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From the Editorial Desk

As a forum for teachers of English language and literature, *Fortell* has consistently been providing a platform for academic and pedagogical engagement for its practitioners both at the secondary and at the tertiary level. With the teaching and learning environment posing ever new and ever complex challenges in the multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic Indian classroom, such engagement provides not only an insight into new strategies but seeks endorsement for one's own practices. Multilinguality, collaborative learning, vocabulary-building, curriculum framework development, enhancing communicative competence through literature amongst students of professional programmes, and negotiations with technology - Issue no. 39 of *Fortell* traverses a vast spectrum of ideas and linguistic as well as literary practices, showcasing the diversity of ongoing research in the respective areas.

In "Transacting 'Language Across the Curriculum': Experiences From Universities in India", Eisha Kannadi outlines the concept of language across the curriculum (LAC) and the purposes for its inclusion in the syllabus of B.Ed. by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in 2015 through an analysis of the syllabi of B.Ed. from five different universities in India. Rachna Sethi's paper, "Teaching Generation Z: Challenges in the Contemporary Classroom" takes into account the generational shift that has taken place in the university/college classroom on account of the invasion of mobile technology, making a case for embracing this technology and harnessing its internet connectivity resource as a tool for creating a modified flipped classroom. An important goal of university education is to prepare students for the professional world. S.K Akram's paper 'Teaching Group Discussions for Employability: From Needs Analysis to Course Design' takes up the much needed area of pedagogic intervention in group discussions to meet the needs of future employability of students at the tertiary level. In her article 'The Activities Based on a Literary Text for an ESP Classroom', Divya John demonstrates ways to make a literary text appealing to engineering students by creating activities to evoke critical and creative thinking in students to enhance their listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities.

It is, however, at the primary and secondary level that the seeds of linguistic competence are sown. In their paper, "Bridging the Divide: Collaborative Learning and Translanguaging in Multilingual Classroom", Samrat Bisai and Smriti Singh present the results of a study conducted in a school in West Bengal to show how translanguaging promotes collaborative learning among students.

The viability of Received Pronunciation of English as a Second language for the native speakers of innumerable Indian languages and dialects, is another area explored in this issue where M. Raja Vishwanathan's article 'Pronounced *Ambivalence*: R. P. and Native Speaker Norms in the ESL Classroom' assesses the relevance of Received Pronunciation (R.P.) in ESL in contemporary times through a study involving feedback from the stakeholders, both teachers and students.

Exploring the teaching and learning of Vocabulary, Jayanta Kumar Das' article 'Issues Involving Vocabulary Learning and Teaching: A Study of the Literature' delves into the various ways in which vocabulary learning can be imparted based on student requirements and abilities and accordingly teaching techniques can be aligned.

In their paper, "Reading in the Indian Classroom", Veena Kapur and Megha Dang explore the implications of the implementation of a significant educational policy- Chunaoti 2018- an initiative of the Government of Delhi aimed at improving the learning skills of its weakest students.

The research-in-literature section of the current issue offers a varied fare, ranging from feminist literature to Dalit writings to poetry. Rakhi Ghosh's paper titled, "Doctrine of Quiet Rebellion: Articulated Defiance in Eliza Haywood's *The Female Spectator*", is a study of some remarkable non-fiction and journalistic writing by the eighteenth century novelist and writer, Eliza Haywood, wherein she combines didacticism along with her invective on the injustices that women suffer at the hands of the patriarchy. In their paper, 'Dalit Canon Formation and the African-American Experience', K. Sree Ramesh and D. Jyotirmai present a comparative study of the process of canonisation of slave narratives in America and that of Dalit narratives in India. Celebrating the notion of cosmopolitanism that connects people over and above limiting notions like that of the nation and the state, Ishrat Bashir in her article, 'Cosmopolitan Ethics in the Poetry of Agha Shahid Ali', undertakes an insightful exercise of revealing what she terms as 'cosmopolitan empathy' in the poetry of Agha Shahid Ali.

In addition to the articles, this issue offers book-reviews, activities, and reports of events organized in collaboration with FORTELL, with the highlight of the current issue being the interview of the renowned academic, author, critic and translator, Prof. M. Asaduddin of Jamia Millia Islamia who offers valuable insights into the processes of translation.

Overall, the present issue provides an insightful and expansive view of the field of English language and literature teaching and learning. As a general issue, the wide range of articles have touched upon areas of varied interests and concerns, with the promise of benefitting and adding to the expertise and knowledge of the readers.

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Transacting “Language Across the Curriculum”: Experiences From Universities in India

Eisha Kannadi

ABSTRACT

The National Council for Teacher Education introduced a new curriculum framework for teacher education in India in the year 2015. Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) was a new compulsory course of study for all Bachelor of Education students. So far, language as a course of study in the teacher education programme was transacted as pedagogy of language, and neglected the role language played in academic learning and achievement across subject areas. LAC was introduced to herald constructive changes in the teaching learning process and enhance the quality of learning in schools. In this paper, I will explore the concept of Language Across the Curriculum and critically examine if the curricular content offered by universities across the country is in consonance with the LAC concept and the B. Ed. curriculum framework 2015.

Key Words: Language Across the Curriculum, language education, curriculum framework, syllabus

INTRODUCTION

The Language Across the Curriculum movement was started in London in 1966 by secondary English teachers who wanted to know how talk and discussion could be better used for language learning. According to Parker (1985):

The ideas about language and learning which form the intellectual basis for the ‘language across the curriculum’ (LAC) movement are drawn from new perspectives on human development and knowledge that have emerged in such fields as psychology, anthropology, philosophy, sociology,

and linguistics—perspectives which see knowledge as the product of a complex interaction between each person and what he or she observes or reads (p. 173).

As a tool for learning, language plays a major role in subject specific learning and teaching. “Language across the curriculum (LAC) relates to linking different forms and aspects of language education within the school, particularly emphasizing the role of language in all subject-matter learning” (Vollmer, n.d., p. 177). Language skills and competences needed for academic learning often do not develop by themselves. Teachers have to train the learners to use them successfully.

In all subject areas, the use of language involves the student in the formation of concepts, the exploration of symbols, the solving of problems, the organization of information, and interaction with his or her environment. Teachers need to recognize and reinforce the central role of language in this learning process (Fillion, 1979, p. 47).

Although the LAC movement was begun by English language teachers, soon other subject teachers joined the discourse, as Barnes et al. (1971) noted:

We found ourselves talking about ‘language in education’, or ‘language and learning’, and finally about language across the curriculum. We felt sure that language was a matter of concern for everyone, that if children were to make sense of their school experience, and in the process to become confident users of language, then we needed to engage in a much closer scrutiny of the way in which they encountered and used language throughout the school day (cited in Parker, 1985).

This view is supported by the belief held by Vygotsky about how children construct meaning. According to him, learning takes place in the context of the socio-cultural history of the child, which includes the child’s language. Explaining how children make meaning, Vygotsky (1994) said, “...one and the same objective situation may be interpreted, perceived, experienced or lived through by different children in different ways” (p. 354). He believed, learning takes place when children interact with people in their environment, and in school with teachers and peers. So when children are introduced to new content areas with different academic registers and new concepts, all teachers are expected to create an enabling environment so that they acquire learning skills that are appropriate to negotiate with the new cognitive demands presented to them.

Vygotsky’s theory of Zone of Proximal Development is of particular significance when we discuss the concept of LAC and learning achievement. According to

Vygotsky, children can perform many functions and activities independently and reach actual developmental level, however to perform certain other functions and activities children need assistance from someone. In school, if children receive assistance from teachers and peers, they can expect to reach the level of proximal development. If children are deprived of such assistance most of them would not reach the zone of proximal development.

As subject teachers joined the LAC movement with language teachers, slowly there emerged an alternative view of learning through language or language in education. This was very different from the confining view of learning language as L1/L2 and the insistence on accuracy of language use and the restrictive idea of language development as the development of communication skills. Some teachers and researchers felt the need to distinguish between the two sets of language skills—Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). In the language classroom BICS received attention, while CALP remained neglected in the content subject classrooms.

LAC acknowledges and emphasizes the role of language as a means for thinking and learning. The LAC perspective is that language education in school is not limited to the learning of specific language subjects (L1/L2), but extends to all subjects and activities in the school, across the curriculum. The LAC concept advocates for the development of language skills and competences to be integrated with subject specific learning and teaching.

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) introduced new regulations in the year 2014 that overhauled and restructured teacher education programmes in India. The new regulations were followed by a new curricular framework for teacher education in the year 2015. The universities offering teacher education programmes were required to redesign the syllabus in consonance with the new curriculum framework. The 2015 curriculum framework brought in new perspectives in teacher education. For the B. Ed. programme, broadly it had three interrelated curricular areas: Perspectives in education; Curriculum and pedagogic studies; and Engagement with the field. Thus, the new curriculum framework meant the B. Ed. programme had new courses and dimensions added to it. In the second category of curricular areas, curriculum and pedagogic studies, a new course was introduced—Language across the curriculum. The LAC course was made compulsory for all B. Ed. students.

School education in India follows the three language formula, which means children learn three languages as subjects during their schooling. One of the three languages the children learn in school is also the medium of instruction. So far

the school curriculum considered language education as the teaching-learning of language as a subject which was the responsibility of the language teachers, and ignored the language dimension in all other subjects. This ignored the fact that broadly speaking, language is one of the most important tools for academic learning.

Before 2015, the emphasis of teacher education curriculum was on teaching language as a subject and the central role language played in academic learning and achievement was completely neglected. The new curriculum framework recognized the importance of language as a thinking and learning tool and addressed this gap:

In India, language and literacy are generally seen as the concern of only the language teachers. However, no matter what the subject, teaching cannot take place in a language-free environment. Assumptions about the language and literacy background of students influence classroom interactions, pedagogical decisions and the nature of students' learning (NCTE, 2015, p. 11).

It has now been over three years since the new B. Ed. curriculum framework has been in place and the universities were expected to design the syllabus based on it. The LAC was also a new concept in the teacher education programme in the country and was expected to herald constructive changes in the teaching learning process and enhance the quality of learning in schools. Therefore, it would be interesting to find out how the concept of LAC was conceived and negotiated by the syllabus designers and reflected in the syllabus.

I will now explore the concept of Language Across the Curriculum and critically examine if the curricular content offered in teacher education programmes in universities across the country is in consonance with the LAC concept and the B. Ed. curriculum framework introduced by the NCTE 2015.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK: BACHELOR OF EDUCATION

The NCTE (2015) introduced Language Across the Curriculum course in the B.Ed. programme under three broad areas. In one area of study, the focus was on, "understanding the language background of students, as first or second language users of the language used in teaching the subject" (p. 12). Here the aim was to develop sensitivity in student teachers about the language diversity existing in the classrooms. In order to develop sensitivity towards language diversity, the student teachers were required to have a theoretical understanding of multilingualism, the interplay and intersection between home language and school language,

power dynamics of “standard” and “dialects”, and deficit and discontinuity theories. In the second area of study, the objective was to, “understand the nature of classroom discourse and develop strategies for using oral language in the classroom in a manner that promotes learning in the subject area” (p. 12). This was aimed at developing an understanding of the nature of classroom discourse, teacher control in classroom discourse, types of questions asked by the teacher, use of oral language in the classroom, and using discussion and questioning as tools for learning. The third objective of the course was to, “understand the nature of reading comprehension in the content areas (informational reading). Writing in specific content areas with familiarity of different registers” (p. 12). Here the emphasis was on the importance of reading comprehension and writing in content areas using appropriate academic registers for learning achievement. This required that the B. Ed. students be given an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the nature of different types of texts (expository text versus narrative texts, transactional versus reflective texts) and text structures. They had to develop an understanding of schema theory, and be able to develop reading strategies such as note-making and summarizing for learners in content areas. Developing an understanding of writing in content areas required the student teachers to get acquainted with different academic registers, process writing, and be able to help learners to make reading-writing connections and analyze their writing to make sense of their cognition.

THE LAC SYLLABUS IN UNIVERSITIES

What has been presented so far is a summary of the curriculum framework provided by the NCTE regarding the LAC course. The universities were expected to develop the LAC syllabus based on this framework. In order to assess whether the curriculum framework and the LAC syllabus of the universities were in consonance, the researcher collected the syllabus of the LAC course from the websites of five universities from five different regions of the country. These universities had been offering Bachelor of Education programmes for more than five decades. The researcher further carried out a discourse analysis of these syllabi content and matched it against the main points as presented in the curriculum framework. The following table shows the content parity of the curriculum framework and the syllabus of different universities. The universities are represented by the alphabets A, B, C, D, and E in the table.

