply transferred from teachers to students – they have to be conceived. Knowledge is not regarded as a commodity which can be transferred from an expert to a learner; rather it should be regarded as a construct pieced together through an active process of involvement and interaction with the environment. Learners bring to class differential life experiences, and learning therefore needs to be looked through students' perspective where they can collaboratively contribute towards a learning goal.

Collaborative Learning implies working in a group of two or more to achieve a common goal, while respecting each individual's contribution to the whole (McInnerey and Robert, 2004). The strength of collaborative learning lies in the fact that active exchange of ideas within small group gives students opportunity to engage in discussion, taking responsibility for their own learning, building new understanding by challenging other's ideas and defending their own. Combination of different perspectives, talent and ideas creates a new product, which could be quite different from what each learner could have created on his/her own. Collaborative learning thus embodies values of reflection, negotiation, human management, decision-making and problem-solving skills, which leads to learner autonomy. Internet being more accessible to learners today, integrating technology is seen to prove effective for knowledge construction.

Use of Technology

Review of literature suggests that technology itself, does not lead to development of thinking skills. The success of the activity depends on how technology is used by the teacher. Jonassen et al (1998) state that computer-mediated collaborative learning is seen as a support and resource for students by which thinking skill is taught, applied and learnt. Computer as a tutor and the computer as a tool together are seen to support reasoning skills, enquiry skills, creative thinking and evaluation skills. In addition, use of technology helps in self-paced instruction.

Keeping the above assumptions in mind, a study was planned and executed to develop critical thinking skills of IV semester BCA students at The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India.

The Study

The study was an E-Project devised on the principles of Business Communication. At first, students were asked to conceptualize, identify, and launch a product in the virtual market. Two, they had to make assumptions regarding the clients of the product. Three, they had to prepare a marketing strategy which included a message for their clients, the channels which they would use to advertise their products and the code or the language they would use to do it. Four, they had to anticipate barriers likely to be encountered at all levels and five, find solutions to them. Lastly they had to obtain feedback on the product launched and resolve issues if any.

Execution

The E-Project was of 15 weeks duration comprising 120 students who had a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic background. These students were divided into groups of six each.

Two contact hours were allotted per week for it. On the first day the task was explained followed by revising Principles of Communication that they had learned in Semester I. For the next two weeks inputs of 1 hour each, using case studies were imparted to students on negotiation and assertive skills, sms-etiquettes and inter-cultural communication. The next hour was reserved for clarifying their doubts as

brainstorming had started to identify the product. All stages of the project were time bound.

- All groups had to identify the product within 2 weeks,
- Each activity was monitored and questioned at every stage,
- All instructions were given via emails, blogs every 10 days,
- All the students had the freedom to email anytime for clarifying doubts.

Use of technology meant using **online learning tools.** Based on the objectives of the project and visualizing its applicability, the following online tools were used:

Discussion Board- on which *discussable* questions, audio-video files, case studies could be posted as well as speeches uploaded. Students learned *how* to participate in an online discussion; ***Drop box assignments*** made assignments meaningful, relevant and frequent; ***Chat Rooms*** helped in 'live' interaction and ***Emails*** were used for giving instructions. ***Blogs*** highly motivated students. For students who otherwise might not become participants in classrooms, it provided an effective platform for collaboration and discussion.

Apart from the above, ***Socratic Questioning*** was used which developed higher order thinking skills in students. Socratic Method is basically asking a series of questions on a central issue or topic to engage others in thoughtful discussion. It is an effective way to explore ideas in depth and promotes independent thinking, giving students ownership of what they are learning. Questions were asked that sought clarifications, assumptions, reasons, evidences, justification of claims, implications, consequences, viewpoints and perspectives about their own thinking process.

Result

The groups identified products like shampoos, soaps, mobile phones, television sets, two/four wheel vehicles, laptops etc. An example of a 'soap', which a group launched, is cited here. They named it 'Blossom'. They assumed that 38% of the rural population and 62 % of the urban population would use it; characteristics of a cleansing agent, with good biodegradability and mild antiseptic were attributed to it and they priced it at Rs. 20. To market the product they prepared a jingle, which is as follows:

Soft Touch

Silken Feel

Soothing Effect

Lilting Fragrance

Experience a Blossom Bath

To advertise their product they used TV, handouts, visuals and radio. The banners they prepared had the photograph of the soap with the jingle written on it. Barriers they visualized were brand power - 30% because many established brands were already in the market, fierce nature of competition - 10%, competition with the MNCs- 30%, faith in customers – 25% and government policy - 05%. Feedback on the product was sought through questionnaires, house to house survey and interviewing customers.

Evaluation

Project evaluation comprised 100 marks, constituting 3 credits. All students individually submitted the written project that included all stages they had undertaken to complete it. Also, all students in individual groups made an oral presentation in front of the entire class, which was evaluated by two external teachers and the teacher concerned. Questions were asked to each and every member of the group which were related to the contribution made by each student by citing examples, making connections between related concepts, stating important aspects they had learned, challenging moments of the project, and how they resolved certain complex issues.

Implications

The learning outcomes that emerged were that students were engaged in active inquiry leading to development of higher level thinking skills. As students dug into complex and challenging problems, addressing real life concerns, it assisted cognitive growth, developed reflective, negotiating, team and value skills, making learning relevant while establishing connections with life outside of the classroom.

Conclusion

The narrow notion of ELT as developing LSRW needs to be redefined. Today, English is increasingly perceived as an international language. Looking at the context in which learners require English today, language teachers need to become interdisciplinary instructors. Teachers should act as critical agents of change in society in which English classrooms can become sites for enhancing life skills.

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Portrayal of Living a Borrowed Identity in Bhavani Prasad Mishra's poem 'Kya Karte Rahtein Hain'

Alka Tyagi

Alka Tyagi is Associate Professor in Department of English, Dyal Singh(Evening) College, University of Delhi. She is a poet, translator and critic.

In this paper I would like to dwell on the subtle interiorization of coloniser's culture by the educated Indian in the postcolonial city space as reflected in Bhavani Prasad Mishra's poem 'Kya Karte Rahte hain'. This poem can be read as a document of fractured modern identity of the educated class in Indian cities at the threshold of post Gandhian era. Gandhi had criticized this class for becoming obsessed with Englishman's language and ways. Bhavani Prasad Mishra, a Gandhian in thought and by practice, is deeply disturbed by the Englishman's parting gift, the poisoned sweet that is being spread by the modern education system. The poem is about a class which is obsessed with English language and culture. It describes how the Western mode of education and work patterns have shifted our attention and energy away from our more urgent problems to pursue the goal of becoming a 'Developed Nation', an idea propagated by the West. Mishra's poem questions this belief and undercuts the notion that achieving the status of a developed country would provide us with immense power and endless zones of comfort and convenience.

Adoption of English language: Imitation and alienation

In this poem, Mishra reflects on the problems of adopting English language as the official language in India. The unheedful and blind imitation of the behavioural patterns of English people by our educated class results in individual and social alienation.

The mother tongue plays an important role in formation of our individual and social identities. Khubchandani describes how through the process of learning mother tongue we learn to understand ourselves:

> A child acquires native speech as a living phenomenon by progressive differentiation of the integral whole, gradually differentiating its perceptions to 'know' the environment. In the process of socialisation a child, at an early stage, recognises the patterns of verbalisation, enabling him/her to participate in a particular social environment. He/ she learns to locate himself/herself, i.e. where does she/he belong to on the social map. (Khubchandani, 1988, p.30).

The ideas of 'knowing the environment', 'participating in the environment' and 'locating the self in the environment' are important because human beings are social and emotional beings; and language is the medium through which sharing of social and emotional concerns takes place. The effectiveness and thoroughness of this sharing is significant for a fulfilling coexistence. The most fulfilling moments are those that bridge the gap between thought and word. The mother tongue helps to bridge the aporia between thought and expression and has the capacity to deliver an emotion in its fullness. The simple reason for this is that the language of a particular region is pregnant with all the nuances of its historical past from the time of its inception. The antiquity of a language has the capacity to hold and convey a wide range of human emotions of that particular geographical and cultural space. Hence the individual who does not speak the language of his living space is living in a superficial layer with no access to the deeper and more intense aspects of day to day living. Using the mother tongue is like looking at daylight and becoming aware of a hidden rainbow. Mishra's poem specifically talks about how our educated have moved away from their mother tongue:

> Words that he utters are perhaps
>
> More in number than the stars in the sky
>
> But the effect that they leave
>
> Is that of a heavy sigh or of pure resentment
>
> These educated ones do not understand each other's writing
>
> or the documents of their fancy
>
> They have long forgotten
>
> The language around them
>
> As even amongst themselves
>
> One's language does not match the other's[1]

Mishra has here indicated that this class in post-independence India suffers alienation on account of its distance from native tongue and also on account of the living style that it has adopted. The English educated person situates himself in an elitist position and finds it difficult to communicate with non-English speaking classes like the farmers, artisans, craftsmen, vegetable sellers and grocers. This cuts him off from a major part of life around him. Mishra says that such people live a meaningless life crowded with words in their heads. Whatever they express through their words is merely a depressive sigh of helplessness or resentment. They inscribe a record of their loneliness and alienation through their words which are unintelligible to others because they are different from the language of common people.

Appropriation of foreign culture

Issues of language are deeply linked to the problem of cultural imperialism. Mishra addresses the issue of depletion of our culture at the hands of English educated class which prefers everything English over Indian and points out with sharp irony:

> How can we spill our hard earned money
>
> On hundreds of these people like barbers, blacksmiths
>
> Moreover why should they receive our money,
>
> Our money is needed by the foreign blade company!
>
> If everything we own, is not imported
>
> From our blade to our brain-
>
> Something in us will remain our own, No!
>
> And then we will not, even in loneliness, become a crowd
>
> Then we will not be able to announce -'We are Modern'

Mishra poignantly describes how this class suffers from emotional emptiness, meaninglessness and a loss of identity:

> Modern man-
>
> From head to toe and
>
> Throughout - is a crowd

In the background of the poem there is an acute awareness about pre-colonial culture which is being continuously displaced and threatened by neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism. For Mishra culture is synonymous with a sense of inner completeness. He witnesses with pain the decline of a compassionate and selfless society which he has experienced. He has lived in times when inner fulfilment had been derived from within the complex system of dependence and sustenance of communities. For example, the interaction and cooperation within various groups in a village community was not merely a professional economic exchange but also an exchange of emotional energy. The process of giving, receiving, supporting and thereby sustaining each other has been an integral part of channelisation of human emotional energy. The barber, the goldsmith, the ironsmith, the carpenter, the cobbler, the local shopkeeper and the school master- all have been threads in the web of community existence. In postcolonial India, the aspirations of middle class changed in view of the new education system introduced by the administrators of the empire. Unfortunately the aspirants for education and progress needed to make a break from their community web and this led to estrangement between rich and poor, educated and uneducated, city-dwellers and village- dwellers etc. The resultant fragmented social formation has created a disconnect with the basic web of life.

Social alienation

Mishra describes the gaps and fissures within the cultural web and the resultant alienation through images of an office-goer in postcolonial India. There is an ironical almost prophetic reference to how multinational companies, taking advantage of Indian reverence for imported things have played a huge role in creating a break with our own way of life.

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A reminder of Macauly's 'Minute on Indian Education' is useful here, that aimed to create clerks to serve the English administration, and not to fulfil the needs of Indian people as it had no system of training farmers, ironsmiths, goldsmiths, barbers, jewellers, carpenters, weavers or artisans.
It degraded our existing system by removing *shram*, the creative labour, from our lives. This led to elitism of the English educated who started to believe that any kind of physical labour is work of servants. The dignity of *shram* which is the hallmark of Indian life was erased from modern education. The poem begins with a typical picture of an educated middle class Indian male's daily routine; he needs 'bed tea' to be served by his wife, and goes to office to while away time and not to work:

What do we do

We wake up late in the morning

That the day has dawned, we come to know

Only when the housewife brings tea to our bed side

Then we do a slow shave, a bath and dress up

To reach office

Where there is no compulsion to work

Where we just have to sit here and there

- Often even this is unnecessary

The poem depicts the laziness that has crept into the entire structure of Government offices and affecting their working style. This laziness that has come to be associated with the 'dignity' of the educated class removes them farther from their own immediate reality and snaps their link with community and nature. This physical inertia of the educated class gradually develops into a kind of mental inertia. They lose their individual capacity of thinking and their minds are being run by neo-colonial powers operating through high powered industrialists and corrupt politicians:

That these few

Can announce through such platforms

Their authority, their supremacy,

Even their meanness and bad taste

In our share they let fall, it seems

Only a silent spectatorship -that too from distance,

And we return home thoroughly exhausted

So our mind and intellect cannot even think

- About the futility, the vanity and the exploitation involved in all this.