Curriculum Framework	Syllabus				
	A	B	C	D	E
Deficit theory	√	√			
Discontinuity theory	√				
Multilingualism	√	√	√	√	√
Home language versus school language					
Power dynamics of 'standard' versus 'dialects'				√	√
Classroom discourse	√	√		√	
Oral language in classroom	√	√		√	
Discussion as tool for learning		√		√	
Nature of questioning in classroom	√	√		√	
Teacher control in discourse					
Expository texts versus narrative texts	√	√		√	
Transactional texts versus reflective texts	√	√		√	
Text structures	√			√	
Schema theory	√	√		√	
Examining content area books				√	
Reading strategies		√			
Making reading-writing connections				√	
Process writing					
Analyzing child writing to understand their conception					
Writing using academic registers				√	

It was observed that the syllabi of Universities C and E were far removed from the essence of the discourse presented in the curriculum framework of the NCTE. The theory component of the NCTE was not given any significance by C, D, and E, while B incorporated only one theory component. Multilingualism found place in all five syllabi. Home language versus school language discourse was missing in all five syllabi. The syllabus makers did not seem to give cognizance to

researches which argued that the language of learning is different from everyday language. Researches have also pointed towards the difficulty experienced in learning by the learners coming from the margins and working class due to the deficit in the language they bring along to school when confronted with school language in which they are expected to negotiate cognition. In the same context, only two universities deemed it fit to engage the students in a discourse with the underlying power dynamics involved in the notions of "standard" language and "dialects". Teacher control in classroom discourse was omitted by all five universities, although it is established that teachers play crucial role in determining and maintaining the pattern of discourse in the classroom that promotes learning. However, University A had a teaching point "teacher's role in promoting discipline" in its syllabus, although the school system was expected to discard behaviourism-centred teacher control and discipline in the teaching-learning process and instead exercise teacher control based on constructivist orientation since many decades. The syllabus designers seemed to have negotiated and constructed the meaning of "teacher control" presented in the curriculum framework as "teacher's role in promoting discipline". It is clear that there are gaps between the LAC curriculum framework implemented by these universities and the NCTE discourse. When a new concept is introduced such shortcomings are unacceptable as they can lead to misinterpretation or diverging interpretation by people who are expected to implement it.

When we further move down the table, we see that many of the points from the curriculum framework were missing in the syllabus of Universities A, B, and D, which had incorporated some of the points appearing at the top. Universities C and E, which hugely ignored the NCTE curriculum framework, had teaching content such as developing skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing (LSRW) and barriers to developing LSRW, which come under BICS prominent in the syllabus. All five universities had made an effort to develop a new syllabus for the LAC course. While A, B and D tried to negotiate with the curriculum framework to some extent, C and E kept clear off the curriculum framework. Neither the curriculum framework put forward by the NCTE, nor the syllabi of the five universities reveal the role of the subject teachers in LAC or if they have a role at all, whereas the concept of language across the curriculum acknowledges and emphasizes the role and participation of subject teachers in it.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There is a series of discourses at different levels in the university before a syllabus is finalized. For the syllabus designers, the NCTE curriculum framework provided

the base for the discourse. In some cases, the NCTE sent teams of experts to universities to engage with the teacher educators who were developing the syllabus. What is important is how the syllabus designers negotiated with the discourse presented to them by the curriculum framework and the team of experts.

The syllabi displayed on the websites of the universities do not reveal who participated in the discourse and designing of the syllabus, whether language teachers or a team of language and subject teachers. The table indicates that there is a gap, and in two cases a wide gap in the conceptual understanding of the curriculum framework discourse and the concept of language across the curriculum. What are the reasons for these gaps; are they deliberately designed that way or do the curriculum designers and the syllabus designers differ in their agency of meaning making? The gap we are discussing here is at the level of the written document. We do not know if the gap widens or closes during the classroom transaction. The syllabus does not tell us about who all are engaged in transacting the LAC course; the language teachers or a team of language and subject teachers.

When teacher education is revamped, it is with the purpose of improving the quality of school education. A micro analysis of the part curriculum indicates that the curriculum framework and the syllabi of the universities across the country are not in consonance. If such wide ranging disparity exists at the level of written documents developed by experts, can we expect what is transacted in the teacher education classrooms would reflect the essence of the revamped curriculum? If we want to improve the quality of school education through teacher education, we need to do more than providing a new curriculum; because a new curriculum perspective by NCTE may not be translated into various curricular activities across the universities by default.

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Teaching Generation Z: Challenges in the Contemporary Classroom

Rachna Sethi

ABSTRACT

Today the teachers of Generation X (born between 1965-1979) and Generation Y (born between 1980-1994) face the challenging task of teaching the students of Generation Z (born between 1995-2015) in colleges. Generation Z or post-millennials have never known a world without smart phones and spend more time on digital devices than on interacting with humans, and most educators view the phone as a threat to their authority in classroom. The traditional lecture system comes into conflict with the tech-savvy, “always connected” students. In this paper, I will argue that it is neither possible nor desirable to banish technology. Instead, there is a need to shift towards a student-centred active learning model, and to attempt to have a modified flipped-classroom where smart phones with internet connectivity play a crucial role. Teachers need to embrace technology and harness the phone for pedagogical purposes by sharing online resources to generate debates in class.

Keywords: Generation Z, smart phone, active learning, flipped classroom, digital resources

INTRODUCTION

We, the teachers in the universities (and schools), are faced with the challenging task of teaching Generation Z, and this necessitates a reflection on our teaching practices to keep the students engaged in classrooms. Demographers typically define Generation X as those born between 1965-1979, Generation Y as those born between 1980-1994, and Generation Z as those born between 1995-2015. Gen Z are characteristically known for their short attention span, have never known a world without a smart phone, and spend more time with digital devices

than with humans. At the university, they are most likely to be taught by an older generation of educators, possibly from Gen Y or Gen X, who have a very different mindset, and I along with my colleagues, find myself groping for new vocabulary to reach out to Gen Z. In this paper, I will deal with the difficulties of teaching Generation Z in traditional classrooms, and attempt to search for new pedagogical practices in dealing with literature undergraduates in the University of Delhi.

GENERATION Z AND THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM

Generation Z is also described as the Internet Generation or iGen, Nexters, or the Digital Generation (Raines, 2002). In his research into “everyday learning” Brown (2000) found that iGen are quite comfortable with “multiprocessing”, and often do several things simultaneously—listening to music, talking on the mobile phone and using the computer. Further, Gen Z exhibit distinct learning preferences that involve teamwork, experiential activities, and the use of technology (Oblinger, 2003; Brown, 2000), and their expectations pose problems for educational institutions that have an ageing infrastructure and lecture mode of teaching.

Banning (2005) lists the major teaching approaches as didactic, Socratic or facilitative. The didactic teaching method is the traditional method that is teacher-centred; it mainly involves lecturing and the responsibility for learning depends largely on the knowledge expertise of the academic. The Socratic method is student orientated and students are encouraged to think independently; it lays emphasis on discussion with peers and research in order to develop critical thinking. Facilitative learning moves towards self-directed learning, where students are encouraged to become independent learners by the facilitator-academic. In a technology-driven world, where students carry personal communication devices and are constantly acquiring new skills of information-sharing, the existence of traditional methods of teaching are under threat and most teachers perceive that the mobile undermines their authority. There is need to bring about a change in this perception, Seifert (2015) suggests harnessing the mobile phones for better access to knowledge and making learning relevant to the current contemporary information-savvy society.

Let me admit that for more than a decade, I began my introductory class in college with the announcement that since I put my phone on silent mode in the class, I expected the same from my students, but today I am forced to rethink about the usage of phones in the classroom. In referring to use of technology in class, my focus is on smart phones since we are still far from a situation where students possess a personal PC or a laptop at home and college, given the varied

social backgrounds of students and college facilities across colleges. However, almost 100 per cent of the students in the DU colleges possess a smart phone, and the slogan “Your life is in your pocket” sums up their day where they are logged onto social networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Snapchat throughout the day. So, is it really possible that smart phones disappear magically in the classroom? Are the teachers competing with the lure of social media in the classroom?

Rather than viewing the phone as a threat, perhaps it is time to give the devil its due; it is neither possible nor desirable to banish technology from the classroom in the 21st century, we need to instead use it for flexible learning, that is, learning without the boundaries of time and place, characteristics that are increasingly in demand. Seifert (2015) suggests that incorporating mobile technology with teaching can provide a chance for educators to lead innovative pedagogy as it empowers learning anywhere and at any time. Jacobs argues that “always on, always connected mobile devices in the hands of students has the potential to dramatically improve educational outcomes (2013, p. 2.) Since most students have smart phones with 4G network (irrespective of wifi availability in college and at home), it allows communication between the students and the teachers through digital resources inside and outside of college. The “always on, anytime, anywhere” model of mobile learning enables the stretching of physical confines of the classroom and the fixed timings of the college day, thereby transforming the learning environment.

One may argue that 24x7 access is detrimental in the long run and blurs the personal and professional spaces, but let us look at its advantages. It allows the teacher to address Gen Z through multiple platforms, to send out initial readings before starting a text, to share audio-visual material related to the course, and to bounce off ideas in the digital space even after class. For example, sharing the YouTube link of *Malgudi Days* while teaching R. K. Narayan’s *Swami and Friends* to B. A. English (Honours) I year students, visually brings alive the 1930s imaginary city of Malgudi with its customs, ethos, and the emotional roller-coaster ride of the child protagonist. Let us remind ourselves that incorporating the mobile in the classroom is only an extension of the use of technology in college. Various administrative functions of college are already mediated through technology, such as applying for courses, paying admission fees, filling examination forms, checking results, and looking up time table and notices on the college website. The extension of the use of the mobile phone for academic purposes is one small step for [a] teacher, one giant leap for [traditional] pedagogy!

Dede, noting the importance of mobile online learning, states:

Teaching is like an orchestra. There are many different instruments, and to reach everyone you need to put a symphony of different kinds of pedagogy together. Learning technologies provide a set of instruments teachers can use to achieve that range of instructional strategies. (cited in West, 2013).

Rather than resisting and rejecting technology, one needs to embrace it when dealing with “digital natives” of Gen Z, whose way of processing information and learning is driven by unprecedented access to technology. Luckily, cheap access to 4G technology in India and near 100 per cent possession of smart phones in DU provides equality in the virtual space, and gives access to resources across distance and time constraints. Further, not only does it allow the teacher to share digital content easily, but it also democratizes learning, within the same class as well as across universities. As geography teacher Saunders puts it, “No matter where a student is—Belmullet or Dublin 4—they have access to the same high-quality learning resources” (as cited in O’Callaghan, 2017).

While emails are an obvious and formal method of interaction, I find that WhatsApp, given its semi-formal/informal platform, works best with students. WhatsApp groups have brought a sea change in the way people communicate in the last five years. For instance in their personal spheres, most people have family groups, friends’ group, school alumni group, college group, etc. The platform is the most commonly used form of messaging alerts and notices in the college as well—there are groups for staff members, various committees and of every class along with the faculty members who teach them. While ordinarily, the WhatsApp class group is used to share information such as the time table, college activities, department events, etc..

I would like to suggest that we extend the use of WhatsApp to beyond disseminating information. The teachers can use it to share audio-visual links (T. S. Eliot’s reading of “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”), critical essays (it is possible to share both DOC files and pdfs) and Google Docs to collect data/feedback. In this way, the phone can be used as a dynamic tool to facilitate learning and to engage students beyond the written word, as it allows for the best of classroom and distance learning models to come together. It also allows students to access content from home, communicate with teachers, and work in collaboration with other students for projects.

TECHNOLOGY AND THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM

The generation that is born in an era where technology is ubiquitous, prefers interactive and experiential learning, and Hawtrey suggests that the landscape of

higher education needs to change to address their needs. Skiba and Barton (2006) state that Gen Z “are challenging the traditional classroom teaching structure, and faculty are realizing that traditional classroom teaching is no longer effective with these students” (p. 3). Flipping the classroom has become an increasingly popular approach to meet their learning needs, and to this end I would like to propose a modified model to suit our university scenario.

The concept of the flipped classroom was introduced in 2007 by two high-school chemistry teachers, Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams, at a Colorado high school. They began recording their lessons and posting them online, so that their students could access them. Although it was aimed at helping students who missed classes, it turned into an innovative approach to teaching and learning, that has caught on globally. In a flipped-classroom model, students watch online audio or video lectures prior to coming for class, and class time is reserved for discussions, active learning, and collaborative assignments. This shifts the teacher’s role from deliverer of content to learning coach. Flipped classroom encourages active learning and requires students to think about what they are doing, rather than learning by rote. By contrast, passive learning is considered as surface learning, whereby students receive information by listening to an instructor (Lucas, as cited in Philips & Trainor). The flipped model is gaining popularity, and the New York Institute of Technology has even introduced an advanced certificate that features flipped-classroom concepts for teachers who want to integrate technology into their classrooms (Philips & Trainor, 2014).

Given the reduced teaching time under the semester system, some faculty members have shifted from blackboard to digital presentations, where the classroom “lecture” does not duplicate the content but acts as a starting point for discussion. This works especially well for subjects such as geography, accounts, and botany that involve diagrams, maps and models. Geography teacher Saunders elaborates, “Ten years ago, if I was teaching glaciation, I’d show them a diagram. Now, in a 60-second video, I can bring the children to Iceland and to a geologist standing under a glacier” (O’Callaghan, 2017).

Here, digital content is not seen as a substitute for the lecture, but as a supplement and an extension to create time for debate and discussion in the truncated time frame. The flipped classroom is essentially part of a broader conceptual framework of teaching, which promotes the use of active learning in the classroom and holds the students responsible for information gathering outside the classroom. In this respect, professors and other educators have been “flipping the classroom” long before this term gained popularity. The advent of video software and increased internet bandwidth, also allow the educators to create high-quality online content,

so that classroom time can be devoted to engaged student learning. While a literature classroom does not have much scope for charts and tables, it can be used to include videos of historical and cultural contexts of the literary texts. Given the digital handicap of DU colleges, where projectors and wireless connectivity is not available in all classrooms, we become dependent on the personal device—the smart phone with its 4G connection—in everyone’s hands.

Whether it is e-learning or flipped classroom, teachers need to think about using the mobile for the purposes of learning and research. Today, our inter-textual references in class are more often than not from visual/popular culture and indicate two things: firstly, English Studies has taken a turn towards Cultural Studies; and secondly, digital content needs to be supplemented with the lecture mode to keep the interest of Gen Z alive. With every syllabi revision, the number of canonical British texts keeps decreasing. What we teach to undergraduates as English (Hons.) in DU effectively takes the form of “World Literatures”, that includes texts from Greek epics to Indian classical texts to Indian Writing in English to Canadian poetry to Latin American novels to African plays, including a significant number of translated texts. The students are increasingly exposed via the syllabus and social media, to ever-expanding definitions of literature, its genres and sub-genres such as blog writing, graffiti art, films, graphic novels, slam poetry and micro tales. In my interview with Devadawson, she stated,

Genre fluidity is an integral part of human activity, we may engage with it in the classroom or not, but it will exist, and it will be foolish of us not to engage with it as it will make changes in the world on its own terms. So the better idea is for us to engage with it in the classroom. (Devadawson, 2017)

To make the class relevant and interesting, and to generate discussion, I find myself increasingly giving cross-references from popular forms, be it chick-lit novels, movie songs or films to explain historical-social contexts. Even then, I often find myself hitting a roadblock, as the knowledge of history, be it in the context of literature or cinema is lacking among the younger generation. For instance, it is impossible to explain the idea of “angry young man” and the angst of the 1970s without referring to Amitabh Bachchan movies of that era. How does one speak to a generation that lives only in the present, as demonstrated by their current social media behaviour? Facebook is already for the older generation (Gen X and Gen Y), who post “albums” reminiscing about print photo albums that are lying in some corner of their cupboard. Gen Z is busy on Snapchat and Tik Tok, posting photos/videos about their everyday college life as an Instagram “story”. The popularity of “story” (that disappears after 24 hours) over “feed” is

a testimony to the appeal of the ephemeral, the transient bubble that makes no pretence of making permanent footprints, albeit even digital ones.

When Gen X or Gen Y teachers face the Gen Z students, they struggle to search for new examples to explain concepts, and often the students come up with references from a web series. Last month, I was mentally searching for literary/cinematic examples to discuss transgender in class, and a student immediately came up with a reference of Kukoo in the Netflix series, *The Sacred Games* (2018). While discussing changing gender roles, one of the students suggested that I watch the net series *Permanent Roommates* (2014). We have moved far away from the debate on high and low culture among literature *wallahs*; somewhere between deriding, scorning and smirking about lowbrow forms of literature and culture, we are now using them as examples in class and doing research on them! For a teacher, the crisis is real; it is a case of Darwinian survival while teaching the post-millennial students. To address the Gen Z, not only do the teachers need to integrate technology in the classroom, but they also need to incorporate examples from popular culture/internet sources to generate discussion. In fact, this makes the classroom scenario a two-way process since the teacher can introduce the theoretical framework, and the tech-savvy, glued to internet generation can add relevant inputs about the latest genres and net series. The classroom becomes a vibrant space for active learning as opposed to the passive mode of learning based on the lecture model.

The issue of gender and stereotyping is a good starting point to post online links, and relate the course texts with contemporary debates. For example, the Gillette short film (2019) “We believe: The best men can be” against toxic masculinity can be useful to generate a debate around machoism with reference to Okonkwo’s character in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, and not just when dealing with the *Women’s Writing* paper prescribed in the Delhi University syllabus. The Amazon Prime series, *Made in Heaven* (2019), not only exposes the hypocrisy of the patriarchal society when dealing with marriages, but also depicts the harassment faced by gays in Delhi; and brings forth the views of Gen Z succinctly.

While I have screened movies based on course texts for years, I find the class WhatsApp groups allows a greater and more sustained engagement with the students over the entire semester, rather than an occasional movie screening. It also provides a good platform to share links about advertisements, web series and other visual material that thematically connects with the texts in the course. Further, the students respond positively to it and often it generates an online discussion where they take the initiative rather than being passive recipients of knowledge.

I have shared only some of my experiences in this paper, but the mobile technology has limitless possibilities of improvising pedagogy. I am not suggesting that Mary Wollstonecraft or Simone de Beauvoir be dismissed from the gender discourse, but that new sources be used as supplementary material. Let me add that it may be useful to train the teachers in using technology effectively in classroom to bring about the much needed pedagogical changes.

TEACHER TRAINING AND TECHNOLOGY

One of the biggest problems of the university system is that teachers entering the profession are not given any relevant training in teaching. The B.Ed. programmes focus on teaching methodologies that are adequate for school level teaching. However in India, there is no programme that is targeted towards equipping teachers for undergraduate/postgraduate teaching. Is it assumed that young scholars who were in college till a few years back know how to manage the discipline from the other side of the table. Not only are college teachers never trained to teach, but even in-service programmes such as Orientation and Refresher Courses rarely focus on pedagogy; and teachers are now faced with the additional challenge of using technology.

Knowledge of effective teaching practices is better now than it was a century ago, thanks to advancements in disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and neuroscience. Most contemporary research in learning processes emphasizes that the social nature of learning, often called group or cooperative learning in the classroom, has a positive effect (Dean, Hubbell, Pitler & Stone, 2012). Moreover, technology can also be used to aid in social learning, be it collaborative or cooperative learning; and for this the academics need to be trained in the use and creation of e-learning materials and to develop ICT skills to innovate teaching for Gen Z. To address the technophiles, the iGeneration, it is good practice to incorporate an Active Learning (Jewitt, 2006) approach. Active Learning involves students in “doing” things by engaging them directly in learning rather than passively receiving information. The online modules do not have to replace face-to-face learning; they can work parallelly as initial steps towards incorporating technology in classroom.

Let us remind ourselves that the majority of the teaching staff was not born in the digital-informational revolution, and so must themselves undergo training to prepare for digital proficiency (Seifert, 2015). These “digital immigrants” face a challenge when addressing “digital natives”, and the education system must therefore modify its teaching methods for the oncoming wave of digitally-proficient students, their skills, experiences and needs. The shift in focus is necessary, from

a teacher-centric traditional method of lecture to a student-centred technology-led learning. Here, the teacher takes a secondary position as a facilitator in a learning process where creativity and critical thinking are encouraged. It also means a change in the attitude of the teacher, from a superior, knowledgeable dispenser of knowledge to a guide whose tech-savviness is less than that of the students. The teacher has to wade through difficult waters in confronting a generation that does not know how to write in cursive hand but can type blindly; that may be clueless in searching through a physical library but is excellent when it comes to online research; that may not be aware of gender theories but is more open to the idea of gender fluidity. However, the teacher's role, albeit as a facilitator is necessary even in such a scenario. The teacher needs to wean the students away from Wikipedia (and citing that in References!) to Google Scholar and JSTOR. He/she can guide the students towards using the mobile for research, while the students can bring in latest examples from popular culture.

CONCLUSION

In India, the discussion about ICT and smart classrooms is still largely focussed on schools, and barely any attention is paid to the college/university classroom. Even as global, corporate universities are coming up in Delhi NCR, the majority of students are enrolled in public universities that lack the infrastructure of a smart classroom. However, let us not forget that the students have smart phones in their bags, which school students are prohibited to carry and use in class. Can we use the smart phone with internet connectivity in the hands of adults to our advantage in the classroom? I am in no way suggesting that we start conducting classes over the phone, or merely use it to watch online resources in class, but that we be open to the idea of integrating technology with the traditional model of teaching for constructive purposes. Nowadays, most college classes have a WhatsApp group; we can begin by using these groups for interaction, discussion and to send across material (text, audio, visual) as "readings". As teachers, we need to stop seeing the phone as a distraction, a disciplinary problem, and instead accept the waves of technological changes and embrace them for our purposes. This paper is in no way trying to give conclusive solutions but is borne out of challenges faced in the classroom while teaching the Generation Z and the possibilities of integrating technology in the classroom is as varied and dynamic as technology itself.

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Teaching Group Discussions for Employability: From Needs Analysis to Course Design

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ABSTRACT

Group discussion is a communicative event where participants share their ideas on a given topic for various purposes. The topics may be related to academic concepts, social or workplace issues based on where the discussion is taking place and who is participating in it. Whatever may be the topic of discussion, participants are expected to share their views in a cooperative manner using appropriate language. Though some studies attempted teaching group discussion skills in academic settings, there appears to be less attention given to group discussion instruction for employment. While employers view group discussion as an essential component in the selection process, the incidence of many candidates getting eliminated at the group discussion stage itself points to the fact that the existing practices to teach group discussions are not helping the participants to perform efficiently. This paper is an attempt in making some modest contribution to this gap identified. The purpose of this paper is to shed light on how a course on group discussion can be designed to develop employability skills in tertiary level students.

Key words: Group Discussions, Sociocultural Theory, ESL, Needs Analysis, Employability

INTRODUCTION

Everyday communication commonly takes place in groups, whether in workplace or at home. In workplaces, most of the complex decisions are apparently made through discussions. It is also customary for workplaces to hold discussions for planning tasks, sharing responsibilities and solving problems. In these Group

Discussions (GDs) and other work related tasks the employee is expected to behave as a team worker with good communication skills in English. Therefore in the process of recruitment, the employers conduct GDs to assess the language and team playing skills of a job seeker. In order for job aspirants to be successful in recruitments it is important for them to possess the skills the employers look for. Making students job-ready in terms of communication, in the Indian context, is deemed to be one of the responsibilities of English teachers at the tertiary level. Therefore, it becomes imperative for English teachers to adequately prepare students to confidently tackle assessing processes of recruitment as well as communication related workplace challenges after joining the service.

This paper is a modest attempt in reporting a work-in-progress research on teaching group discussion skills to undergraduate students with a view to preparing them for one of the components of recruitment process. It is, therefore, important to understand how the concept of group discussion is understood in the academia and the industry. In order to understand academic perspective, a review on teaching GDs was done. To understand employers' perspective, a needs analysis was conducted with a few recruiters. Based on the findings of the review and needs analysis, a course was designed to teach group discussion skills, which is informed by the principles of socio-cultural theory.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Group discussion is a communicative event in which participants share their ideas on a given topic in a cooperative manner for different purposes. While sharing their opinions, participants may agree, disagree, and negotiate meaning among themselves. During this process the participants need to explore different sides of an issue, express their points of view and support and counter different opinions by bringing appropriate evidences to reach a logical conclusion on the topic of discussion.