This machine like existence that deprives this class of any active thinking is the reason behind its acceptance of things around with a horrifying passivity. Complete degradation of ethics is seen at all levels, and they keep watching it helplessly, mostly due to weakness of will to bring about change. Mishra describes a picture of this modern urban existence:

Only smoke enters through the windows

And vulgar voices

And if one peeps out

The spectacle is far from

What can be called pleasant

Fast moving vehicles,

Fearful pedestrians

Screechy sounds

Obscene sequences of dirty songs set to music

Naked people - deprived of clothes or of taste

Mishra's answer to problems of modern life that is wrapped up in poverty, deprivation, alienation, corruption and crime is 'a strong will to do selfless work'. He invokes solidarity among those who have a desire to bring about change. He urges them to shed off their small comforts and luxury in order that all may live in dignity and with a sense of contentment. In the last lines of 'Kya Karte Rahtein Hain', Mishra implores people to wake up to bring about the much needed change in society:

The way is simple and easy-

Some of us have to wake up

And have to keep awake day after day

And leave behind

Our masks, our dresses

And our worries about many such things

We have to dissolve

Sweet primitive fragrances of pure dawn

Into our dust and smoke filled surroundings

In Mishra's opinion, we don't need a Christ, a Buddha, or a Gandhi for this task. We only need a few willing individuals from amongst ourselves who are ready to shed off personal comfort zones and leave behind the masks of false identities which we have been wearing since the colonial invasion on our psyche.

Notes

1. All the translations of Mishra's poem given in the article are mine.

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'Say It with Shakespeare'

Developing Communication Skills in Professional Courses

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The primary goal of language teaching is communication – written as well as spoken. Communication strategy is one of the components of communicative competence. Canale and Swain (1980) discuss four different components that make up the construct of communicative competence. The first two components reflect the use of linguistic system itself and the other two define the functional aspect of communication. They refer to communication strategies as 'strategic competence'.

The four components are:

1. Grammatical competence refers to the knowledge of language code (this includes lexical items, rules of morphology, syntax, semantics etc.)
2. Discourse competence pertains to the ability to combine sentences in discourse to form different types of cohesive texts (political speech, poetry etc.)
3. Sociolinguistic competence means mastery of the socio-cultural code of language use (including appropriate use of vocabulary, register, politeness and style in a given situation)
4. Strategic competence refers to the knowledge and understanding of the social context in which language is used. It is the ability to use verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. This knowledge enhances the efficiency of communication to overcome the difficulties of communication breakdown (use of mime, circumlocution, approximation, avoidance, self-monitoring and interaction etc.). It helps to develop the ability to manipulate language to meet the communicative goals. It is said that an efficient and eloquent speaker possesses strategic competence.

With globalization and technical innovations, there is an increased awareness of the importance of English in the professional fields. Until the beginning of this century, English had been viewed as a language to gain knowledge in science and technology in higher education. In the present day it is not enough to acquire knowledge but it is essential to be able to use it efficiently in professional fields. Hence the skills in communication through English have assumed greater importance. Teaching of communicative strategies has become an integral part of a professional programme.

The objectives of teaching language skills in professional colleges certainly address the need for developing communication skills. The most pertinent question is, does teaching correlate with the objectives with which the language course is introduced in the professional colleges? A look at the various textbooks in use and the methodology used by the teachers of English in different colleges in various states speaks contrary to this.

A study conducted in this context a decade ago does not reveal very encouraging results. 'The English course books prescribed mainly focus on developing reading and writing skills. Speaking skills receives least priority in the course books. The activities given in the form of oral fluency, discussion and role plays do not yield the required language competency among the students.' (Indira, 2003, p 137). Again, the same study finds a tremendous responsibility placed on the language teachers in these institutions: 'The course books pre-empt the resourcefulness of the teachers. The responsibility placed on the teachers seems to be very heavy. They are expected to supplement and complement the exercises presented in the course books' (p.139). A recent study of 'Employability Skill Index' was undertaken by Purple Leap, a talent management institute with a sample of 9,000 students across 95 colleges in the country(*The Hindu*). The study reveals that students need focussed intervention across communication skills, technical skills and problem solving.

Whether we talk about theories of communication or language teaching for communication, and developing 'life skills', these disciplines are centuries younger than Shakespeare who wrote:

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,

Sermons in stones, and good in everything.'

(*As You Like It*: Act II, sc.i: 16-17)

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I wish to argue that Shakespeare is very much relevant today not only to students of English literature but even to the modern day business audience in the offices and boardrooms. We can use his plays innovatively in training programmes for professionals in communication strategies and soft skills. Shakespearean texts are being 'rediscovered' in developing soft skills at various levels, especially in Management and Engineering Programmes. Developing soft skills at higher levels of learning and in professional programmes presupposes the basic communicative competence in the learner which includes the four strategies mentioned earlier. For example, an effective salesperson utilizes these strategies of communication to make a product irresistible for a consumer.

Shakespeare's kings, queens, dukes and generals are being summoned outside the confines of literary studies to provide a spectrum of good, efficient, indifferent as well as brilliant leadership in management. Corrigan (1999) discusses the Shakespearean protagonists to draw lessons in management and leadership qualities.

A typical Course in Management Communication includes the following topics:

1. Communicating as a professional includes skills like preparing and delivering presentations and responding to audience questions; interpersonal communication including facilitating productive discussion; coaching and motivating employees; mediating interpersonal workplace conflicts; executive communication skills like getting one's message across to an audience.
2. Leadership qualities includes building a positive attitude, inspiring commitment in the team, developing speaking skills, conflict resolution, analyzing audience pulse, reducing potential antagonism and winning confidence, and defining rhetorical goals.
3. Written Communication includes writing a report, and conveying progress of projects.

We can take some of these components and seek illustrations from Shakespeare. The first among the management strategies is **building a positive attitude**. What better instance can we find than the Duke Senior in *As You Like It***?** Duke Senior is banished from the court by his younger brother Duke Frederick and is exiled into the forest. His exile in the forest does not make him depressed and angry as these words suggest:

... Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?
Here feel we not the penalty of Adam,
The seasons' difference; as the icy fang
And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
Which, when it bites and blows upon my body
Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say
'This is not flattery; these are counselors
That feelingly persuade me what I am.'
Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;

(*As You Like It*: Act II. Sc.i, 3-14)

The words of Duke Senior reflect the essence of the small story often used in management courses as a problem solving exercise. The story refers to two young marketing management trainees of a shoe company who are sent to a part of Australia where only the aborigines live. The first comes back and dashes off a report, which says 'No chance! The blokes don't appreciate shoes'. The second one sends a report – 'Great opportunity! We can introduce shoes to the entire population!'

Another factor that should be developed in a manager is the **persuasive communication strategies** that facilitate effective management. The business manager has to have forceful language that can motivate the employees and spur them on to action. Look at the language of Lady Macbeth:

Was the hope drunk,
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since,
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? …
…And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
Like the poor cat i'the adage?

(*Macbeth*: Act I, Sc.vii; 35-44)

Planning and execution of the plan are integral parts of professional management. Excuses for non-performance are discouraged. The strong words/imagery of Lady Macbeth could motivate any man into action.

What beast was 't then
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet would make both:

(*Macbeth*: Act I. Sc.vii; 47-52)

Interpersonal skills are of paramount importance in Business Communication and in any professional's career. An effective manager would always confront unacceptable behaviour in a tactful way that does not damage underlying personal relationship. In *As You Like It*, the exchange between Duke Senior and Orlando who rudely interrupts the Duke's meal can be cited as an appropriate example here. Orlando's rude words 'Forbear, and eat no more!' are met with the Duke's gentle words:

Art thou thus boldened, man, by thy distress?
Or else a rude despiser of good manners,
That in incivility thou seem'st so empty?

(*As You Like It* : Act II. Sc.vii. 91-93)

At the end of a long exchange between them, Orlando exits as a changed man saying 'Thank ye; and blest for your good comfort!'

Conflicts are common in the workplace. **Conflict resolution and problem-solving** are skills imparted in management programmes. An effective manager does not get flustered but resolves conflicts effectively with sound reasoning to produce high quality win-win solutions. Portia's cool demeanour is a case in point:

Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh;
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh. If thou tak'st more
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple – nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.

(*The Merchant of Venice*: Act IV. Sc.i. ; 324-332)

Presentation skills and effective speaking comprise an important component of a professional programme. An effective manager should be able to get the message s/he wants to convey about the organization across to an audience. The credibility of the manager increases with the manner in which s/he responds to audience questions. All these factors find an excellent example in Antony's funeral speech in *Julius Caesar***.** The very beginning of his speech has a careful choice of words, which arrest the attention of the audience:

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.

(*Julius Ceasar*, Act.III. Sc.ii. 70-71)

Anthony's words display his knowledge of the pulse of the audience, his ability to present his argument in a gentle, but firm and persuasive manner, and his ability to motivate them into action, which was his hidden agenda. He wins the crowd's favour using his persuasive rhetoric to whip the masses into frenzy so great that they don't even realize the fickleness of their favour. His carefully crafted speech can be used as a model of presentation skills by any teacher.

As we read Shakespeare's observations we can see how readily they apply to many forms of communication involved. This paper has taken a few examples from only 4 plays. We can find examples galore in all the 37 plays which can be material for an entire book on the relevance of Shakespeare in developing communication strategies in professional courses.

The art of teaching through the use of illustrations is a well-respected pedagogical tradition. Machiavelli used stories of kings in ancient Greece to instruct his Florentine princes in strategic statesmanship. Vishnusharman in India has done the same. Management students look at case studies of real business houses to understand the principles of Organizational Management. William Shakespeare gives the teachers enough opportunities to seek new explorations in professional thinking by providing ample opportunities to develop problem-solving exercises. Shakespearean lines can be used profitably to meet the new challenges in professional education.

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Skopoi of a Translator: Assessing Vermeer's *Skopos* Theory

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In an essay titled 'What does it Mean to Translate' Hans J. Vermeer (1987) explores the structural, semantic and stylistic problems of translation. He asks, 'Why does one translate a text?'(p. 28) and asserts, 'Linguistics alone won't help us. Firstly, because translating is not merely and not even primarily a linguistic process. Secondly, because linguistics has not yet put the right questions to tackle our problems. So let's look somewhere else.' (p.29) The present paper will explore Vermeer's *skopos* theory and the second half of the paper will use Vermeer's *skopos* theory to analyse the *skopos* of some translations from Hindi into English and English into Hindi.

Vermeer finds the translator an expert who knows the best way to project the source text in the target language. His translational action is not only dependent on the source text but on his understanding and his purpose to translate in a given situation. Vermeer developed the *skopos* theory as an approach to translation in Germany in the late 1970s. The word *skopos* in Greek stands for 'purpose', 'goal' 'target' or 'aim'. This theory marks a general shift from the predominantly linguistic approaches and moves towards a 'more functionally and socioculturally oriented concept of translation' (Baker, 1998, p. 235). Vermeer's *skopos* theory presented in 1978 stands on the premise that 'human interaction (and its sub category: translation) is determined by its purpose (skopos), and therefore it is a function of its purpose…The *skopos* of a translation is determined by the function which the target text is interned to fulfil' (Nord, 2005, p. 26). This implies that the source text and the source text recipient do not have a very significant role to play in the determination of the target text. Instead, it is the purpose of the translation and the intention of the translator/ commission to present it to an originally unintended readership which fixes its translation process.