Owing to the importance of GDs in professional environments, jobseekers are expected to possess the skills required for the efficient participation in GDs to get employment. Su Pinnell (1984) observes that “group discussion is not a simple collection of listening and speaking skills; it is a dynamic event which requires participants to orchestrate a number of language skills, all used simultaneously” (p 249). And he further states that “being successful in group discussions requires using both knowledge of the topic and of social situations to determine what to say, how to say it, when to say it, to whom to address it, and when not to say it” (p 249). Many students fail to perform effectively in GDs in spite of being proficient in language and well-informed about the topic of discussion.

There appears to be a little research on teaching GDs in general and on teaching GDs for recruitment in particular. This claim is asserted by Jones (1999), “since the advent of EAP and ESP as approaches distinct from general English, relatively little research appears to have been published on the oral skills required in professional and academic discussions” (p.243). Su Pinnell (1984) gives an account of goals of discussions and skills used in discussion through interaction analysis. Maesin *et al* (2012) observe the effect of explicit language instruction on group discussion performance. Lam and Wong (2000) explore the effects of strategy training on developing discussion skills in ESL classroom. Flowerdew (1998), Jones (1999) and others explore the cultural perspectives and cross-cultural ideas in academic discussions.

TEACHING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Group discussion seems to have received emphasis in English classrooms as early as 1980s with the advent of Communicative language teaching. In order to promote authentic interaction among students, different tasks such as pair work and group work have been used as techniques by the teacher. Su Pinnell (1984) observes that when the paper and pencil measures of achievement were predominant (Silberman, 1970; Goodlad, 1984), language experts (Brotton, 1970; Pradle, 1982) suggested that part of assessing learning should include observing how well students are able to discuss the content of a particular topic. Though this argument is related to assessment, it is an obvious fact that if something is a part of assessment it would surely find its way into instruction.

Research related to teaching GD appears to have focused on three perspectives i.e. (a) Teaching the language phrases useful in GD (for example Maesin, Mansor, Nayan, Osman & Shafie, 2012; Lam, 1995; Hargreaves & Fletcher, 1981), (b) Strategy Training (Lam, 1995; Lam & Wong, 2000; Bejarano *et al*, 1997) and (c) Cultural perspectives and cross-cultural aspects in GDs (Jones, 1999; de Moraes Garcez, 1993 and Flowerdew, 1998).

(a) Teaching language phrases useful in group discussions

During the late 1970s and early 1980s (around the same time when functional and formulaic language instruction started in ESP) Group Discussion instruction made its entry into English classrooms. But the reluctance of students to participate in such discussions and negative experiences of teachers who attempted it subdued the focus on instruction of GD skills (Green, Christopher, Lam, 1997). But since the GDs are a part of assessment, teachers resorted to introducing “students to a set of formulaic phrases and expressions for use in academic discussions” (Lam,

1995). Some Teachers adopted the use of structured and guided discussions, which provided a framework for students (Wallace, 1980; Hargreaves & Fletcher, 1981; Heyworth, 1984; Ur, 1981). This kind of guided approach may be of some help to some students in terms of language and a pre-set framework to fall back on. However, in the long run this will not make the student self-sufficient and may lead to boredom at some point due to the repeated practice of frameworks in non-heuristic approach.

(b) Strategy Training for discussion skills

During GDs, at different phases, participants employ different strategies to initiate, interrupt, agree, disagree and conclude. Strategies used by participants who performed effectively in GD may be adopted by others in order to do well in the discussions. There has been much research on use of strategy training in teaching and learning vocabulary, receptive skills like reading and listening comprehension (Lam, 2000). Relatively little research was reported on productive skills, such as speaking and writing. One significant study on use of strategy training in interactive speaking was done by Bejarano *et al* (1997).

A study conducted by Lam and Wong (1997) used the strategy training approach to instruction of discussion skills and found an increase in incidents of strategy use by students in discussions though the effectiveness of strategy use was found to be minimal. Their study suggested a lack of peer help and co-operation among participants as a possible reason for the ineffective strategy use.

(c) Cultural perspectives and cross cultural aspects in group discussions

When students from different cultural backgrounds participate in a discussion, their perceptions of interactive norms and assumed roles in communicative events specific to their respective cultures may differ from one another. This difference in cultural perspectives and other aspects of culture may affect the performances of participants. These aspects of culture in language learning with a specific reference to GDs were explored by many researchers like Flowerdew (1998), Jones (1999) and Gumprez (1990). These studies mainly focused on the cultural differences, intercultural communication, cross cultural apprehension faced by non-native speakers of English during discussions in international classrooms in universities. Some of the essential problems faced by non-native speakers during discussions with native speakers were found to include fear of entering a discussion or using inappropriate strategies while entering a discussion (Micheau & Billmyer, 1987), failing to attain the 'common ground' (Brown & Levison, 1987), and lack of cooperation or empathy from native speakers (Jones, 1999).

Studies in western contexts suggest that teachers should raise cross-cultural awareness among students, sensitize non-native learners to the nature of classroom activities in English speaking universities and train students in interactional skills required for active participation in discussions (Jones, 1999; de Moraes Garcez, 1993; Jones, Bell, Bush, Carton, Galloway, 1993). In Indian context, Vishwanathan (2014) suggested some inclusive measures to address the non-participation of Indian students in GDs in ESL classrooms. Similarly, Chakravarthy (2017) tracked the progress of learners in terms of non-verbal parameters and highlighted the importance of feedback immediately after GD.

These three trends in GD instruction can be mapped to three major theories of second language learning. While teaching formulaic phrases corresponds to behaviouristic view that looks at language learning as habit formation, strategy training is rooted in cognitive approach which emphasises conscious thinking about one's own learning and thereby improving the way one learns. Instruction focusing on cultural aspects is related to sociocultural approach which stresses the meaningful interaction to promote language learning.

When we consider teaching GDs at tertiary level especially for employment, the focus needs to go beyond linguistic features to include cooperation, managing emotions, body language etc. In addition to this, teaching GDs for employment should include the learner needs i.e. what they don't have now (lacks) and what they are expected to have by recruiters (needs). Furthermore, it is also important to consider learning context that provides opportunities for learners to engage themselves in meaningful practice.

NEEDS ANALYSIS ON GROUP DISCUSSIONS FOR EMPLOYABILITY

According to Dudley-Evans & St John (1998), needs analysis is carried out to establish *what* and *how* of a course. They define needs as 'identifiable elements in students' target situations' i.e. in this case the recruitment situations. In general practice needs analysis starts from looking at available literature and then consulting people who are part of the target situation. But in this context, published literature available on GDs for recruitments appears to be scarce. The aspiring students generally have very limited exposure to the target situation (recruitment). All that they might know is what they gather from their seniors and other sources. Therefore, there arises a need for consulting recruiters to know their expectations about the candidates' performance in GDs and to gain an insider's perspective to the target situation needs.

In order to carry out needs analysis, six HR personnel from three different companies were interviewed. These interviews were semi-structured and included

questions that focused on the following aspects:

- a. How are GDs conducted for recruitments?
- b. What are the skills expected to be possessed by the participants?
- c. What are the reasons for failures in GDs?
- d. What kind of rubrics (if any) do they use while assessing candidates' performance in GDs?

Interviews with recruiters revealed that GDs conducted for recruitments may vary in terms of topics given for discussion but the objective is to select candidates who have the attributes required to work in teams. Participants are expected to demonstrate their skills as team players and express their views on the topic in a coherent manner. Though there are no standard rubrics to gauge the performance of the candidates, the recruiters indicated that they identify good performance in GDs by observing traits such as initiating the discussion with an appropriate point, bringing relevant points to the discussion, handling the contradictions in a cooperative manner and maintaining emotional balance. The recruiters gave some instances of undesirable performance such as initiating the discussion with an irrelevant point, becoming too emotional when countered, and interrupting others without listening.

Having understood what GD is and how it has been taught in the classroom through literature review and having gained insider's perspective from needs analysis, it is necessary to incorporate theoretical underpinnings relevant to GDs in order to develop GD skills.

MEDIATION: REFLECTION, COLLABORATION AND SCAFFOLDING

Since effective participation in GDs calls for the effective use of language and social skills, it is important to engage learners in a meaningful interaction that would provide opportunities to observe and use skills necessary in a GD. Such a meaningful interaction can be better fostered through mediation which is central to sociocultural theory (SCT) (Vygotsky, 1978).

Wertsch (2007) views mediation as human contact with the social world through psychological tools, most important of those being language. Linguistic tools are directed outwards to influence or regulate the mental or social activity of other individuals. They are also inwardly directed with the goal of self-regulation (Harvey, 2011). While linguistic tools directed outwards would help GD participants in influencing each others' thinking and behaviour, linguistic tools directed inwards would help GD participants to self-regulate their emotions, language use and behaviour.

Other-regulation is achieved through ‘collaboration’ and ‘scaffolding’. ‘*Collaboration*’ refers to a situation in which a learner is offered “some interaction with another person in relation to a problem to be solved” (Chaiklin, 2003). ‘*Scaffolding*’ refers to any form of adult-child (expert-novice) assisted performance that ‘enables a child or novice to solve a problem or carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts’ (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Collaboration plays an important role in GDs as participants are required to support one another to arrive at a consensus/make a decision/find a solution. In order to develop collaborative traits in GD participants, it is important that the teacher provide necessary scaffolding wherever required.

Self-regulation is achieved through ‘reflection’ which is not just being thoughtful but is an intellectual and affective activity through which individuals create and clarify meaning through experience resulting in a changed conceptual perspective (Dewey, 1933; Boyd & Fales, 1983; Boud *et al.*, 1985). In order to cultivate self-regulating behaviour, it is necessary for students to develop reflective abilities while preparing for GDs. Such practice would gradually make them self-regulate their own behaviour in GDs.

TEACHING GROUP DISCUSSIONS USING SCT

Since group discussions are socially situated activities, sociocultural theory is found to be suitable to develop skills required for effective participation in GDs. Therefore, a course on GD skills for employability was designed incorporating principles of sociocultural theory: reflection, collaboration and scaffolding. Course design followed a functional approach based on the findings of needs analysis. Functions such as initiating, giving opinions, (dis)agreeing concluding were included along with the resources on contemporary topics for GDs with a view to engaging students in pair and group tasks to prepare for GDs and participate in GDs during the classroom instruction. In classroom, the teacher facilitates the learning experience of the students by raising their awareness on functions of GDs, providing inputs during preparation and feedback after they participate in GDs (scaffolding).

Given the space and scope of the present paper, only a sample lesson on expressing opinions in GDs is presented to illustrate the nature of the course designed. The contents of the course are delivered in terms of presentation, practice and production. The tasks used in the class are given under each stage.

PRESENTATION

In the presentation stage, the teacher raises the awareness of students on language functions useful in GDs and provides them with resources (texts, videos, websites,

etc.) on specific topics. The following is a sample task in which students are shown a video followed by a whole class discussion. This task is intended to make students understand how opinions are expressed on a topic.

Task

Step 1: Watch the video played to you and observe how the presenter expresses his view.

Step 2: Participate in a whole class discussion to answer the following questions.

How are GM foods made?

How are they different from traditional crops?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of GM food?

What is the view of the presenter in the video about GM foods?

(<https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/o?fr=tightropetb&p=GM+foods+video#id=1&vid=eefca12307bd286c327ed6b241de7c1d&action=click>)

Practice

In practice stage, students are divided into pairs or groups (collaboration) to prepare for a discussion on the topic using the resources provided by the teacher. They are also supported wherever necessary by the teacher who monitors the practice activity (scaffolding). The following is a sample task intended for making students practise identifying different opinions presented in the source texts and organising their ideas about the topic.

Task

Step 1: Form pairs and read the text provided to you to identify the opinion in it.

Sample Text A

The reason for modifying genetic structure of food crops is to increase the production from the available land resources. Increase in food production is made possible by improving the immunity of the plant and amplifying the produce. The improved immunity not only makes the plants more resistant to pests and diseases but also leads to high quality food production. The higher the production of food implies the greater number of options at the disposal of the end user.

Sample Text B

Cultivators also have to bear the brunt of GM foods. As GM plants produce non-fertile seeds that will not be able to germinate, farmers cannot use them for next crops. As a result, the farmers are compelled to buy the seeds from the company that produces GM seeds. Since the company has the patent on the seeds, farmers cannot buy the seeds elsewhere. Cashing in on this situation the company charges higher prices. In other words, growing GM foods costs a fortune for farmers, which was not the case with traditional farming.

Step 2: Form groups with the pairs that found similar opinions as that of yours and complete the worksheet given below.

Production

In the production stage, a group of students are made to participate in a GD on a given topic and other students play the role of audience. While the students participated in the GD assess their own performance (self-assessment), the rest of the class assesses the participants' performance as their peers (peer-assessment). Finally, the teacher provides feedback and involves students in reflective journal writing. The following is a sample task in which participants for a GD are randomly picked up from different groups formed in practice stage. This task is intended for students to use the awareness gained about the language and social skills required for GDs in the presentation and practice stages.

Task:

Step 1: Form into a group the first 10 students with odd roll numbers in the class and discuss the topic:

Genetically Modified Foods: Boon or Bane?

Step 2: a) Assess your own performance using the rubric provided (for participants).

b) Assess the participants' performance using the rubric provided (for the rest of the class).

c) Reflect on the whole learning experience and write about it in your journal.

Similar to the lesson illustrated above, the course comprises lessons on various functions of group discussions which raise awareness of the students, engage them in practicing the skills through tasks and facilitate the application of skills by making them participate in GDs in class.

CONCLUSION

Group Discussions have a significant role to play both in academic and professional settings apart from their regular role in day to day life. Though there are some studies that contributed to the understanding and conceptualisation of GDs in academics, a scarcity in the available literature on the GDs for recruitments is observed. Previous studies on GDs focused on teaching language phrases, strategy training or cross-cultural aspects and have contributed to the pedagogic practices. Based on the review of existing literature and findings of needs analysis, a course on GD skills for employability was designed using the principles of sociocultural theory. A sample lesson was presented to illustrate the course design. Offering such a course can help learners develop the skills necessary for employment in modern workplaces.

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The Activities Based on a Literary Text for an ESP Classroom

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ABSTRACT

ELT experts accept the creative potential of literary text in the language classroom, but the English teachers in engineering colleges have differing experiences of the students' outlook towards it. The acceptance of a literary text depends on the kind of text chosen, the quality of activities designed around it, the type of students in the classroom and their willingness to cooperate. As a teacher-researcher, I will demonstrate how a literary text can be appealing to first-year engineering students if a suitable text is chosen. Further, appropriate activities can be improvised around the text to encourage the students to think critically and creatively, and develop their listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. In this paper, I will suggest six activities based on Ruskin Bond's "The Night Train at Deoli", to provide students with the opportunities to enhance their language skills and thus gain a meaningful experience. I will conclude my study with a list of guidelines for choosing an appropriate literary text and relevant activities for an ESP classroom.

Key words: Literature in ELT, TBLT, LSRW skills, ESP

INTRODUCTION

Time and again, ELT experts have opted in favour of using literature in the ESP classroom even though some ESP experts like Hutchinson and Waters (2010), Dudley-Evans and St. John (2012) have encouraged using an ESP Text. Not many educators can deny the creative potential that literature can bring to the language classroom. In this paper, I will show how using literature in the engineering classroom can encourage students to think critically and creatively and also develop their listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. However, a literary text can appeal to students only if the right kind of text is chosen and suitable

activities planned to motivate them. This study is based on the following research questions:

1. What is an appropriate literary text for an ESP classroom?
2. What are the relevant activities based on the literary text?

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The participants of this study were first-year engineering students at SSN College of Engineering, Chennai, an institution affiliated to Anna University, Chennai. These students, admitted purely on merit, formed a mixed-ability group—those who come from English-medium schools were proficient in English and those from regional-medium schools found English difficult. Understanding the need to develop the proficiency levels of English in the students, Anna University introduced two courses—Technical English I and Technical English II—in the first and second semesters respectively. These courses were designed to develop the LSRW skills of the students. The six activities suggested in this paper were conducted over a period of two years (2015-2016 and 2016-2017 batches), to offer them a chance to develop their critical and creative thinking and enhance their language skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The debate still goes on whether literature can be used as a tool to learn Technical English in an engineering classroom. The experience of teachers handling English in engineering colleges has shown that if chosen correctly as per the aptitude and attitude of the students, literary texts can be fascinating for students. Choosing a suitable text is however a difficult task and designing relevant activities is even more difficult. However, if teachers find time out of their tight programme to choose texts that complement the proficiency level of the students, they can motivate them to work as a team to improve their English skills. Justifying the use of literature for language study, Alan Duff and Alan Maley (2007) in their “Foreword” to *Literature*, affirm emphatically that well-chosen literary texts offer a rich input for language acquisition because they contribute to the cultural knowledge and understanding of the students; they appeal to feelings as much as to thought; they make a contribution to the students’ personal growth; and above all, they motivate and stimulate learning (p. 3).

Collie and Slater (1987) highlight the advantages of using literature in the language classroom: it is authentic material; it provides cultural and language enrichment; and it enhances personal involvement with the text of the target language (pp. 3-6). They also advocate the short story form as an ideal way of familiarizing the learners with literature as it is handy. Short stories can be read

and reread several times, especially when a task is given as homework; they can be chosen from a wide range according to the preference of the learners in the class; and they can be dealt with in one period, with no obligation towards continuity (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 196).

Carter and Long (1991) also vouch for the use of literature to study a language. They suggest three approaches to language learning: the Cultural Model, the Language Model and the Personal Growth Model. They see the text as a cultural model; a model for grammar and language activities; and as a model for personal growth (Carter & Long, 1991, pp. 2-3). Akyel and Yalçın (1990) advocate the use of literature in the classroom (p. 175). Ur (1996) records the advantages of literature as a language teaching resource, saying that it gives pleasure while reading; it provides different styles of writing; enhances vocabulary; fosters reading skills; stimulates a discussion in the classroom; contributes to personal development; encourages critical and creative thinking; enriches the students' world knowledge; and makes the students aware of the various human situations and conflicts (p. 201).

ACTIVITIES BASED ON “THE NIGHT TRAIN AT DEOLI”

The literary text chosen for this study, “The Night Train at Deoli” by Ruskin Bond, belongs to the genre Indian writing in English. As mentioned earlier, I have designed six sample activities based on the story for first-year engineering students, to provide them with the opportunities to augment their critical and creative thinking, and to improve their language skills. The activities are: (1) Reading-while-listening, (2) Critical writing, (3) Speaking and interacting, (4) Rewriting or reshaping the story, (5) Creative writing, and (6) Speaking on their own creation.

Activity 1: Reading-while-listening

Ask the students to read the text and simultaneously listen to its audio recording. Generally, while introducing second language learners to a literary text, reading or listening has been the commonly employed method. Experienced teachers have tried this method with students and found that it brings remarkable progress in language learning. It also has other advantages such as better understanding of the text; enrichment of vocabulary and grammar, and understanding the pronunciation, stress and intonation of unfamiliar words.

Activity 2: Critical writing

Get the students to write an informal review of the text. They may write a brief summary, or a critical analysis of the setting, plot, character, theme, etc., or give reasons for liking or disliking the text.

Activity 3: Speaking and interacting

Get the students to speak aloud what they have written in Activity 2. For example, they can discuss the plot; narrate the story; give reasons for liking or disliking the text; and comment on the language used.

Activity 4: Rewriting or reshaping the story

Encourage the students to rewrite the story in any one of the following cues:

Consider a different ending to the story

Place the story in a different time zone

Use the present time throughout the story

Reshape the story from another character's point of view—that of the girl, the grandmother or the station master

Activity 5: Creative writing

Give students 10 minutes to practice free writing on a similar or different childhood memory.

Activity 6: Speaking on their own creation

Give the students 2 minutes to speak on the incident they have written about in Activity 5.

DISCUSSION

What is an appropriate literary text for an ESP classroom?

There are several difficulties in using literary texts in an ESP classroom. Duff and Maley (2007) categorize them as: (1) Linguistic difficulty, (2) Length difficulty, (3) Cultural difficulty, (4) Referential difficulty, and (5) Conceptual difficulty (pp. 6-7). During my years of teaching, I introduced the engineering students to a number of short stories such as “The Last Leaf”; “Hunger Artist”; “Man from the South”; “Araby”; and “The Fly”; to name just a few. Unfortunately, I was met with a kind of apathy on the part of the students (John, 2016, p. 6). Thus, I arrived at the conclusion that choosing a literary text for an engineering classroom has to be done with utmost care, because engineering students are not generally attuned to appreciating a literary text; further, most of them prefer to read texts based on science subjects (John, 2016, p. 8). I also recorded the feedback of the engineering students with regard to their reading preferences (p. 7). This situation can be grasped better given that the engineering students involved in this study had an end-semester examination based on language skills and the exam did not have any reference to literary texts.

According to Lazar (1993), the three main areas to consider when choosing a

text are: (1) The type of course the students are undertaking; the level of the students and their reason for learning English; the kind of English they require; and the length and intensity of the course. (2) The type of students, that is, the students' age, their emotional and intellectual maturity, their interest, their cultural background, their linguistic proficiency, and their literary background. (3) The type of text, that is, the availability of the text, the length of the text, its exploitability, and its fit with the syllabus (p. 56).

When a literary text is chosen for an ESP classroom in India, it is desirable to pick one that belongs to the genre of Indian writing in English and set in an Indian context. This will ensure that the students are familiar with the situations described and the language used, and will hence be able to relate to the story in one way or the other. They can be substituted later with the texts of non-Indian writers.

The main reasons for choosing Ruskin Bond's "The Night Train at Deoli" for this study are the following: the students were familiar with Ruskin Bond's writings at school; his language is rather simple and therefore understandable even for regional-medium students; the story belongs to the genre of Indian writing in English; it is a story about a young boy's crush on a girl who sells baskets at Deoli station and how he wanted to meet her but could not; and finally because this experience of having a crush on someone is universal and it resonates with the students' age group.

Based on the opinion of experts, Carter & Long (1991), Collie and Slater (1987), Duff and Maley (2007), Lazar (1993) and my personal experience, I have enumerated some guidelines for choosing a literary text:

- Choose a text in keeping with the comprehension level of the learners
- Go for a text that suits the students' interest and age-group
- Select a text for which the task can be completed in one period
- Find a text that does not have any unintelligible or complicated references
- Pick a text of Indian origin based on the students' culture and surroundings
- Proceed later to texts of other cultures and nationalities (John, 2018)

What are the relevant activities based on the literary text?

Activities 1 to 6 described earlier need not necessarily be used for one class or for the same group of students. Teachers can experiment with them, or may choose any one or two, according to the attitude, aptitude and the intellectual capability of the students, and also the availability of time during the periods. Activity 1, "Reading-while-Listening" should be planned as a pre-writing or pre-speaking activity only. The main activity should either be Activity 2, "Critical Writing" or Activity 5 "Creative Writing". In 2015-2016, I conducted "Reading-while-

listening” as a pre-writing activity, followed by a discussion as in Activity 3. This was followed by the main task—writing an informal review as in Activity 2. In 2016-2017, Activity 1, “Reading-while-Listening” was again done as a pre-writing activity, followed by a discussion as in Activity 3. This time, the main activity was creative writing as in Activity 5. Discussions enable students to think about a literary text critically and write about it. Several times, when a listening activity was conducted in the class, the students complained that they were not able to understand the speaker, especially when the text was by a British or American writer. On the other hand, when a Reading-while-Listening activity was carried out, the students sat in rapt attention and took part in the follow-up activities willingly. They also admitted that they followed every word of the text. The response of the students was even better when the text was that of an Indian writer or read out by an Indian speaker.

ELT experts recommend creative writing for a number of reasons. The chief among these is that when the end result is considered an achievement, most learners feel proud of their work and want it to be read out (Ur, 1996). The sense of achievement in creative writing is significantly more marked than for any other writing. I conducted a creative writing class in which I gave my students a free writing exercise of 10 minutes. All the students produced original writings, which they shared during the speaking activity. Recreating a task can thus help students to think from a different angle. This can be done as a speaking task as well as a writing task prior to a creative writing task.

Harmer (2015) says that when teachers set up imaginative writing tasks to engage students, they usually strive hard to produce a greater variety of correct and appropriate language than they might do for more routine tasks. For example, when students try to construct a narrative or tell stories from their childhood, they are tapping into their own experience. This activity provides a powerful motivation for some students to find the right words to express their experience. Harmer adds that creative writing provokes a kind of input-output circle.