Vermeer explicates the theory by firstly clarifying the basic assumptions. *Skopos* theory is not valid just for 'complete actions' but it also applies to parts of texts. The text is not an indivisible whole and hence has numerous *skopoi* within it. Considering that the source text is a result of the source culture it is not expected to possess any knowledge of the target culture. Therefore, mere 'trans- coding' or 'transposing' of the source text into the target language cannot result in an appropriate '*translatum'* (translated text). In turn, it is the translator's job to make it compatible with the target culture. His role is to establish 'intercultural communication'.

Since the source text is oriented towards the source culture and the target text towards the target culture, according to Vermeer (2000), the two texts might or might not converge '… source and target texts may diverge from each other quite considerably, not only in the formulation and distribution of the content but also as regards the goals which are set for each, and in terms of which the arrangement of the content is in fact determined' (p. 229). Therefore, there is always a degree of 'intertextual coherence' between the *translatum* and the source text which might vary according to the *skopos*.

Basil Hatim(2001) defines 'intertextual coherence' as the translator's basic ability to comprehend the source text and to engage with the *skopos* it is intended to have in the target language (p. 75). The fidelity rule according to *skopos* theory merely maintains that 'some' relationship should exist between the source and the target text having the *skopos* and the 'intertextual coherence' basis satisfied.

Vermeer (2000) cites two major possible interrelated objections that exist/will arise against the *skopos* theory and provides counter arguments to them. The first objection is that not all actions have an aim; but Vermeer argues that any action by definition has an aim. 'Aim' or skopos must be 'potentially specifiable'; for him every translational action- process, result and mode have a goal, a function and an intention to fulfill. The second possible objection is that every translation activity might not have a purpose or intention; that goal oriented translation would limit the range of interpretation of the target text, and the translator does not have a specific addressee in mind. Vermeer counter argues that a translational action has a much wider conception of the translator's task including matters of ethics and translator's accountability. And therefore, notions like 'translator's fidelity' also provide a *skopos* to a translator. A translation might aim to protect the breadth of interpretations of the source text in the target text too as one of its *skopoi*.

'The *realizability* of a commission depends on the circumstances of the target culture, not on the source culture…on relation between the target culture and the source text'(Vermeer, 2000. p. 235). Therefore the commission actually decides the *skopos* of a translation, not freely falling for impulses but directed towards a well defined goal. Hence, this challenges the conventionally validated view that translations should be literal and 'loyal' to the source text. It is this *skopos* which determines if a text should be 'translated', 'paraphrased' or completely 're-edited' (p. 237).

In this manner, the theory debunks the concept of 'equivalence' that has demanded precedence over any other idea in translation procedures. Equivalence stands for a relationship between a source text and a target text making them directly related to each other in a way that the target text is seen as an outcome of translating the source text. In Nord's (2005) words it is 'the greatest possible correspondence between source text and target text' (p. 25). This concept is used by translators to produce the same 'meaning', 'effect' or 'value' as the source text. Though, no concrete definition has come up for this concept it is generally equated with fidelity. However, *skopos* theory, functionalist in essence 'dethrones the source text itself'. This theory as already pointed out does not rely on the only premise that 'equivalence' depends on. Yet, as Nord suggests and one can see achievement of 'equivalence' can be one of the *skopoi* of a translational action. 'Fidelity is not the criterion but a mere adequacy with regard to the *skopos*' (Nord, 2005, p. 27).

I would now illustrate *skopos* theory with practical instances. Let me take the example of Ruth Vanita's translation of short stories by Hindi writer, Pandey Bechain Sharma 'Ugra'. Ruth Vanita has very often taken up same-sex love as a central thematic concern; and her work recurringly raises the issue of homosexuality.

Ugra's stories pertaining to same sex love came up during the Indian nationalist movement for independence. Ugra's narrator seems to be against same sex relationships, but he never wins any argument against it. Ugra was heavily criticised for bringing up such a subject to the literary world in a language which was going to become the national language of India. His discussions about gender, masculinity, sexuality, obscenity, censorship and Section 377, along with nationalist concerns are just as relevant today.

Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai (2000) traced the history of modern homophobia as it developed in nineteenth century India. Vanita's intention is to use Ugra's stories and the discussions around them as examples of homophobia. As a translator she decides her area, namely the stories that discuss gay relationships. Her *skopos* makes her extra sensitive to some nuances of the stories. She mentions in the translator's note that 'problems arose especially with regard to Sanskrit, Perso Urdu and regional language terms for sexual preferences such as *batuk prem, laundebazi, paalatpanthi*, and idiomatic turns of phrase, particularly when they involve puns and wordplay, such as Ugra's use of his own pen-name or that of the journal *Matvala* as adjectives within the text' (Vanita, 2006, p. x). Vanita liberally uses Indian English words, translates literally, provides approximations, works hard to retain the poetic quality of some verses, and provides endnotes to explain untranslatable difficult metaphoric words. However, she confesses that *dhwani* of some words cannot be produced in the target language. Her aim is to draw our attention to what was a problematic aspect of literary and historic period of Hindi writing, and continues to be so. From a work written during the nationalist period, she makes her case against homophobia and strengthens her point about Indian discussions of homosexuality. She adheres to her political position while choosing the subject and to a large extent in her technique of translation.

Moving on, let me now discuss an English canonical text translated into Hindi, Amrit Rai's translation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* Amrit Rai's *Bhumika* (Introduction) to the translation expresses his unhappiness with the available translations of Shakespeare's plays. Rai holds Shakespeare's ideas and emotions in such high value that for him any language which can retain them in translation actually proves its own efficiency and capability. For him translation is a creative process and he encounters two major problems in translating *Hamlet.* The first is the appropriate understanding of the text and its translation in such a way that the complexity of the original does not get lost. Secondly it should never be forgotten that Shakespeare wrote these plays for performance and if that gets affected then the translation does not mean anything (Rai, 1965, p.7).

Rai is a propagator of the Hindi language and has such faith in it that he does not pine for word to word translation of the play but translates it into simple day to day Hindi which gives it the naturalness of Shakespeare's thoughts. He aims to maintain detailed intricacies of expressions and emotions in his prose translation, accepting the problems of rendering the works into verse. His intention is to capture the essence; this translation is actually a panegyric to Hindi which is true, secular, receptive to new words and is lively. He concentrates on the emotions of the characters and presents them in the target language to prove its vitality and vast vocabulary independent of the source text at least linguistically. The translator's declaration of his intention serves as examples which very well illustrates *skopos* theory's point that the translator's decision making power has precedence over the source text.

The paper has tried to argue that any translation cannot be understood, analysed and critiqued merely on the basis of the 'linguistic' equivalence between the source and the target texts. It takes a lot more in the process of translation and the study of a translation should also look outside a mere comparison between the original and the new version. With the above mentioned examples we find translations a lot more than mere linguistic and mechanical re-coding of a text in a target language. Translations are intimate works of art which involve absolute attention of the translator in what (choice of texts) and how to translate. The s*kopos* theory of translation brings the translator in the perspective. It helps us gather the human link between two languages and therefore cultures. With this theory in mind a reader of translation

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would be more conscious of the two diverging texts and the respective separate ideological standpoints of the author and the translator.

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What? Literature! Taking a re-look at using literature in the ESL classroom

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Introduction

'To use or not to use (literature) that is the question', seems a very reasonable dilemma that has divided opinions while multiplying controversies. The proponents of literature teaching hold that the best way to learn language is through literature since one cannot learn a language without attention to literature.

Teaching language through literature is considered the best way to learn language in an authentic ambience as grammar, vocabulary and usage are available in contexts that chunks of language presented as isolated units cannot. There is yet another reason provided by literature lovers for using literature- literary texts mirror life; they portray human emotions - love, anger, sadness, joy, betrayal, jealousy, etc. and therefore appeal to readers' instincts and interest. The mind absorbs words, phrases and sentences from the texts read for pleasure, leading to language learning. Literary pieces become fertile breeding grounds for ideas, opinions and different points of view. Learners can therefore use literature as a springboard for enhancing their reading and writing skills. Literature teaching trains learners to be critical and deeply independent thinkers. All these reasons make a persuasive case for including literature in the ESL curriculum.

Opponents on the other hand see literature teaching as imposing an alien culture with a view of glorifying it and that language learning and literature are mutually inconsistent with each other. It is the contention of language teachers that English teaching needs to divorce itself from literary texts and concentrate instead on the bare essentials: only language in its barest form- tenses, voices, reported speech, idioms and phrasal verbs and clauses should figure in the texts and therefore argue for a textbook that has a lot of role plays, situational dialogues and other activities that use English in authentic situations. Just as there are sound reasons for teaching language through literature, there appear to be strong grounds for dispensing with literature in the ESL classroom.

McKay supplies what literature opponents say are the reasons due to which it is unwise to use literature in an ESL curriculum.

> First, since one of our main goals as ESL teachers is to teach the grammar of the language, literature, due to its structural complexity, does little to contribute to this goal. Second, the study of literature will contribute nothing to helping our students meet their academic and/or occupational goals. Finally, literature often reflects a particular cultural perspective; thus, on a conceptual level, it may be quite difficult for students. These arguments certainly need to be addressed if we are to reach a decision as to whether or not to use literature (McKay, 1982, p.529).

The wisdom of using literature depends on the linguistic and cultural level of difficulty that learners encounter when reading or interpreting literary pieces.

The study

The motivation for this study sprung from the texts –prose and poetry pieces –I taught and the concomitant difficulties I encountered when doing so; I realised that literature was easy to read, understand and appreciate while teaching it was not. Informal talk with those I had taught revealed the difficulties one ran into when teaching language through literature. The mismatch between expectations and outcomes was too conspicuous to be omitted and I set about analysing reasons based on the informal talk with students, the salient points of which are provided below.

The college(s) I taught in had students of arts, sciences and commerce, where General English was compulsory for the first two years of the three year course. English is in the curriculum since it is viewed as helping students cope well with the demands of the curriculum in which all subjects barring languages are taught in English, the medium of instruction in classroom is English and the mode of answering is also English.

The students on the courses may be divided into four categories. Students who are from:

(a) Rural areas and regional medium schools

(b) Semi-urban areas and regional medium schools

(c) Urban areas and regional medium schools

(d) Urban areas and English medium schools

Of these, students of categories A, B and C formed the majority; teaching them was a real challenge. These learners opened up when asked about the difficulties they encountered in comprehending a text. The first difficulty stemmed from the language in use to explain the contents of a prose piece or poem. I experienced this when teaching them Mathew Arnold's 'Dover Beach'. I used Telugu and occasionally Hindi to explain the meaning of the poem but realised I had hit a roadblock when I got to the third line:

> Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
>
> Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
>
> Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.

The elucidation was done in English because I knew no better! All the students wanted scaffolding in the mother tongue; they were quick to point out that being first generation learners and having had their education in Telugu/ Hindi in school, they were facing a huge hurdle in being able to understand English. It was not literature that was to blame but the teaching method and the choice of texts. A poem like 'Dover Beach' is difficult to interpret because of the philosophical underpinnings that form the poem's layer and Arnold's own melancholic take on the conflict between science and religion in Victorian era.

Second, students were not interested in the figurative meaning. They wanted to learn grammar and vocabulary from the units and wanted exercises that taught them language as it was used in everyday speech and writing. The exercises based on the poem wanted students to appreciate the *inner* meaning of the poem and the message it had for the reader, a difficult task given the low levels of English proficiency of the learners.

Among the genres – short story, essay, and poems, poetry was seen as most difficult because of the vague, complex and abstract imagery used and the difficulty in bringing out the subtle messages couched in the poem. It was difficult to use even mother tongue to translate the poems prescribed, for example William Carlos Williams' 'This is Just to Say' was tough to tackle. It is both insensible and amusing to teach poems of this kind for exploring grammar or usage since there isn't much the poem can offer to a student of General English course.

Third, students with low proficiency in the language were looking for short paragraphs to help them learn language gradually but confidently; they needed a lot of help by way of background knowledge and found even short stories by foreign writers difficult to follow. The setting and themes seemed alien to them and they were unable to identify with the culture or characters described in the stories.