I will conclude by adding some guidelines for choosing the right kind of activities:

- Choose activities catering to the level of the students,
- Pick out activities of short duration for “Reading-while-listening”
- Select discussion activities that enhance critical thinking
- Suggest speaking activities that can be easily handled
- Give students prep time for the speaking activities
- Use short texts for reading activities
- Start with a freewriting exercise
- Introduce the creative writing activity gradually
- Limit the writing time for the writing activity for better results

CONCLUSION

This study shows that critical and creative thinking and language skills can be developed in engineering students by introducing them to a suitable literary text in the classroom and appropriate activities based on the text. Using the example of Ruskin Bond's "The Night Train at Deoli" to enhance the students' LSRW skills, the paper concludes with the guidelines for choosing the right kind of literary text and the right kind of activities in the ESP context.

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Bridging the Divide: Collaborative Learning and Translanguaging in Multilingual Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

Collaborative learning is an educational approach which involves groups of learners who work together to solve various problems, perform a task and arrive at a certain conclusion together (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012). It also involves the students to actively participate in the classroom, which encourages them to socialize with one another. However, it promotes a single language formula in the classroom. This becomes a problem for multilingual students as they come from various linguistic backgrounds. Also, their language resources remain unutilized in the classroom and most of the time they lose interest in their studies as they cannot comprehend the language of their teachers, which forces them to leave the school (MacKenzie, 2009). In such a scenario, the strategy of translanguaging can be used as it gives multilingual learners an opportunity to hover “freely within, between, and among languages” (Shohamy, 2013). In this paper, we will present the results of a study, that was conducted in a school in Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal. As part of the study, a qualitative discourse analysis was done to study how translanguaging promotes collaboration among students.

Keywords: Multilingualism, collaborative learning, strategy, translanguaging

INTRODUCTION

India is globally acknowledged for its diversity, be it in its religion, culture or language. In fact, there are very few classrooms in India where students do not come from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Hence, they bring with them various linguistic resources and cultures to the classroom. However, most of the time this valuable resource remains unutilized because the Indian education system, by and large follows a monolingual model of education. Mohanty (2009) rightly opines

that the education system in India is superficially multilingual, but it remains monolingual at an underlying level. The three language formula suggested by the Kothari Commission (1964-1966) is more abused and less used.

Students who come from a minority language background face difficulties during classroom transactions as they cannot comprehend the language of their teachers, which results in utter frustration. As a result, they leave school even before completing Class Eight (Mohanty, 2009). According to MacKenzie (2009), dropout rates are significantly higher among linguistic minority students, than among students from a dominant language background in India. As their culture and languages are ignored in the educational spaces, such students no longer find the education system helpful. They withdraw from the education system, which in turn has a long term influence on human resource development. According to Sahu (2014), the dropout rates are the highest among the Adivasi community.

In such a scenario, the linguistic and cultural resources of the minority students should be addressed in the classroom as language plays a vital role in constructing identity in the classroom (Panda & Mohanty, 2009). Previous studies (MacKenzie, 2009, Sahu, 2014) have proved that the exclusion of the mother tongue from the curriculum has a negative impact on the education of tribal students. According to MacKenzie (2009), the inclusion of the mother tongue has a positive influence on the education of such students, as they can relate their personal experiences with the environment of the schools, thereby making the learning environment more interactive. NCF (2005) also suggested imparting education in the mother tongue, observing that, “the multilingual character of Indian society should be seen as a resource to promote multilingual proficiency in a child”.

However, the challenge that lies before us is how a multilingual education can be promoted as including diverse languages in the education system, and how minority languages can be promoted without harming the other languages in the classroom. Certainly, we should adopt a teaching and learning strategy which gives equal respect and position to all the languages in a classroom by considering language as a fluid system rather than restricting the learners within strict linguistic boundaries. Translanguaging is one such strategy, which can address the issues of multilingualism in the classroom.

Translanguaging can be defined as “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages that form their repertoires as an integrated system” (Canagarajah, 2011). Garcia (2009) describes translanguaging as “an important educational practice—to construct understandings, to make sense of the world and of the academic material, to mediate with others, to acquire other ways of languaging”. Shohamy (2013) perceives translanguaging as the process of shaping connotation, gaining experience and understanding from the use of more than two

languages in a single linguistic repertoire. She describes translanguaging as being necessary as it gives the learners a chance to move freely within, between and among languages.

Why Translanguaging to Promote Collaborative Learning?

Most of the earlier researches on translanguaging have dealt with issues of bilingualism. There are only a few studies which have been conducted from the perspective of multilingual students in India. Pattanayak (1984) argues “in multilingual countries many languages are the facts of life; any restriction in the choice of language use is a nuisance, and one language is not only uneconomic, it is absurd”. Srivastava (1990) adds that Indian society should preserve and develop multilingualism through its formal education system in various educational institutions. Krishnamurti (1990) expresses concern with regard to imparting education through the mother tongue and suggests that teachers and students use various languages in the classroom. Through my study, I will attempt to explore the relationship between translanguaging and collaborative learning and also look at how translanguaging can promote collaborative learning in a multilingual classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Translanguaging

The term translanguaging was proposed by Cen Williams (1994) to describe bilingual language practices among students in secondary schools, and was later popularized by scholars such as Baker (2001) and Garcia (2009). It is specific language practice, rather than a theoretical concept. It celebrates the fuzziness of language boundaries (Bagwasi, 2016). It emerges from social practices where languages are neither static nor linked to the other languages (Creese and Blackledge, 2015). The practice of translanguaging considers that boundaries between languages are fluid, dynamic and constantly shifting (Cenoz and Gorter, 2011). Hence, a speaker can easily shuttle between and among various languages in everyday classroom interaction (Canagarajah, 2011; Bisai & Singh, 2018). Gradually, it creates an environment of dynamic and flexible ways of languaging, where multilingual speakers access their linguistic repertoires to enlarge their communicative potential (Duarte, 2016). Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012) opine that in translanguaging, languages are used in a dynamic and functionally integrated manner for the purpose of learning or communication. It can also be described as the systematic use of various languages in a single lesson.

Translanguaging can also be used as a tool of learning from a sociocultural perspective. It plays a vital role in facilitating language learning among students. Martin-Beltron (2014) argues that translanguaging can be used as a vehicle to

promote collaboration among students. Further, it actively engages students in peer interactions, which improves their literacy as well as their communicative competencies. While interacting with their peers, learners bring their background knowledge into the classroom, negotiate meaning with each other, and create and manage a social space among themselves (Duarte, 2016). Reyes (2018) opines that translanguaging ignites interest as well as creativity in education, develops knowledge and proficiency in the subject matter and offers the students a space to construct their knowledge. Palmer, Martinez, Mateus and Henderson (2014) argue that it validates the students' ideas by bringing their resources into the classroom. Gradually they start developing various linguistic skills and become more competent in the target language.

Translanguaging has cognitive benefits too. Carstens (2016) remarks that it challenges students cognitively and improves their academic skills. Palmer et al. (2014) opine that it ignites the metalinguistic awareness of the students. Reyes (2018) says translanguaging encourages students to explore various aspects of a social topic critically, which allows them to get a deeper insight into the subject.

With regard to the role of the teacher, Palmer et. al. (2014) argue that teachers play a vital role in a translanguaging classroom. They engage the students in collaborative tasks, create opportunities for discourse where the students can learn and relearn various concepts and validate the resources which the students bring into the classroom. Creese and Blackledge (2010) opine that teachers use translanguaging for various purposes, such as for annotating a text to provide greater access to the curriculum. Duran and Palmer (2014) argue that both teacher and student reinforce pluralist discourse in the classroom. Teacher creates new possibilities of languaging in the classroom. According to Palmer et. al. (2014), teachers use translanguaging to develop the linguistic skills of their students by teaching the structure and usage of various languages. They also switch from one language to another purposefully and intentionally to validate or monitor students' language practices.

Collaborative learning

Collaborative learning is an educational approach which is based on a social constructivist philosophy. It makes a shift, away from a traditional teacher-centric classroom (Laal & Laal, 2012), and introduces the students to a wider world of target language and culture (Oxford, 1997). Laal and Ghodsi (2012) opine that collaborative learning is an educational approach in which a group of learners work together to solve various problems, perform a task and reach certain conclusions together.

Collaborative learning has numerous benefits for students. Bruffee (1984) remarks that it provides the students with a social platform where students respect the

opinions of each other, create a social space for each other and engage in a mutually interactive process. It also teaches them how to think collaboratively in the classroom. Laal and Ghodsi (2012) argue that collaborative learning gives students the opportunity to converse with their peers, represent and defend their ideas, and exchange diverse opinions and beliefs within the classroom. Elbers and Streefland (2000) observe that collaborative learning allows learners to explore and evaluate new ideas. It allows learners to create a familiar learning content for each other. Gradually, the students start learning how to regulate the process of acquiring knowledge. Staarmane, Krol and Meijden (2005) write that collaborative learning provides students with rich opportunities to reflect on the reactions and perspectives of their peers. While talking about collaborative learning, Laal and Ghodsi (2012) categorize the benefits derived from collaborative learning under three sections—psychological, social and academic. Psychological benefits include enhanced problem solving skills, positive attitude towards teachers and classroom and increased self-esteem in students. With regard to social benefits, collaborative learning helps to develop social interaction skills, enhance conflict resolution skills, and encourage diversity understanding among students. It also creates an environment of caring, supportive and committed relationships. Academic benefits includes increased motivation and better learning outcomes in the classroom.

Collaborative learning can help students discuss cultural problems and difficulties (Flammia, 2012; Oxford, 1997; Wang, Freeman & Zhu, 2013). Flammia (2012) describes collaborative learning as the process of acculturation as students learn various components of culture from their interaction with each other. Oxford (1997) opines that collaborative learning shapes the cultural and linguistic ideas of the students as they engage in reflective enquiry in the classroom. Bruner (1996) states that collaborative learning is necessary for cultural development. Economides (2008) opines that culture and collaborative learning have a positive relationship with each other, and collaborative learning makes the students culturally sensitive. It also has a significant impact on learning and knowledge transfer. Wang et. al. (2013) discuss how engaging students in cross-cultural collaboration helps to develop their intercultural competencies. They add that cross cultural activities are necessary to satisfy the linguistic needs of the students.

Theoretical Framework

This paper has been developed based on the following theoretical ideas:

Social Development Theory

Vygotsky (1978) asserts the importance of social interaction in human development. He opines that cultural development of a child makes an appearance twice: first, on the social level, and then on the individual level; first between persons (inter-psychological), and then inside or within the child (intra-psychological).

Vygotsky states that social interaction leads to the thinking that discourse between people is internalized by individuals as their perception. This internalized talk can in turn lead to the development of thinking in different ways. First, language is a cognitive resource; hence practicing and using a language helps one to become a “fluent speaker” of that language. It enables a child to use and understand the concept, functions and expression of the language. Second, through talk participants are exposed to alternative voices and perspectives that challenge or elaborate on their worldview. Third, habitual interaction patterns—providing all participants with an opportunity to voice their views, demanding and providing justification for an argument, questioning, making assumptions, clarifying concepts—help in the development of language skills.

SALAD BOWL CONCEPT

The salad bowl or the cultural mosaic concept/theory (Paulston, 1997; Deyoe, 1977) calls for the integration of diverse languages or cultures in a single context, or combining them like the different ingredients of a salad, where the ingredients do not lose their identity but provide a distinct and unique flavor. The salad bowl concept of language strictly rejects the traditional concept of melting pot theory and embraces the notion of multilingualism, where every language maintains its separate entity as well as its identity in a society (Tamasi & Antieau, 2015).

Methods

The research for this paper was conducted in a school in the Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal, India. The consent of the school authorities and the class teacher was obtained before the study was conducted. For the purpose of qualitative discourse analysis, the researchers drew on observational and interview data of Class eight students of a state run school. The classroom comprised of sixty students from diverse linguistic backgrounds—Santali, Bengali, Lodha, Kurmi, etc. To draw data for the purpose of research, English language classes were observed for 30 hours at different times of the day. Audio and video recordings were taken and semi-formal interviews were conducted both with the teachers and students. The demographic information of the students was noted down by the researchers for the purpose of research only.

While analyzing the demographic factors, we realized that 23 percent of the students were from linguistically diverse backgrounds and most of them were competent in three languages. The rest of the students were competent in two languages.

While analyzing the video recordings, we discovered that students were moving

between, across and among languages to express their understanding of the subject matter. To prove our point, the researchers planned a few activities in the class. The purpose of these activities was to show how students break language barriers and use translanguaging as a learning tool. One classroom discussion is cited as follows:

Activity-I:

Teacher: What is the meaning of grandfather?

Student 1: *Nana* (Hindi)

Student 2: *Dadu* (Bengali)

Student 3: Is it mother's father or father's father?