Finally, almost all the students stood united in their opinion that as students of science and commerce, they did not want English for broadening their horizons through 'a knowledge of the classics of literature' (Akyel and Yalcin, 1990, p.175) or to develop cultural awareness. They did not want any appreciation of literature since most of them felt their limited command of English did not permit that.

All the students wanted English to enhance their language competence and welcomed the inclusion of any text that helped them achieve that. They wanted to learn English for instrumental purposes. To them English was essential to prepare them for interviews, provide them with a good job, and help them use it as a common language of communication. They were in effect looking for an ESP course that trained them for using English in real life.

Implications: The following implications flow from the opinions gathered from students about the idea of using literature in ESL classroom.

1. The necessity of using mother tongue to explain crucial ideas is not only inevitable but the only option to aid comprehension. It may not be possible all the time for teachers to translate the central idea of the text being discussed into the L1. In such cases, one may seek the help of learners themselves in making sense of the text. Thus fluent users may help their weak counterparts with meaning through translation and this arrangement may go some way in ensuring that the enterprise of ELT is not a waste of time or resources.
2. As students complained about the inappropriacy of texts, in particular poetry, which everyone believed was 'unequivocally difficult to grasp'(Ramanathan, 1999, p.225), it is imperative that the selection of poems be such as to make possible comprehension even for a

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learner with very average competence in English. For example, a learner can relate better to a poem by Gieve Patel 'On Killing a Tree' or Wole Soyinka's 'Telephone Conversation' than s/he can to 'Dover Beach' by Mathew Arnold or 'This is Just to Say' by William C. Williams.

3. The students also confessed to being confused and alienated from some of the prose pieces they had been studying; they complained of 'cultural dissonance between themselves and the topics portrayed in the literature' (Ramanathan, 1999, p.225). It is perfectly understandable if one considers their socio-economic background and the concomitant absence of support at home which their English medium peers enjoyed. If literature is to be included, then let it be literature that is a reflection of everyday realities and one that can be 'culturally transposed in local terms' (Ramanathan, 1999, p.226). In other words essays and short stories by R. K. Narayan or works of contemporary Indian writers will resonate better with their lived experience than short stories or essays by Addison, Steele or Charles Lamb. I can testify to the happy experience of teaching paragraph writing to students using essays and short stories of R. K. Narayan.
4. A remedial course in English with emphasis on speaking, a much neglected skill, would be better than dense pieces of poetry or prose. Students have grown wise to the fact that while learning English may be difficult, it is indispensable for upward social mobility. They therefore emphasise their commitment to learning English at their own pace and for purpose of communicating fluently with others. They made clear their desire to be taught spoken English and grammar.

Literature therefore needs to be trimmed and tailored to meet the needs of learners who are the ultimate judges of the effectiveness of teaching materials used.

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Indian Campus Fiction and its Linguistic Gymnastics

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This paper is an attempt to look at speech patterns, as seen in Indian Campus Fiction set in technical, management and liberal arts colleges and to question the homogenous categorization of 'Indian Campus Fiction' for the plethora of novels set in Indian campuses. The last few decades have seen a phenomenal rise in the number of campus novels and the emergence of new writers has also given rise to new publishing houses. Rupa, with Chetan Bhagat writing for it, might not need more writers in the same genre, but Srishti and others are creating opportunities for these new storytellers. Kaushik Bose, the publishing manager of Srishti says that they publish two books every month and their authors are from across the country, metros as well as small towns (Banerjee, 2010).

According to Eble (1989) the language used by college students is a highly expressive, oral and informal form of language that has a distinct subculture. As seen in these campus novels, this lingo performs another function, in addition to those outlined by Eble. It homogenizes its crowd, levelling out diversities and differences. Tushar Raheja's *Anything For You Ma'am* talks of the cohesiveness of the IIT fraternity. One gets the sense that it is closed, self contained and gendered space whose members look at each other as 'long lost brothers' (Raheja, 2006, p.186).

The cohesiveness which Raheja sees in the IIT fraternity, is also seen amongst MIJites in *Mediocre But Arrogant*:

> When you meet an MIJ-ite for the first time, you relate with the person the moment you realize that he or she shares the same language, laughs at the same jokes and possibly shares the same worldview as you. There is a nice German word for worldview-*Weltanschauung*. (Bhaduri, 2005, pp. 41-42)

It is the language they speak that brings all of them together barring their differences. It acts as a great leveler which allows them to think of a commonness which is above and beyond their regional, linguistic and cultural differences. This novel is set in Management Institute of Jamshedpur and takes us through Abbey's journey from Delhi University to MIJ. In one of their lectures on Organizational Behavior, Father Hathaway explains how a group is created and the importance of language as a code to distinguish between 'insiders and pretenders'. He says that, 'Jargon and phrases and nicknames all serve to create a bond within a group but at the same time, could work to alienate some' (Bhaduri, 2005, p. 41). Each and every institute has its own folklore which, as Father Hathaway, rightly points out is a double edged sword. It creates solidarity within a group and it is predicated on the politics of exclusion. The MIJ-ites are 'bar coded' as the original building where MIJ was started off was later converted into a bar. So according to the Boys' Hostel folklore, every MIJ-ite was a 'confirmed boozer'. The protagonist is a FL, a freeloader or a parasite. He hung on to those who worked hard because he was unused to hard work, courtesy, his three years in DU. The anti-establishment crowd, hated the ACP(after class participation) which is seen as *maska maroin*.(p. 36). The three D's are banned from the boys' hostel, drinks, drugs and dames.

A university is often seen as a space which allows an individual to explore, to develop and to sustain his/her individuality. These campus novels on the other hand often speak of the IITness, IIMness, DUness and JNUness that students imbibe from these spaces. Towards the end of the novel, *Something of a Mocktale,* Soma Das shows how JNU had standardized their thought process when Kaya, Ragini and Shubhra play a game, they realize that their responses were the same:

> JNU definitely soaks in your lifestyle, your worldview, your attitude and into you so much that after a 15 minutes chat session, there is no way that one JNUite cannot recognize another anywhere in the world even if their conversation had no mention of their background. (Das, 2007, p. 200)

Although all these books proudly adorn the shelves reserved for Indian Campus novels in bookstore chains, their proximity on the bookshelves cannot homogenize this diverse and myriad set of novels. There is a paucity of novels set in liberal arts colleges like DU and JNU and those that exist are not considered as remarkable as those set in IITs and IIMs. Amitabha Bagchi, in *Above Average,* addresses this difference between what C.P. Snow called 'Two Cultures'(1956). He talks of the different worlds which the protagonist, Arindam Chatterjee and his love interest in the novel, Aparna inhabit. Arindam or Rindu, as he is called in the novel felt that there was a whole universe within him which Aparna could not travel to. He realized that his three years in IIT had made him a stranger to the city-'I could speak its language, but it was not the language I spoke most often' (Bagchi, 2007, p. 231). Aparna's language was a parody of the way 'Hindi speaking people spoke English' and was absolutely different from IIT lingo. At IIT, their 'linguistic gymnastics' emerged from caricaturing fake Anglicization and Punjabi crudeness. The IITians had a repository of 'hand me down lingo' of unknown origin in time. IIT slang was full of 'in-jokes and engineering references' and was full of the smell of 'male sexual frustration'. Aparna's lingo, comprising of words like ML (Marxist-Leninist) and 'junta' baffled and charmed him. While Aparna's language has fluidity, there is a sense of sanctity associated with the IIT lingo. Even after being in Delhi for fifteen years, for Arindam the world and language of IIT and that of the outside city are strictly demarcated. The influence of city is reflected in phrases of Arindam and his friends from Mayur Vihar, 'Total *maal* item', '*pataoed'*, and these are juxtaposed against IIT lingo of 'JLT'(Just Like that), 'compguy' and 'backlogger'. The term 'compguy' is attributed in the novel to Loda Kumar who became famous because of the one-liner he uttered at the time of the ragging period, 'It's not fair to rag us 'compguys', asserting the superiority of that stream.

Undergraduate speech borrows from both the slang of the larger culture and a subcultural vocabulary of college slang, out of which some are shared as part of the 'national collegiate subculture', while some are relegated to more 'provincial, regional and institutional subcultures (Hummon, 1994, p. 76). Universities like DU and JNU borrow more from the 'national collegiate subculture' as against the IITs and the management institutes which are more 'provincial'. In *Five Point Someone (Bhagat, 2004),* when Hari is unable to answer a question, the Professor calls him a 'commerce student' which is the worst insult possible. As compared to the seriousness, sincerity and competition in technical universities, others are seen as frivolous and most of the novels set in IITs and IIMs are marked by a condescending approach to liberal arts colleges. Bhaduri, in *Mediocre But Arrogant,* talks of how unprepared he was for the rigour of MIJ, because of his three golden years in the Delhi University:

> Most of us in DU were not really sure what we wanted to do in life, professionally speaking. We attended rallies and meetings where we debated the need to make laissez-faire the dominant approach to government. What we had been trying to do, I realized in retrospect, was to recreate the insouciance of campus life for the rest of the world. Take away ambition and the need for action from my part of the earth and what you have left of life as I experienced it in my three years at Delhi University. (Bhaduri, 2005, p. 19)

Life in DU was unhurried. The first three months were for 'ragging or getting ragged', the next three months for Cultural Festivals and the last three for buying books and studying for exams. In DU, Abbey's language was that of a 'typical Delhiwallah', participating in Cultural Festivals primarily for PYTs (pretty young things) and protecting them from *luchchas*. Some of these novels end up trivializing the

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college lives of liberal arts colleges which makes it even more difficult to talk about 'Indian Campus Novels'.

While Delhiwallahs abbreviate words, the JNU *junta* comes up with new interpretations of words; Kaya's centre CSODR is not Centre for Study of Obstacles in the Development of Regions, but 'Centre for Suppression, Oppression, Depression and Repression' (Das, 2007, p.2). The comprehensibility of the DU and JNU slang is a sufficient indicator of the permeability of these campuses. There is the *maa go* club of the Bengali girls whose 'mini Bengal' dominated the 'mini India', girls are given 'TRP ratings' by boys and rated on the *oomphometer*. Ganga Dhaba (GD) in Das' world is the 'Page 3' of JNU. The dhaba exhales frustrated air and inhales fresh air from the city outside, 'Therefore, we prefer to meet in the horizon where the outer world meets the inner world to celebrate our knowledge and to console our poverty' (Das, 2007, p.50). This description of Ganga Dhaba, is concomitant of the interfacial location of DU and JNU, located neither inside nor outside, but somewhere in between.

Thus, the idea of being infused with an IITness, MIJness and JNUness runs across most of these campus novels, but an analysis of college lingo reveals the sacrosanct, niche like, self contained existence of technical and management institutes and the relatively porous, permeable lives of DU and JNU. IITs and IIMs refuse to open their gates to the outside world, choosing to remain contained within their hallowed walls. The interfacial location of DU and JNU is conspicuous by its absence with regard to other universities. This containment produces differences between these technical institutes and other porous campuses as indicated by Bagchi, a difference which reflects in the fiction coming out of these campuses.

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Reading Journal: A Tool for Classroom Reading Assessment

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Weighing a pig won't make it fatter.

Testing our children won't make them smarter.

—Anonymous

Introduction

Recent research on classroom assessment has focused on the interaction between assessment and learning with a hope that improvement in classroom assessment would result in effective learning. As a result, a variety of alternatives in assessment have been proposed and researched. Alternatives in assessment have become popular for that they require students to perform, produce, and create; focus both on processes and products; tap into higher level thinking and problem-solving skills; and provide information on both the strengths and weaknesses of students (Brown & Hudson, 1998, p.654). They are also popular as they establish an on-going interactive association among three significant aspects of education: teaching, assessment and feedback. The interactive relationship is shown in figure 1.

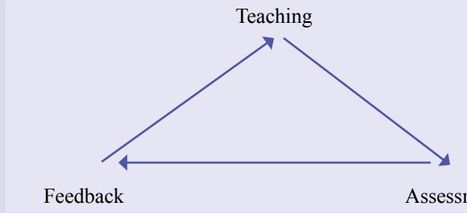

Figure 1. The interaction among instruction, assessment and feedback

As shown above, teaching is followed by continuous assessment which offers continuous feedback, which in turn guides the process of instruction. In this model, teaching, assessment and feedback occur interactively as an ongoing process. Alternatives in assessment include portfolios, journals, conferences, interviews, observations, and self- and peer- assessment. These tools, if used effectively, assist students to learn more effectively and teachers to teach more efficiently vis-a-vis standard tests that narrow the effects of testing on teaching and learning.

Reading Assessment

In line with the developments in assessment in general, reading assessment has also been researched with both product and process approaches. Though, earlier research into reading assessment followed the product approach, 'product approaches to reading have been unfashionable in recent years as research efforts have concentrated on understanding the reading process, and as teachers of reading have endeavoured to improve the way in which their students approach text' (Alderson, 2005,p.5). In addition, it is difficult to address the variation in the product and to measure the product using valid and reliable measures (Alderson, 2005). Consequently, though not as an alternative but as a complementary approach, the process approach to reading assessment gained significance. However, the process approach to reading assessment is challenging since 'the process is likely to be dynamic, variable, and different for the same reader on the same text at a different time or with a different purpose in reading' (p.3). In spite of the limitations, the process approach offers noteworthy data on how the reader, the text and the context interact and impact the construction of meaning. The process approach also integrates the three aspects of teaching reading: teaching, assessment and feedback into an on-going comprehensive process. Hence, the process approach can be adopted for classroom assessment and by a teacher who wishes to have flexible and interactive assessment procedures that offer different types of mediation for each student depending on their specific needs as revealed by the students during the assessment.

The basic goal of reading assessment in classroom is to design more effective instruction by gaining information on student's strengths and problems in reading. However, much of the current reading assessment is limited to verify whether readers understand the text or not by asking comprehension questions after they complete their reading. The incongruity between the goal and the practice was not just limited to reading assessment but permeates among other subjects too; and this has been precisely recognized by the Central Board of Secondary Education which has introduced Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE hereafter). CCE has been recommended by different committees on education to reduce stress on learners and to emphasize that the *process* is as significant as, in certain cases more significant than, the *product*. And in fact CCE has been made mandatory under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009. CCE can be defined as assessment before, during and after instruction using *multiple assessment techniques* to evaluate *all round development* of students' personality. The National Focus Group's Position Paper on Examination Reforms listed four objectives of CCE:

1. To reduce stress and anxiety
2. To make evaluation regular and comprehensive.
3. To allow teacher to be innovative both in teaching and assessment.
4. To make diagnosis and instruction dependent on each other.

In light of CCE, assessment of reading is not just assessing reading comprehension through comprehension questions but it includes assessing students' interest in and attitude to reading; their approach to reading; their reading habits; their reading strategy use and their reading of other than prescribed materials. Consequently, reading teachers are in need of assessment tools that can capture the 'authentic, continuous, multidimensional, interactive' aspects of reading assessment (Valencia, 1990, p.339). Reading journals can be one of the options reading teachers may explore in classroom assessment.

Reading Journal: what and why

Use of reading journal in educational settings started relatively recently when there was a widespread recognition of the importance of alternatives in assessment that focus on the formative nature of learning. Reading journal, which had no place in the second language classroom erstwhile, occupies at present a 'prominent role in a pedagogical model that stresses the importance of self-reflection in a student's education' (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2011, p. 134). Journal writing has been recognized as a significant retrospective tool in language research. In general, a journal, as defined by Brown & Abeywickrama (2011), is 'a log (or 'account') of one's thoughts, feelings, reactions, assessments, ideas, or progress toward goals, usually written with little attention to structure, form, or correctness' (p. 134). Reading journal, which provides insight into the reading process, is a useful tool as it promotes reflection on the nature of reading and on the problems encountered by the reader during reading. Journals have been recommended for strategy training purposes to assist learners develop metacognitive awareness

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of their strategy use, learning and thinking. However, it is not without concerns. Some critics express concern over the cultural issues as revealing one's inner self may not be a practice in certain cultures. It is also argued that it is difficult, if not impossible; to construct valid and reliable criteria for evaluation since journal writing involves potential variability. Despite the fact that self-reporting through journal writing may be inaccurate if learners do not report honestly or cannot recall their thinking or report what they ought to do rather than what they do, it is the only way to develop an insight into learner's mental processing. It is not possible with the present technology 'to get inside the 'black box' of the human brain and find out what is going on there. We work with what we can get, which, despite limitations, provides food for thought' (Grenfell and Harris, 1999, p.54). According to Valencia (1990), reading journal is based on:

> a philosophy that demands that we view assessment as an integral part of our instruction, providing a process for teachers and students to use to guide learning…a philosophy that honors both the process and the products of learning as well as the active participation of the teacher and the students in their own evaluation and growth. (p.340)

Journal writing has been argued for in this article given the receptive nature of 'reading skills' and given the fact that 'journals, perhaps more than portfolios, are the most formative of all the alternatives in assessment' (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2011, p. 138).

How it can be used

Students may be asked to describe their reading processes when they read a text. Selection of text may be made by the teacher considering the proficiency level and interests of the students. Over a period of time, teachers may integrate different types of texts in their choice of selection to examine and to let students understand how type of text shapes the process of reading. The focus on the process can be kept intact by providing students with prompts such as 'I did this before I started reading'; 'I did this while I was reading'; 'I did this after I completed reading'; 'I did this to deal with unfamiliar words' and 'I did this to deal with the difficult parts of the text'. During the initial days, students may be asked just to describe their thinking processes when reading. To begin with, they may be asked to describe *what* they did and *how* and *why* they did. Students may be asked to reflect, evaluate and regulate their approach to different aspects of reading a text and their deployment of tactics and strategies only after they are able to comfortably describe the processes. In executing the reading journal in classroom assessment, a special consideration is required on the following two aspects: *teachers' response* and *self- and peer-assessment*.

Teachers' response: Journal entries may be responded to by the teacher in a non-judgmental written dialogue to support the process through close interaction. The response to the journal entries may be as immediate and supportive as possible to sustain students' interest and energy in maintaining a reading journal (Wollman-Bonilla, 1989). While responding, teachers may avoid correction of structural or spelling errors of the students, instead they may attempt to motivate them by linking students' journal accounts to teachers' experiences of reading. Teachers may also offer better reading strategies. For example, if a student frequently refers to a dictionary to know the meaning of unfamiliar words, s/he may be encouraged to use the contextual clues to infer meaning. However, pragmatic understanding of the Indian education system and teacher-student ratio especially in government schools would puzzle the reader of this paper: how a teacher can respond to all the students' reading journals on an on-going basis? Hence, the frequency of reading journal writing and the response to it by the teacher may be programmed on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, if not daily or weekly, depending on the resources available to the teacher.

Self- and peer- assessment: Considerable advantage of reading journal lies in how the teacher encourages the students to participate in self- and peer- assessment of the journal accounts they write. With regard to self-assessment, the teacher may guide the students as it might be unfamiliar to them and they might find it difficult to execute. Although the teacher-student relationship is addressed through teachers' response, it is the peer group which plays a significant role in shaping the reading of a student. Hence, incorporating peer assessment only maximises the benefit of maintaining a reading journal. However, forcing students to share their personal thoughts and strategies with others might not work with some students as they might feel shy to reveal their private side to others. Rather, asking students to share and discuss voluntarily on their reading processes and strategies using their journal entries during the initial days might gradually motivate others to follow suit.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper briefly highlights the importance of alternatives in assessment, compares the product and the process approaches to reading assessment, and deliberates on the relevance and objectives of CCE in Indian education system. Subsequently, the paper discusses what a reading journal is, the rationale for it, and how it can be executed in classroom assessment. It also proposes reading journal as a significant means to assess authentic, continuous, multidimensional and interactive aspects of reading development.

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Sexuality as/of the Other: Enactment of female desires in Namita Gokhale's *Paro*

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Namita Gokhale's first novel, *Paro: Dreams of Passion*(1984) was described as blatantly bold and 'soft porn' for its use of erotic language and depiction of intense sex. While three decades later the reception is bound to be not so extreme, it is a significant precursor to Shobhaa De's sexual satires and to urban sexual escapades in contemporary chic lit. Located in the spatiality of Bombay and Delhi, it critiques the social urbanity of these cities while focusing on the gender and class dynamics in dealing with issues of Indian womanhood and its subterranean sexual desires. Woman's articulation of sexuality in *Paro* seems to find expression only through the 'liberated' Other, while questioning if the Other perceived as the epitome of beauty and sexuality is really independent and free.

What distinguishes *Paro* from other writings of its ilk is its fluid negotiation of sexuality in terms of coexistence of latent homoerotic and heterosexual desires. This comes across right at the outset in describing B.R. as nymphomaniac instead of the satyriasis; this conscious choice of word blurs the stringent boundaries of heteronormativity. Linguistic witchery and what Young et al(2013) describe as switching of codes points to an androgyny both linguistically and in use of imagery. It is significant that the normative spaces of a household and the bedroom of married couple are invested with these non-normative modes of sexuality, creating tense negotiations of sexuality vis-a vis space, language and imagery.

The narrator Priya begins writing the text as a diary given her faculty for telling and recording the 'truth', a confessed non-participating voyeur. The middle class Priya obsessively follows the life of glamourous Paro, attracted by her vitality and vigour, 'Her irreverence both frightened and excited me.'(Gokhale, 1984, p.32) Her diary entries are not about the autobiographical Self trapped in staid mundaneness but the adventures of the beautiful and audacious Other followed through her various affairs to her death. The transformation of genre from journal/diary to novel, from truth to fictionalization ties thematically with the dilemmas of being caught between reality and dreams. Her notions of romance and love are derived from her reading of *Rebeca* and Mills and Boon and from the figure of the glamourous boss B.R. who makes love to her against the backdrop of Marine Drive and music of 'Rites of Spring'. Desire in women is informed by socialization process and as Walkerdine(1990) among others suggests that modern history makes romance rather than sex the key to sexuality. Sexuality is carefully contained and channelized through acceptable and normative ideas of romance and love, silencing any explicit or frank expression of it. The sewing machine, symbol of domesticity and family, 'The Housewife's Friend' is symbolic of cloaking of desire while the boss B.R. rules over the opulent Pallas Athene office.

Fine(1992) in 'Sexuality, Schooling, and Adolescent Females: The Missing Discourse of Desire' writes about woman's desires being regulated by patriarchy and heterosexuality. Discourse of desire evokes the dichotomies of good girl/bad girl, Madonna/whore that draws narrow sexual boundaries around women where men generally initiate and control

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sexual encounters and pleasure of women is not even discussed or acknowledged. The linking of sexuality with morality is used to rein in woman's independence and agency; desire is controlled and manipulated to subordinate women and to instead extoll the virtues of docility and subservience. It appears as if the woman has internalized societal norms of sexuality but the closeted sexuality creates a split in the self. Sennett and Cobb (1973) call it a 'divided self', a division between what the woman 'acts' like and what she desires for, an alienation between the 'performing' self and the 'real' self, problematizing the very definitions of these terms. Priya tries to 'perform' the role of the good woman, the bhartiyanari and forgoes her sexual pleasure in this 'act', yet her 'real' self yearns to embrace the confident sexual agency of Paro. Priya's mind, body and writing are sites of playing out this dilemma and her alter ego Paro is symbolic of the Other outside. No wonder she is obsessed about her and tries to articulate herself through this alternative and opposite Other right from the opening sentence itself, 'I am writing about them because I saw myself in her' (Gokhale, 1984, p.1). Her middle class sensibilities about demure and coy brides are shaken up with the unabashed attitude of Paro at her reception in silver sari and lipstick, a glass of gin in her mehndied hand and kissing her father-in-law on his forehead.