All students: Ha, ha, ha...

Here, the students are breaking the traditional boundaries of languages and using various linguistic repertoires in a single classroom discourse. They are using repertoires from three languages (Bengali, Hindi and English) with ease. At the same time, they are also raising critical questions and mocking at the limitations of English.

Activity-II:

The teacher divided the students into seven groups of seven students each. Each group was given a placard with a story in which the sentences were in a jumbled order. Each placard had a different story. The students were instructed to think aloud and discuss with their group members while arranging the sentences in the right order to narrate the story. The researchers recorded these conversations, which have been documented as follows:

Student 1: *Ata first hoba karon singho ta prothama ghumocchilo. Tarpur jaglo* (This will be the first sentence because the lion was sleeping at first [*sic*]. Then, it woke up.

Student 2: Right.

Student 3: See, the fat lion here like Ankit.

Student 4: But you are like the rat, *patla and daat gulo boro boro* (thin and you have big teeth).

Student 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7: Ha, ha, ha.

Student 5: Let's come to the topic. Don't make fun always [*sic*].

Student 2: This will be the third one.

This discussion shows how students translanguage while collaborating with each other in the classroom. While arranging the story, they are actively engaged in the learning process and consequentially, learning becomes fun for them. They are engaged in a discussion in which they share their thoughts, feelings and emotions freely and creatively in the classroom. They are also enhancing their speaking skills through this discussion. Gradually, they become managers of their learning environment; when certain disruptions hamper the classroom discourse, learners take the initiative and create a learning environment for themselves.

TEACHERS' RESPONSE

While interviewing the ESL teachers of the school the researchers asked them if they used only English language in the ESL classroom, to which all of them said that they do not always use English. Instead, they mix various languages as students comprehend better and faster if teachers communicate with them by mixing various languages. One teacher replied that teachers should use English language exclusively in an ESL classroom, but this would make the lesson monotonous as the students would not be able to understand anything. Hence, teachers deliberately use various languages to make the lesson more interesting and comprehensible to the students.

While interviewing the students, I found that they also alternate between different languages in the classroom. They specifically move between, across and among various languages when they explain the lesson to a peer who was unable to understand it in the class. For instance, when a minority language student did not understand the instructions given by the teacher in the classroom, he asked his best friend to translate them for him in Santali. The students acknowledged that by using various languages in the classroom, it helped them to understand the lesson better, and express their feelings and emotions more easily in the classroom.

FINDINGS

Translanguaging has manifold benefits in a multilingual classroom. Though the students are constantly mixing various languages at any given time, they come out with coherent, creative and unique ideas. Such interactions help them to improve their speaking skills as they engage them in various collaborative tasks. They also learn to organize their ideas. Even when they mock at the limitations of a language, they use translanguaging. Similarly, when the students perform collaborative tasks, they use translanguaging.

While delivering instructions, teachers deliberately use translanguaging to bridge the gap between the mother tongue and English, to make the lesson interesting

and comprehensible, and to yield better outcomes in the classroom. They also use translanguaging to make the students perform certain tasks smoothly, to promote collaboration among students, to promote discussions, to bring various linguistic repertoires of the students into the classroom, to bring flexibility in the classroom and to discuss some complex ideas with the students. Last but not the least, the teachers work as facilitators or the more knowledgeable other (MKO) to facilitate the learning process in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

In a multilingual classroom, translanguaging promotes specific ways of languaging which go beyond the artificial divide between languages. This proves that language is not a fixed entity; rather it is fluid and derives meaning from the social, historical and political context. When students translanguage in a multilingual classroom, they create an environment of collaboration and cooperation among their peers. This collaboration and cooperation make the learning environment joyful, helpful and productive to the students. It also helps the linguistic minority students to bring their linguistic repertoire into the classroom, validate their identity and enable them to make sense of their world. It enlarges the thinking capacity of the students, resolves conflicts among languages in the classroom, does justice to students from minority linguistic background and provides an equitable space for all languages.

It is clear that promoting translanguaging is necessary in a linguistic and culturally diverse country such as India in order to make the education system more effective. Translanguaging creates a space for broader thinking and knowledge-building among the students by making the learners autonomous. It has also the potential to resolve dynamic tensions among languages and to create a space for various languages within the classroom. Hence, our multilingual education should include translanguaging as a strategy to strengthen the education system in India.

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Pronounced Ambivalence: R. P. and Native Speaker Norms in the ESL Classroom

M. Raja Vishwanathan

ABSTRACT

In spite of numerous studies that have detailed the necessity of dispensing with native speaker norms when teaching pronunciation, the temptation to persist with Received Pronunciation (henceforth R.P.) and native speaker norms seems irresistibly hard to resist. This has an inevitable consequence—that of instilling “... in the minds of students the idea that other varieties are less valued, and ‘embedding’ into the ELT activity, systems of exclusion which marginalize speakers of other varieties” (Modiano, 2001, p.1). This not only creates an unequal playing field where establishing the superiority of one variety of English over other equally legitimate varieties is uncritically endorsed, but it is also passed off as the only way to speak or use language. This has negative consequences for learners who might not only end up internalizing such arbitrarily determined norms as normal, but also develop a sense of inadequacy and failure in being unable to attain such exacting standards. The whole exercise of teaching language for communication stands defeated; moreover learners play straight into the hands of agencies that have a vested interest in keeping the notion of linguistic *purity* alive.

This study, which was conducted to investigate teacher and student views about teaching RP and native speaker norms, belied some of the claims about the necessity of teaching RP and native speaker norms, as also the belief that learners are passive recipients of knowledge. Data from the study revealed that learners have a mind of their own and are not keen to imitate an accent just because it is considered *standard*. Teachers are also beginning to realize that there are varieties of English that have come into their own and any talk of norms and standards is merely a facile attempt to market a product that is past its sell by date.

Key words: R.P., non-native pronunciation, native speaker norms, ESL classroom

INTRODUCTION

“We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can write only as Indians. Our method of expression . . . has to be a dialect which will someday prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish and the American. Time alone will justify it.”

“One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own. . . .”

(Raja Rao, 2008, Foreword to Kanthapura, p. iv)

It was a visit by a delegation of professors from various engineering institutes across the country to NIT Warangal for an inspection, which first fed the germ of an idea for an investigation into current ELT practices and subsequently for this paper. One of the professors who was visiting the English language lab where I teach asked me in heavily accented English why students had a “flawed” pronunciation. His English sounded unintelligible and hard to make out at the first instance. In fact, his pronunciation of the term “pronunciation” sounded like “*pronoun-se-son*”, and all I could reply at the time was a weak promise to help where I could to “neutralize” the mother tongue influence (MTI) of learners. I felt as if the Indian English pronunciation or accent inherited from the learners’ country of origin was an enemy at the gates, waiting to be tackled by a robust surgical strike from R.P. every now and then, to use a politically loaded and incorrect term!

I was ably aided and assisted by my colleagues, who rushed to explain why accent neutralization was such a valiant linguistic labour of love worth the effort and time, thereby accentuating my helplessness and desperation to sound politically correct. I could only sadly recollect Canagarajah’s (1999) apposite observations about the dangers of unquestioned conformity to norms. According to him, teachers of English experience a state of “schizophrenia” insofar as teaching practices go, with most of them “torn between Center norms and Periphery practice; Center expectations and Periphery classroom conditions; Center expectations and Periphery realities” (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 86).

Yet another reason for the investigation was the cartloads of Ph.D. dissertations on linguistics and phonetics that come to my department for adjudication. All of them invariably focus on the tone, tonality and tonicity of Indian users of English, ranging from school students to college students, with a monotony of theme that is both frustrating and enraging. The recommendations of these dissertations invariably point to the necessity of teaching stress, rhythm and intonation to students to make them “fluent” speakers of English.

Canagarajah, Phillipson, Skuttnabb-Kangas, Pennycook, Cook, Jenkins, and Modiano are among the most consistently active researchers, who have repeatedly questioned the wisdom of persisting with teaching materials and methods that militate against learner needs and preferences in countries that have imported everything from the Centre.

Cook (1999) raises perfectly valid and sensible points when she questions the ideology behind the “native speaker” and “non-native speaker” labels:

Apart from a few die-hard writers of letters to the newspapers, nobody would claim that speakers of Brummy and Glaswegian fail to acquire native speaker language because they were born in Birmingham or Glasgow. Consciously or unconsciously, people proclaim their membership in particular groups through the language they use. However, L2 learners are not supposed to reveal which part of the world they come from; they are considered failures if they have foreign accents, as much research into age differences in language learning assumes (Cook, 1986). Why should English-speaking people who sound as if they come from Houston be accepted as L1 successes when Polish people speaking English are deemed L2 failures for sounding as if they come from Warsaw? (p. 195)

Also many native speakers of English have themselves spoken in favour of jettisoning certain models of pronunciation hatched under laboratory conditions and passed off as best practices with universal validity. This has provided the impetus for revisiting RP and native speaker norms in the ESL lab.

THE STUDY

To seek the opinion of students and teachers about how they perceived the teaching of phonetics from across the globe, a study was conducted that used questionnaires. Two National Institutes of Technology- NIT Warangal and VNIT Nagpur - were chosen for data collection. This was to compare and contrast the situation in NITs.

There were two reasons for choosing NITs. Firstly, at the NIT's, English is taught as a compulsory course to students of first year, who come from across the globe. English is taught as a second language as the students doing the course belong to 55 nationalities, with English in these countries and continents often functioning as a second language to a first or foreign language. For example, there are students from the USA and Canada where English is the first language; from the Middle East where English is a foreign language, and from parts of Asia such as India, Bangladesh, and the Philippines, where English is a second language.

The views elicited from these students therefore represent a fair cross section of the globe and provide insights into what should go into teaching phonetics.

Second, English is taught as an ESP course at NITs, and therefore not all aspects of phonetics that students of other courses learn as part of English curriculum (in B.A. or M.A., for example,) need to be taught to students of engineering.

METHOD

Data for this study was collected from 119 students and 4 teachers across two NITs—NIT Warangal and VNIT, Nagpur. There was a student questionnaire and a teacher questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered during English lab sessions to the teachers as well as the students after assuring them that the information would be used purely for purposes of research.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Data was collected from first year students of engineering for whom English is a compulsory course. The student questionnaire had **one** question, which sought their view(s) on what they wished to be taught. The question was adapted from the norms prescribed by Timmis (2002) and modified. The students were able to express themselves freely as they had the privacy to voice their thoughts and anonymity was guaranteed. The questionnaire carried one question asking the students their preferred model when learning to speak English and the reason(s) behind their choice. The model was presented in the form of two students, A and B, each with their preference for a particular end result with regard to their spoken English. (See appendix for details)

Videos were played showing various accents, following which the students were asked which accent they preferred. They had already been taught segmentals and supra segmental features. For example, students were shown two models, both endorsing native speaker norms. One was Bill Gates' commencement speech at Harvard to show to the learners a sample of General American (Thang Nguyen, 2012), and the other included scenes from the movie *My Fair Lady* (Shanmugamlakshmanam, 2008) to show them RP norms. These included scenes from the movie, such as "*Why Can't the English*" and the famous song "*The Rain in Spain*" , where Professor Higgins makes a case for teaching RP.

As mentioned earlier , data were collected from two NITs with 119 students from both NITs participating in the study. Out of the 119 students, 99 students chose to be student B. The reasons provided were fascinating and ranged from patriotism to resistance to "fake" accent. The students who were patriotic claimed that they would never settle for a foreign accent as it was not needed, and that

their *Indianness* needed to come through in the English they spoke. In fact, in both NITs, the choice was overwhelmingly in favour of student B. A total of 28 students from NIT Warangal and 71 students from **VNIT Nagpur** favoured student B, thereby showing their aversion to speaking English like a “native speaker”.

One student said: “I want to learn the language but not the accent. That accent sounds a little fake & [sic] I don’t want people talking to me [sic] feel awkward because of my accent. I want them to connect to me.”

Yet another student said: “I prefer student B to student A, because I want people to understand my English not my accent. It’s enough if the message I want [sic] to tell them is conveyed, whatever may be the accent.” A third one said : “I would like to be student B, as after all English is a language., [sic] and while speaking any other language, you should not forget where you belong from [sic]. Understanding a language is the foremost criterion, & [sic] if that is fulfilled there is no need of adopting any accent.”

Yet another had this to say: “ I would like to be student B because, though we speak English, having an accent of our country will make [sic] us our own identity. Student A has learned to speak English in [a] native accent but he has lost the identity of his country. While student B can interact in English and also preserved his own identity.