In a clearly homoerotic zone, Priya fantasizes about the irreverent Paro while masturbating, as she climaxes she aspires for the seductress charm of Paro and the social mobility that she is symbolic of. She strives to transcend the notions of womanhood and middle class existence that she is caught in, and Paro's life 'seduces' her to think of the Other both in terms of being an alluring temptress and leading a luxurious life of beauty and grace. The dualities between Priya's mundane existence and her dreams are repeatedly emphasized, be it through the wedding gifts of the domesticating sewing machine and the suggestively romantic cut glass vase, or the sophisticated sexiness of B.R. and her conjugally dissatisfying husband. She obsessively and compulsively follows the life of Paro and B.R. and confesses that through her writing she was 'trying to lay their[B.R. and Paro] ghosts, banish their tyrannical mythologies; it is both a therapeutic experience, an old fashioned catharsis, an enema. I shall vomit out my malice and envy and adoration'. (p.25) The mixed and complex emotions that Paro evokes in Priya are emblematic of the her conflicting ideas about femininity and sexuality, of the dilemma of playing a dutiful housewife with sex associated with closed door silences and of being unable to acknowledge one's sexual life with directness. Paro creates awe, admiration and jealousy in Priya regarding her unabashed and overt sexuality.

In Priya's private mythology B.R. and Paro are irrevocably conjoined in an androgynous image, despite their divorce, as the Greek god and goddess of sexuality respectively, a pantheon that she is able to evoke only in fantasies and tries to exorcise through her writing. In a highly charged self-erotic language and scene, she describes her fantasies of appropriating the sexuality of the Other, 'sometimes I became Paro, and sometimes I was myself. Sometimes I was B.R. devouring Paro, and B.R. tenderly loving Priya, and then I became Suresh who was ravishing Paro, and then Paro with Suresh in slavish possession, and intermittently Suresh copulating with Priya who was actually Paro.' (p.60) The vivid and explicit fantasies break the monoliths of gendered identity, the 'enactment' breaks the neat categorizations of real/projected self, desire/reality and heterosexuality/homosexuality to explore fluid identities of gender and sexuality. The fluid pansexuality is visible in the amalgam of Paro, Priya and B.R. at the time of sexual intimacy, malleable identities intertwine in the orgasmic outpouring. Suresh joins her in this homo/hetero erotic zone and takes her on with urgency; both seem capable to giving in an unbridled rein to their sexuality only when they break the moulds of being husband and wife caught in domesticity, and act and re-enact being the man and the whore. Significantly the boundaries of normative sexual behavior are questioned and stretched in the normative space of the nuptial bed. The controlled sexuality of the 'good woman' breaks the acceptable codes and the fluid negotiations of Priya's sexual self are articulated through the trope of enactment. Sexual pleasure seems a possibility and reality for Priya only in imaginative role play, else it seems burdened with conflicting and non-reconciliatory ideas of good wife and woman with sexual needs. After the highly intense encounter described above Priya writes, 'It was as if the basically voyeuristic nature of my life had been laid bare. I was possessed.'(p.60) The voyeuristic Priya has a strong fixation for the sexually uninhibited Paro; the exhibitionist and the voyeur are a conjoined pair, each feeding and depending on the other for existence and sustenance. While Priya feels compelled to act in conformity of social and cultural inscriptions of womanhood, her sexual yearnings find expression by donning the persona of the more sexually liberated woman. She looks at Paro as 'the free woman, symbol and prototype of emancipation and individuality.'(p.48) But is Paro really 'free'?

For Paro, the beautiful woman, the body is not the site of freedom but of subordination. Sandra Lee Bartky in *Femininity and Domination* (1990) writes that women's bodily self-discipline and sado-masochistic sexual fantasies are manifestation of internalized oppression and affects the perception of the self. Through obsessive dieting, exercising, beauty regimes and alluring clothes, women 'discipline' their bodies. While the voyeur Priya admires the always beautifully turned out Paro, Paro confesses 'It's part of being a Beautiful Woman. It's a full time occupation.' (Gokhale, 1984, p.62) It no doubt has an elaborate regimen, investing a lot of time and money in maintaining physical attractiveness. As she begins to age and put on weight, Paro tries various things like salads and yoga to maintain her figure as the body is integral to her self-image. The middle aged Paro moonily adores Mishra and admits 'He is so ugly, so repulsive, that he makes me feel beautiful.'(p.84)

Naomi Wulf in *The Beauty Myth* (1992) argues that images of beauty perpetuated through woman's magazines and advertisements are detrimental to women. She elaborates that the concept of 'beauty' is a weapon used to make women feel inferior about themselves; after all, no one can live up to the ideal, which is defined as thinness, pertness, and youthfulness taken to extremes, effectively an unattainable image. However the quest keeps the women submissive to the consumer culture, making bodies the site of subordination and deprivation. The continuous assessment of the self with these images deflects attention away from inner emotions and sensations to expression of the self solely in terms of the body. The corporeal anxiety is acute as pleasure is derived from visible appearance; emotional graphs of exhilaration and depression become tied to the body image. While few years back social columns of *Onlooker* and *Eve's Weekly* celebrated Paro as the glamourous socialite, the lowlier papers now lampoon her desperate attempts to hang on to youth and beauty, ridiculing her emotional surrender to Mishra. The controlling media eye is a male gaze that is stimulated by female youthful beauty but erases older woman from popular media/culture and ridicules one who does not follow this normative code. The woman's selfhood and happiness are linked to appreciative masculine gaze; this makes the presentation of a 'beautiful' self a burden, and an alienating act between real and performing selves that Priya from the detached vantage point of voyeur does not completely understand.

Priya, the voyeur-diarist obsessively follows and chronicle Paro's life, yet somewhere she is unmoved by her fall in fortune. The fertility of Priya's body and mind are both linked to Paro, she conceived the night when both in her subconscious and Suresh's she was Paro, and Paro's totemic gift brings on her miscarriage. Paro is the object of her gaze as she compulsively writes about her, and writes as if possessed, writing in sleep, over tea and even over the commode. 'Even amidst the deepest possible flow of emotions I could never abandon the unmoved voyeur within me, the wary spectator in the crowd, never participating, only watching' (Gokhale, 1984, p. 121). When Paro discovers her diary, she flings at her physically and emotionally in rage: 'you little spy, you bloody lesbo, you don't even have the guts to live your own bloody life, always creeping about me and Bubu…'(p.123). The voyeur derives pleasure from looking at the exhibitionist, a reversal of activity-passivity. By appropriating the Other as image, the voyeur makes it an object of pleasure while remaining uninvolved in the other's intimacy. Priya, the narrator brings under her scanner Paro's appetite for life and sex through her relationships, tracing her life from glamour to decadence to death. The voyeur in her is fascinated, excited and even fantasies about Paro but is curiously detached.

Priya's pleasure in observing and recording the life of Paro can be read in relation to Laura Mulvey's (1975) essay, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'. Mulvey's work brings together theories of psychoanalysis and feminism and argues that films create a space for female sexual objectification through the combination of the patriarchal order of society, and 'looking' in itself as a pleasurable act of voyeurism. Cinema's pleasure of looking, scopophilia is primarily the pleasure of the male gaze. Priya, the woman voyeur-narrator seems to appropriate the male gaze in recording the adventurous and dramatic life of Paro. Priya in her role as voyeur(and appropriation of male gaze in fascinated obsession with the exhibitionist female body of Paro), her compulsive following of actions of the 'beautiful woman' and in her sexual fantasies about Paro/B.R. is overturning the notions of romance and passion that are buried under the baggage of compliant cultural and moral codes of womanhood. This articulation uses the trope of enactment, of expressing her subterranean sexual desires by performing the Other i.e. fantasizing about the overtly 'liberated' Paro. These expressions question the normative and acceptable codes of female sexuality suggesting a more fluid pansexuality in articulation of desire where the notion of the Other is not a simplistic and unidimensional dichotomous of the silenced desires of the Self but argues for a complex and nuanced understanding of female sexuality.

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An Interview with Richard Allen,

Emeritus Professor of Literature at UK Open University

Ruchi Kaushik

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Ruchi Kaushik is Associate Professor of English at Shri Ram College of Commerce, University of Delhi. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D in Materials Development in ESP.

Richard Allen is Emeritus Professor of Literature at the UK Open University, and was for eight years Dean of the Arts Faculty. His publications include *Literature and Nation: Britain and India 1800-1990* (with Harish Trivedi), and 'Heritage and Nationalism' [in India] in Rodney Harrison (Ed.), *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*. He was joint leader of a UK government funded collaboration between Delhi University and the Open University designed to introduce modern computer based pedagogy to Delhi University, and is joint leader of a UK Arts and Humanities Research Council funded network investigating 'Prospects for English Studies' in Delhi and the UK.

In an online interview with Ruchi Kaushik, he discusses various facets of **distance education**, its evolution and development and highlights the need for quality assurance and teacher training to make this rapidly evolving area of education more meaningful.

Ruchi Kaushik: Distance learning in Higher Education (HE) has been garnering a lot of interest in the last few years be it in Government or University policies or general learner attitude. What, according to you, are the main reasons for this shift?

Richard Allen: It's tempting to be a little cynical here and say that distance education is interesting to those in Government or in University management because it offers ways of expanding HE provision without a proportionate increase in fixed costs involved in buildings etc. But I think the majority of distance education initiatives have had a strong moral purpose, the desire particularly to reach students in social, economic and geographic groups who are under-represented in HE. I think it's also possible that the methods of teaching associated with distance education are now perceived to be better, so are more interesting to those interested in teaching and learning. This is particularly the case where it is possible to build systems on the basis of new technology. In a number of countries in the past distance education was identified with poor quality (in all senses of the phrase) photocopied materials sent out by post. Students were expected passively to absorb these materials and there was little interactivity and little support. Learning based on computing and communication technology regularly supersedes that approach, enabling students studying at home to actually feel closer to their teachers than a student studying ostensibly 'face to face' (but actually usually only 'glimpsed at a distance') on a large campus. New technology also provides far more effective and far more secure possibilities for assessment. The important thing here is that teachers need to be trained and resourced to use distance learning, primarily to benefit students but also to overcome the prejudice against distance learning which is entwined with the lack of interest you mention.

RK: Off-campus learning is often perceived to be similar to other modes of education such as *online learning, e-learning, blended learning, open-learning, life-long learning* etc. All of these apparently have a lot in common and yet are dissimilar in many ways. Could you briefly explain the main features of off-campus learning?

RA: You're right that there are a number of terms which are used in ways that suggest each is separate but in practice that's not the case. I could begin by saying that I can't now imagine *blended learning* that didn't involve *e-learning*. *E-learning* is most often imagined as *online learning* but might also be on-campus *computer-room learning*. When *blended learning* features *online e-learning* it is often because it is *open-learning* or *life-long learning*. It should be obvious from this that the issue at hand is *education*. The main features of good off-campus learning are then the same as the main features of good on-campus learning. Off campus learning can be done badly, just as on campus learning can be done badly, but the faults are more damaging for students because they tend to be studying on their own and can easily become disheartened.

So the main systemic features of off-campus learning have to be quality and integrity. Particularly given the prejudice against distance education, off-campus education has to aim to be the best, to the point that on-campus teachers want to borrow from off-campus. Beyond that you need a system which has been thought through. Whether you are dealing with off-campus learning that leads to a whole degree or smaller units of learning to provide updating professional or technical skills you need an effective registration system with secure assessment. Quality teaching is a must, but that needs to be articulated with good resources for learning. At the Open University (OU), for example, we've created virtual field trips for environmental studies, and virtual libraries for the Humanities. Good management of the processes for course design are important, and since the use of technology seems almost inevitable you also need specialist support there - for students, teachers and course development.

RK: Well, talking of Open University (OU), UK, it is one of the pioneer institutions in distance learning, established in 1969 and your association with it dates back to several decades. Can you please tell us about the objectives behind establishment of OU and whether it has succeeded in fulfilling them?

RA: The original (and I think continuing) objectives of the OU are embodied in the two words of its title; we seek to be open in a whole range of ways, and to be a university in the fullest possible sense. We often link the idea of 'open-ness' to opportunities; we make opportunities for HE study available to people who are housebound or serving in a submarine, or who just want to study with us to improve their skills and qualifications. We aim to make the opportunities for study that we provide challenging and engaging to encourage students to keep studying. We also ensure that our standards of assessment are unchallenged through systems which use external examiners beyond the norm in UK education.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of our open-ness is that at undergraduate level we set no entry requirements. We have comprehensive advice systems so that students aren't recruited who will immediately fail and drop out, but beyond that students make their own decisions about entry and we do everything we can to support their aspirations. Of course the situation has changed drastically since 1971 when we registered our first students. The OU has also increased its ambitions especially in terms of geographical reach and the use of technology. Most recently it has established Future Learn in which a wide range of other universities join with the OU to provide MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). So students began with books, television and radio, and moved onto video cassettes, DVDs and the Internet, things are changing all the time.

As for the objectives being achieved, they are dynamic and changing but more or less we have been successful. Overall we challenge ourselves as we encourage our students to challenge themselves; we have the same kind of intellectual and social aspirations now as we did in 1970 but adapted to fit the changing world order. The support we gave to IGNOU, the Singapore Institute of Management, and the Arab Open University signal the breadth of our aims. The English Department interestingly played a big part in these latter two schemes; students wanted to study English as well as management just as they do in India. We want to be the best; it is difficult to find another institution which combines the same range of excellences - in teaching, research and development of new educational technologies.

RK: The support and collaboration among Open Universities across the world is certainly an important feature of this dynamic field. Distance learning is a rapidly evolving area of education. Can you please elaborate some prerequisites for ensuring quality distance education in the Indian context?

RA: I think three things are key to the development of distance learning. First, distance learning should be *quality* learning. Second, is the understanding that good learning here must involve student activity and interactivity just as much as in face to face on campus teaching. Third, the development of technology must enable real interactivity; for example Moodle has empowered teachers to create their own materials rather than having somehow to fit it into some complex prescribed programme that only the IT people understand.

If I think about these three things in relation to the evolution of distance learning in India I want to say first that the pursuit of quality and standards has to be absolute: that would involve securing accreditation and endorsement of quality to a degree. Equally distance learning has to be interactive to be effective, and that means a sea change in the way teachers and students work, setting aside the old system of rote learning. One of the key inventions here at The Open University has been the role of the part-time tutor. This is someone who takes responsibility for a group of twenty or so students and for the facilitation of the learning devised by the central faculty. Students rely on contact part-time tutors to help them solve problems in their learning but also in their lives (meeting deadlines etc.) Where I pause is on the issue of technology; in the cities maybe technology will be important, but in the countryside where education is so much needed, it needs people to think things through differently. But maybe things aren't so different from the way they were here in the UK in the earlier days where people depended on telephone contact with their tutor to keep going and achieve success.

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RK: The common perception in India about distance education is that the course and the degree offered via the distance mode are inferior to the conventional course and degree both in terms of content and market value. What is your take on this?

RA: As I have mentioned earlier, it is essential to have strong, transparent and publicly recognised Quality Assurance(QA) processes to ensure proper standards. That might be easier in an organisation dedicated to distance learning like the OU or IGNOU. It's perhaps harder to establish distinct QA processes for distance education where that is just an adjunct to a large face to face teaching system. Processes have also to be owned throughout the organisation, so that those teaching distance programmes are insistent on QA, that way, they get the respect of their students and employers. Distance teaching is often more publicly visible than face to face teaching; books are published and websites are open to scrutiny whereas what goes on in a lecture hall is often known only to the teacher and the students. That means again that those involved in distance teaching need to be ambitious and strive for the best.

RK: You are right; there can be no short cut to quality assurance to give distance education the desired respectability. But do you think that as an educational mode it functions better for some subjects, say social sciences and humanities than sciences?

RA: I think distance teaching is suited to all disciplines so long as those involved are prepared to put effort into working out how technology etc. can help. We've always taught science subjects at the OU. In the beginning we sent out kits of materials so that students could do experiments at home, guided by printed instructions and television programmes. Now we've moved on to using virtual reality and other high-tech systems to achieve the same ends. Archive resources can be made available in a closed 'library' structure for history students or project work can be set up using open web resources. And of course these techniques can be used by students working in a computer lab on a campus just as easily as they can be by those working at a distance.

RK: What do you have to say about its suitability for English Studies?

RA: The situation in English is similar. In English we began with specially produced books that were only available within the University but our skill in curriculum design and pedagogy led to our materials being taken up by publishers - I'm thinking here of the *Approaching Literature* and *The Nineteenth Century Novel* series both published by Routledge - and thus made more widely available. But now technology can be used in a whole range of ways to create hyperlinked editions of texts, computer based assistants for language learning, techniques for enabling students to understand metre in poetry or plot structure in a novel. At the OU we've also used conferencing techniques for Creative Writing Workshops, and in fact the communications aspect of ICT is perhaps as important as anything here. Students can get together in a conference or a forum to discuss a text, helping each other (or being helped by a facilitator) at basic levels to achieve understanding of difficult materials, but also going on to understand how different meanings can interact in often unstable texts. There are lessons to be learned even from the kind of hyperlinked annotation I've mentioned; does a reading of *The Waste Land* for example depend on following up every reference fully, or do you need some other more dynamic model? More broadly here you can see that in English and in other subjects students learn in ways that will much more replicate the way they will need to learn after graduation; learning in groups as well as on their own, and learning from on line resources rather than by rote.

RK: In learning through new models, technology is an important interface and that brings in its own set of problems that critics of distance education highlight. How do you think these challenges can be addressed?

RA: There is a risk of fault on both sides here. Those who criticise distance learning in the way you suggest have often a hidden hostility to distance learning. But equally on the distance learning side there is a risk that the use of new technology and computer based open educational resources is fetished. Really it needs people to think the situation through from a pedagogic point of view; to work out the learning outcomes that they want students to achieve and how students will learn and be assessed.

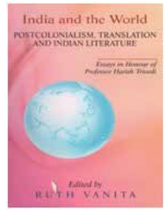
RK: We are witnessing greater availability of online courses and the possibility of pursuing courses where geographical location of the learner is not a concern. Do you think in future fewer students will opt for traditional on-campus courses and a large part of their education will comprise online and off-campus courses?

RA: I rather suspect that won't be the case, since notwithstanding the centrality of social media to younger people's lives, the pull of the social life that is part of a campus system is strong. The idea of social media is perhaps helpful here. We're not going to be talking about a teacher-learner relation but of learners within a network comprising other learners, a tutor, and the central faculty. A student who is stuck on the meaning of a particular speech in a Shakespeare play can ask the whole community for help with students learning from each other under the corrective eye of an expert. I do think that the techniques used in distance teaching will become more common on campuses, and oddly this might be an important factor in raising the reputation of distance teaching so that they do become truly complementary.

RK: Thank you Prof Allen for sharing your thoughts regarding the expanding and dynamic area of distance education and I am sure our readers will find your insights engaging and thought-provoking.

India and the World: Postcolonialism, Translation and Indian Literature

Essays in Honour of Professor Harish Trivedi



Edited by Ruth Vanita

Pencraft International, Delhi, 2014 pp. 275, Rs. 850.

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T. C. Ghai retired as Associate Professor of English from Deshbandhu (Evening) College, University of Delhi. He has extensive experience in teaching English and designing materials and syllabuses for schools and colleges. He is a creative writer and a translator.

The festschrift for Prof. Harish Trivedi, *India and the World: Postcolonialism, Translation and Indian Literature* is edited by his first PhD student, Ruth Vanita, Professor at University of Montana. Apart from his significant publications in the field of postcolonial literature and translation studies, Trivedi was instrumental in the revision of courses at University of Delhi that marked the paradigmatic shift from colonial to postcolonial, the deBritishization of the study of literature.

The 18 essays in the book have been divided into four sections: 'Ways of Reading', 'Ways of Translating', 'The Text and the World' and 'East in West, West in East'. They cover the three fields to which Trivedi's contribution is seminal, namely criticism of Indian literature, translation, and postcolonial studies. The contributors are prominent figures of these areas, including those who have engaged with these issues for years and young scholars. Significantly the essay writers by birth or work are connected to more than a dozen odd countries underlying the transnationality of these areas.

The essays cover a whole range of issues in literary studies in the context of world literature: the use and function of literature; whether to read for aesthetic pleasure or social relevance; making of literary cannons; the shift from the colonial to postcolonial era; the role of translation as an instrument of literary transactions across nations, languages and cultures; the interaction between films and literary texts; the role of publishers, media and the award committees in creating the demand for a particular genre of literary text; a critique of the theory of the somewhat 'megalomaniac and/or utopian' novel; the relationship between literature and other human sciences; and the concern about decline of interest in literary studies all over the world because of their inability to contribute to 'increasingly corporatising university'.

The larger theoretical concerns are addressed by using diverse literary pieces: reflections on translating Hindi (Braj Bhāṣā) poet Bihārī 's *Satsaī;* reading of *Hanuman Chalisa* 'as a Hymn to the Intellect*';* reading of translations of Kalidasa's *Meghduta* as a cultural transmission; and teaching the *Ghazal* in an American classroom. One senses a concern in the book at the 'growing monolingualism of postcolonial studies' leading to a domination of western literary theories and to the 'marginalization and to the exclusion of non-Anglophone languages and cultures.'

The Lives of Others

by Neel Mukherjee

Random House India, 2014.

pp- 514, Rs. 599.

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Saloni Sharma has a keen interest in contemporary fiction and teaches literatures in English at Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi.

The problem with making it to the shortlist of an important award is forever thereafter being condemned to the ranks of the also-rans. Therefore, more than ever, after the announcement of the Man Booker Prize for 2014, it is crucial to look at the brilliance that Neel Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others* is.

An epigraph to the novel quotes James Salter (*Light Years*), 'How can we imagine what our lives should be without the illumination of the lives of others?' Much of the text then becomes an exploration of what/who constitutes the 'others'. The story begins in a small village in West Bengal in 1966 with a farmer suicide- a term which had become almost banal in its implications in our current socio-political climate. It then segues into the upper middle class lives of the Ghosh family in Calcutta of the late 1960's. Poised between the complacency of the traditional and the robust, often violent energy of the modern, three generations of Ghoshes occupy three stories of a house, itself a microcosm of the class privileges and prejudices that defined urban life in a capitalist economy dependent on feudal structures. The city becomes a space for the playing out of personal drama against the backdrop of varying degrees of violence as exemplified in the Naxalite insurgency as well the ensuing Naxalite purges, air raids, food riots, economic slumps and consequent agitations by the newly-emergent working class.

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Mukherjee's tremendous success lies in making the reader a participant in the lives of others- Purba, the young widow, condemned to a life of privation and servitude, Madan da, the family retainer, always 'like family' but never quite becoming it, as well as the dispossessed farmers and their families that Supratik encounters and writes of in his journal. The journal itself becomes a crucial tool for negotiating the rapidly changing meanings of family, belongingness and the indistinguishable categories of right and wrong.

The power of the prose lies in its ability to lay bare the harshness of existence. Like a naked wire, it snakes through lives, connecting them, often with explosive results, leaving the reader struggling to reconcile with the idea of violence as both retribution and a cry for help. Mukherjee's novel is complex and searing and needs to be read and re-read and recommended widely.

Language Activities for Young Learners

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Solve the Maze

Young Learners always enjoy solving maze problems.

As part of a series of Teacher Training Workshops, I asked my participants to develop language activities using mazes so as to stimulate the young minds.

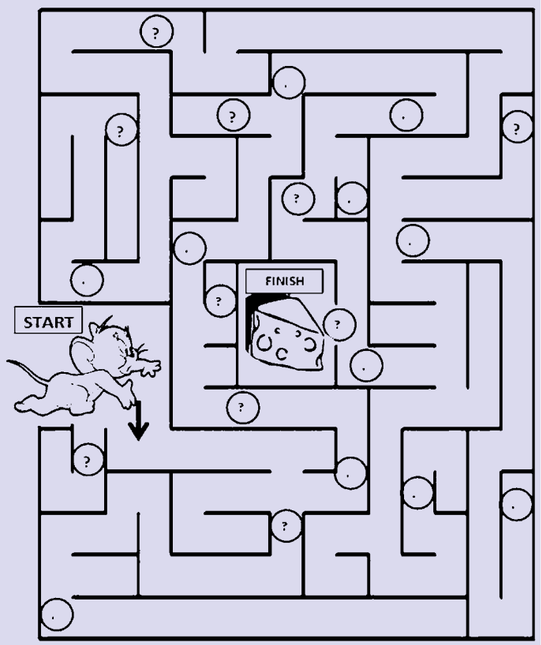
The following activity was developed by Ms. Shefali Bagai, English Teacher of Grade 2 at RSJ Modern School, Humayun Road, New Delhi. It is a 'while-listening' task to revise the topic 'The Sentence – Statements and Questions'.

Instructions (to be read aloud): Children, look at the picture carefully. Jerry, the mouse, is lost and very hungry. Let us take him to the piece of cheese.

Listen to the sentences that I will read aloud. Identify them as a statement, which ends with a full stop, or a question, which ends with a question mark. For each sentence, choose the correct punctuation and thus the correct way to the cheese. If you go wrong, Jerry will not reach the cheese. Remember to move forward only.

1. Peter is a good boy.
2. Where is my red cap?
3. We are going to the market.
4. My mother gave me a cookie.
5. He has a big house.
6. Are you going to the party tonight?
7. How is your dog Ben now?

Take hungry Jerry to the cheese.



Board Game Snakes and Ladders

Activity

Objective: To develop speaking skills using a board game

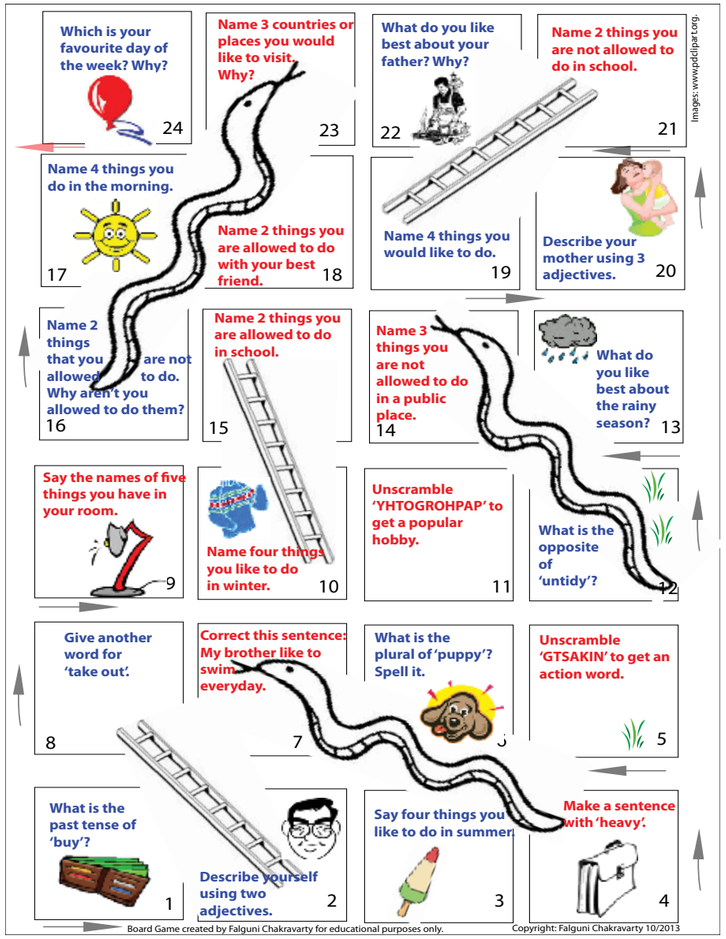
Level: Primary

Preparation: - 1 copy of the game for a pair/group of 4 students, Dice, Plastic coins

Classroom layout: Students can work in pairs or in groups.

Method

1. Distribute a copy of the game to each pair/group along with the dice and coins.
2. The rules of the game are similar to the traditional game of Snakes and Ladders.
3. Familiarize the students with the rules.
4. Monitor the activity.



Celebrating 450th Birth Anniversary of Shakespeare

Gorvika

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Gorvika is Assistant Professor in Rajdhani College, University of Delhi. Her areas of interest include drama studies, literary theory and gender studies.

English Literary Association (ELA) of Rajdhani College, University of Delhi in collaboration with **Fortell** celebrated 450th birth anniversary of literature stalwart William Shakespeare on September 23, 2014. The Principal Dr. Vijay Laxmi Pandit delivered the welcome address and highlighted the importance and relevance of Shakespeare in

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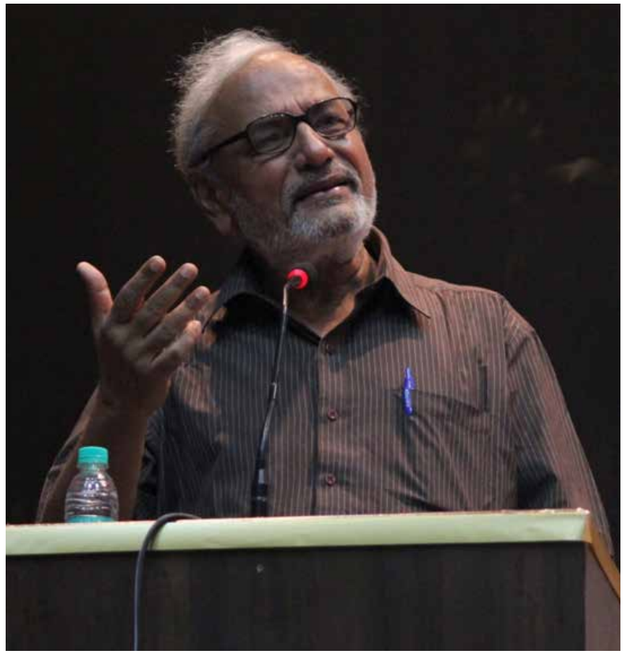
the contemporary world.

The chief guest, Prof. Shormistha Panja, Joint Director, Institute of Lifelong Learning, University of Delhi presented the paper titled 'Visual Shakespeare'. Her paper examined how the paintings and illustrations of Shakespeare's plays and retellings depicted the culture in which they were created. Taking examples from Bengali prose retellings of Shakespeare, she argued how illustrations of the plays depicted the emerging, rebellious Bengal. She also argued that the illustrations of these retellings often have an independent narrative of their own, at times at variance from the verbal text of the plays. The paper raised new questions on visual reception of Shakespeare among Bengali readers and was very well received.

On the occasion, the students presented an act titled 'Universal Shakespeare'. The act was an experiment with modern theatre - a combination of 'Shadow work' and 'Mime'. The 'Shadow Work' formed the background pop-out which consisted of prominent scenes from Shakespeare's plays and the 'Mime' act depicted major human emotions. The combined act formed a collage which presented Shakespeare in an entirely new, *avant-garde* form.



understanding possible.

Prof. Trivedi lamented that today we are so caught up with the linguistic and literary sensibilities of the Western world (primarily in the English language) that there is no cognizance of the significant literary interactions India has had with China and South-East Asian countries since the ancient times and thereafter with the Middle East, Central Asian countries or the Muslim world. Translations of Indian religious and Buddhist texts, scriptures and other classics made Indian literature available to these worlds. In fact, some of these Indian texts are today available only in translation and not in the original Indian language! On the other hand, the nature of the relationship between the Indians and their British rulers played a significant role in determining the kind of literature that was accessed by the West through English translations. Prof. Trivedi also highlighted the fact that in our present obsession with the English speaking world we have taken little cognizance of literatures and litterateurs in Indian languages.

Prof. Trivedi's scholarship and erudition received a standing ovation from the large audience at Maharaja Agrasen College.

Annual Lecture at Maharaja Agrasen College

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Mona Sinha is Associate Professor in Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. She has taught and researched in areas of translation, gender studies, media and cultural studies.

The Department of English at Maharaja Agrasen College was privileged to invite renowned academic, formerly Professor and Head, Department of English, University of Delhi, Prof. Harish Trivedi to deliver its Annual Lecture on September 18, 2014. The event was held in the college premises at Vasundhara Enclave in collaboration with FORTELL which has a large footprint in the college.

Prof. Trivedi stands tall as an eminent scholar, critic and writer, giving a new direction to postcolonial studies in India and abroad. A few weeks prior to his visit to Maharaja Agrasen College a festschrift titled *India and the World* (edited by Ruth Vanita) was released in his honour. Since 2004, Prof. Trivedi himself has been associated with an international collegium working to put together a literary history of the world, locating the literary history of India in relation with the rest of the world.

Speaking therefore, on the topic *India and the World: A Literary History*, Prof. Trivedi questioned the uni-dimensional approach of history as a continuous master narrative of dynasties and political events. While this approach has its own significance, there is now a new understanding of history which is intangible and which records interactions of sensibilities; of why and what we got from others and what we gave in exchange. A literary history makes this

Workshop for Teachers

Sandhya Koli

Sandhya Koli teaches at Tulips International School, Bawana, Delhi.

A workshop on Teaching English was conducted by Falguni Chakravarty**,** a renowned educationist, counsellor and writer on August 23, 2014 at Tulips International School. The trainer gave teachers valuable practical ideas for adopting communicative methodology and improving the effectiveness of English language teaching in school.

The primary purpose of this training was to explore the importance of teaching English and to find solutions to the problems that teachers face in the classroom. The workshop began with the expert providing the teachers an overview of the importance of teaching English. She emphasized the role of English as a global language and explained how it has come to be perceived as a symbol of people's aspiration for quality education. She next highlighted the challenges faced by teachers while teaching English such as difficulty in explaining concepts in English, lack of participation in English by students, teachers not equipped to handle the language in their own domains etc. Elaborating on the very important theme of language acquisition, Dr. Chakravarty explained how language is acquired and how it can flourish in the classroom if the teachers aim at developing their students' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills along with enhancing their use of vocabulary and grammar. The programme aimed at encouraging and motivating the educators to bring in innovation in teaching-learning process. It also aimed at developing their leadership skills to guide students and enable them to find a solution to problems to bring about positive changes for sustainable future. Every aspect of classroom teaching was touched upon with an effective group task given by the trainer followed by a fruitful discussion.

Dr.Chakravarty summed up the workshop by giving very important suggestions to the teachers such as using new techniques to build students' self confidence; giving students ample of opportunity to engage with the language; including peer group work, simple conversation, discussion and debates in classroom interactions and finally, attending workshops for professional growth.

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Forthcoming Events

1. International Conference on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and New Language LearningTechnologies - SYNERGIES OF LANGUAGE LEARNING
   22nd to 24th May 2015
   Niš, Serbia
   Website: http://esp.elfak.rs/
   Contact person: Nadezda Stojkovic
   Deadline for abstracts/proposals: 31st March 2015
2. 48TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS
   Date: 3-5 September 2015
   Venue: Aston University
   Tel: 0120 204 2836
   Email: baal2015@aston.ac.uk
   Deadline for receipt of abstracts: 31 March 2015
3. The 14th Symposium on Second Language Writing
   Learning to Write for Academic Purposes
   November 19-21, 2015
   AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand
   Key Dates (New Zealand Time)
   Monday 15 December 2014: Call for papers opens
   Friday 27 February 2015: Call for papers closes

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Call for Papers for FORTELL, ISSN no. 2229_6557

July 2015, Issue no.31

Special Issue

on

Teaching of English and Indigenous Cultures

A teacher in Punjab / Tamil Nadu sings a lullaby to the class, a song that they are familiar with, a context most intimate to them. S/he weaves a web of familiar lexicography not to lull them to sleep but to teach them their second language i.e English through translation. Consider a second scenario: students read indigenous writers/ texts in translation to get a better understanding of the culture in which these texts are contextualised. It is true that the native and indigenous cultures have always influenced our pedagogies in the classroom in myriad ways. This special issue of FORTELL attempts to bring to the fore, modes and methods of engagement with these texts whether in their native languages or in translation. We invite articles pertaining to, though not restricted to the interface between English and the Indigenous with a deep focus on pedagogy.

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Guest Editors:

Gitanjali Chawla & Prem Kumari Srivastava

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