This student had something interesting to say: “ I would prefer to be student B because I would like to have a mark of my own nation or to [sic] the area which I belong. Like the other nations of the world like [sic] American, British, Russian, French and German [sic] have their own mark of accent, [sic], similarly I would also like to have accent of my own soil. As everyone has their accent moulded in their mother tongue, I would also love to have one.”

Those who remonstrated against fake accent explained that there were several accents and British, Australian, New Zealand and American accents were acceptable, there should not be any controversy or unhappiness over the acceptance of other accents. They added that other accents such as Asian or African accents were equally legitimate in their own right.

Many students reacted negatively to the idea of cultivating a British accent because they saw it as alienating and unrelated to their needs. Some rightly averred that meaning was context dependent and did not need stress or intonation.

Those who chose student A were not very clear about their choice. In most cases, they related a native speaker accent with good English and command

over language. One student, who wanted to be like student A, had something interesting to say:

“I would prefer to be like student A. I want to develop an American accent. It looks clear and attractive. In future, when I speak to my clients from America, they need to understand my accent. American accent is also attractive to me. People subconsciously take your words seriously if you have a decent accent, not a funny one.”

This view clearly belongs to someone whose motive is to integrate into the American system or culture and so is perfectly understandable. However what this student was perhaps not very familiar with was that General American, much like RP, is an idealized norm. There are as many accents in the U.S. as there are speakers of English, ranging from the Harlem accent of the African Americans to the Texan accent, and the New York accent of the Whites to the accents of Hispanics, Latinos and other immigrants.

Another student had something equally interesting to say about being like student A. According to him: “ I would definitely prefer being A. In today’s world, English is [a] very important language. At an international level, it is the only way one can express themselves effectively. Many a time the accent of an individual becomes a barrier in his/her communication leading to a communication gap. Also an improper accent can lead to a bad first impression among colleagues or schoolmates. Also at the top level of a company, i.e. board of directors & [sic] panellists, an employee needs to be presentable not only through his grammar but also through his diction and accent. Lastly I would conclude that there is nothing wrong in having an accent of one’s country but one needs to be perfect at what one learns and accent is an essential part of the language hence it [sic] study and and [sic] use in language is very essential.”

In the case of this student, what merits attention is the inherent belief that one variety/accnt is possibly better than others, and that is what perhaps led him to believe in the existence of one superior variety. Perfection for him connotes mastering RP or general American, a belief that was introduced at the time of colonialism and which continues to have its supporters. Somehow fluency in English seemed synonymous with acquiring an accent, preferably the “standard” variety.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Data were collected from 4 teachers, two each from NIT Warangal and VNIT Nagpur. All of whom had doctorates in ELT and had teaching experiences ranging

from two years to several years.

The teacher questionnaire featured two questions that sought the view of the teachers on what kind of models (native speaker models or intelligible Indian English model or any model that aimed at English that is intelligible to the listener) they aspired to emulate and why. The questions were adapted from Middleton (2017) and Timmis (2002) and modified to suit the needs of the study. The first question asked the teacher about the native speaker model the teachers could aim for (if they so wished) and the second pertaining to the model they would recommend to their students when teaching phonetics (see appendix for details).

Out of four teachers, three said they were happy to sound like a non-native speakers and what was more important was how they reached out to their students intelligibly, for which RP was neither necessary nor desirable. They also agreed that the most important parameter to judge speech was “comfortable intelligibility” (Abercrombie, 1991), and it really did not matter which accent the students were exposed to as long as their English was intelligible.

Jenkins (1998) acknowledges as much: “rigid stress-timing is no more than a convenient fiction for classroom practice” and that English may be moving “towards the syllable-timed end of the stress/syllable-timing continuum, under the influence of other world languages in general and of rap music in particular.” (p. 123)

In the words of one teacher: “I feel comfortable in teaching my students English retaining the accent of my state. Moreover, students from any state will not have any problem understanding my English if I speak it clearly.”

Yet another teacher said : “In Indian context, it is important for the students to be exposed to any and all types of accent as they have to comprehend and respond to a variety of input. The whole point of communication is to express, and not to impress. As long as the message is received, interpreted and conveyed correctly, any accent will suffice.”

Teachers were also in agreement that “English is no longer a language of native speakers alone. It is important to accept and acknowledge the non-native [*sic*] speakers as well.”

One teacher said that though he was comfortable with his Indian accent, he would nevertheless teach RP because that was the recommended model. He added that left to himself, he would be happy with any model that promised intelligibility. The demands of the syllabus meant that he had to teach RP and supra-segmental

features. At both NITs, the choice was loud and clear: clear and intelligible English was the preferred model and the aim, teachers opined, was to use/speak English such that the message was unambiguously transmitted.

All teachers rightly said that it would be unwise to push RP or any other external norm down the throats of learners when it was wholly redundant.

CONCLUSIONS

This study carries important implications for teachers of English.

1. It is essential that students acquire thorough knowledge of the speech sounds of a language because this is important when using words where mispronunciation can lead to miscommunication. However this knowledge needs to be imparted minus value judgements about superiority or inferiority of dialects or models.
2. Teaching the 44 sounds of English language is necessary since learners would know how many speech sounds there are in English and how these differ from the sounds of their own language. Besides, the sounds would allow learners to exercise their choice in arriving at a pronunciation model they are comfortable with. Treating RP and/or General American as a model would be useful since models offer guidance. However, viewing RP/General American as the norm is undesirable as the norm is seen as “invariable and has to be imitated independently of any considerations of language use” (Jenkins, 1998, p. 124).
3. It is essential to teach only what is necessary and leave out what may cause difficulty in learning and possibly push students off the learning curve. Arabic speakers of English in my class, for example, would always substitute /p/ for /b/ since Arabic does not have the /p/ sound! It was always *beoble* (people), *bresent* (*present*) and *bebsi* (*pepsi*) as far as these speakers were concerned, and it was easy to see why. Likewise, Bengali and Oriya speakers of English would inevitably substitute /b/ in place of /v/ so much so that *have* would sound like *habe* and *welcome* like *belcome*. According to a thought provoking article by David Lavelle, this is a problem that every non-native speaker of a second/foreign language faces as it takes some time to get used to a foreign/unfamiliar pronunciation

Getting students to actively participate in group discussions and debates is more important than correcting their pronunciation every time they speak as overt correction causes inhibition and is damaging to their sense of self-

worth. Speaking is surely the most significant activity that learners need to hone in order to overcome diffidence and that can only happen if the insecurity that learners experience with respect to their accent is brought down. A very illuminating example can be found in Halliday (1968), as cited in Cook (1999):

A speaker who is made ashamed of his own language habits suffers a basic injury as a human being: to make anyone, especially a child, feel so ashamed is as indefensible as to make him feel ashamed of the color of his skin. (p. 195)

4. Teaching students suprasegmental features is an exercise in futility. Students use RP only when compelled, in the English lab, or under compulsion. Once out of class, it is their local accent that takes over. Also, one cannot hope to correct the pronunciation acquired over two decades in one semester. To cite Jenkins (1998), it is common knowledge that rules of word stress are:

... highly complex, containing manifold differences among L1 varieties and according to syntactic context. Some words, e.g. ‘controversy’, ‘ice cream’, even have optional stress patterns within Received Pronunciation (RP), the standard British pronunciation. Reliable rules therefore cannot be easily formulated, let alone learnt. (p. 123)

In the MITs, phonetics is taught to students of engineering who have little use for the rules or nuances of English stress, rhythm and intonation, especially considering that they learn it for just one semester. Hence, no useful purpose is served by teaching suprasegmental features, a point that has been seconded by Rajadurai (2001) in her investigation of Malaysian learners of English. Her study showed that “while supra-segmental features helped them understand native speaker accents, students did not particularly find these features useful for their own pronunciation” (p.17).

Not to stress too fine the point about rhythm and intonation, and extrapolating the prescient views of the late Raja Rao, it will not be out of place to emphasize that, we cannot and should not speak English like the English. We can only speak it like Indians. Acknowledging the legitimacy of non-native varieties of English is the first but very significant step towards ensuring respectability for English spoken in different parts of the globe, each with its distinctive features.

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APPENDIX

(A) Student questionnaire

Student A: "I want to learn to speak English like a native speaker now. I am proud to speak like one."

Student B: "I can pronounce English clearly now. People understand my English wherever I go, but I still have the accent of my country/state/of my first language."

Please underline one answer.

Would you prefer to be like Student A or Student B? Explain why in brief.

(B) Teacher questionnaire

I: Which teacher would you prefer to be like?

(Teacher A) I want to sound like a native speaker to both native speaker and non-native speaker students.

(Teacher B): I can speak English clearly, but I retain a clear accent of my state/country.

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

II. Choose the statement you most agree with:

(A) Students should only be exposed to a native-speaker accent of English in the classroom and should learn that accent.

(B) It is enough if students are exposed to a non-native local accent that is comprehensible.

(C) It doesn't matter which accent the students are exposed to as long as their English is intelligible.

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

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Issues Involving Vocabulary Learning and Teaching: A Study of the Literature

Jayanta Kumar Das

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I will attempt to bring out the discussion and studies that have been carried out in the domain of second language vocabulary learning and teaching. To this end, I have examined the existing literature to highlight the conditions required for vocabulary learning and types of vocabulary learning. I have also presented a discussion on the different types of vocabulary teaching and the factors affecting it. The paper begins with a general introduction to vocabulary as a language component and its role in building second language proficiency. It ends with a discussion on the need to recognize the various vocabulary learning types and conditions by the teacher, so that they can make changes in their teaching techniques to maximize the scope for vocabulary learning.

Key words: Incidental learning, contextual learning, rich instruction, strategies, vocabulary learning, vocabulary teaching

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary knowledge plays a critical role in determining the overall language proficiency of a second language learner. Schmitt (2000) maintains that “lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language” (p. 55). Speaking in a similar tone, Nation (2001) describes vocabulary knowledge and language use as complementary to each other. Given that a fair amount of vocabulary knowledge is indispensable for building second language proficiency, it is pertinent to investigate how second language vocabulary is learnt and taught, and the various issues involved in the process. In the following sections, I will discuss various aspects of vocabulary learning by delving into the existing literature.

VOCABULARY LEARNING

Vocabulary learning is a lifelong process. This is because although there is a limited set of grammatical rules in any given language, a person is unlikely to ever stop learning words throughout his/her life for the number of words is huge. Further, word learning is incremental in nature. We keep learning new words and new meanings to old words even in our first language (Thornbury, 2002).

Vocabulary learning can happen in various ways, depending upon the types of input that the learners receive, the types of exposures that they have and the kinds of strategies that they make use of to learn vocabulary. In the following sections, I will discuss some of these issues.

CONSCIOUS/INSTRUCTIONAL LEARNING

Instructional learning or intentional learning is a result of planned teaching and is very different from incidental learning. Here, the learners are conscious of their learning processes and thus can use various learning strategies to control and facilitate their learning. The most important aspect of instructional learning is the selection of the target words. This selection is done by the teachers, who decide which words to teach and how much time to spend on each word. Apart from classroom teaching, conscious learning of vocabulary can also take place if the learner decides to focus explicitly on vocabulary while reading or listening to a text. It is quite common for highly motivated learners who understand the role of vocabulary in academic success and beyond, to prefer intentional/conscious learning of vocabulary over incidental learning.

INCIDENTAL LEARNING

A good part of vocabulary acquisition or learning is incidental. Incidental learning is facilitated by exposing learners to language inputs from teachers, peers, the media, and through extensive reading. Keeping the enormity of English vocabulary in mind, all the words of the English language cannot be taught explicitly. Thus, there should be a provision for incidental learning of vocabulary in the curriculum. In incidental learning, learners do not explicitly focus on vocabulary learning. For example, while carrying out a reading task, the learners' focus is on the comprehension of the text and the follow-up comprehension questions. Vocabulary learning therefore takes place as a by-product of reading. With multiple exposures to unfamiliar words, the learner is more likely to learn and retain the meanings of these words. Incidental vocabulary learning can also take place through listening to audio materials and through contextual guessing, which has been discussed in the following section.

CONTEXTUAL LEARNING

Learning from context refers to the subconscious or incidental learning of vocabulary while engaged in reading or listening. This type of learning is often contrasted with direct intentional learning and teaching of vocabulary. The main focus of the learners' attention here is on the message of the text and not on the form. Learning from context requires the learner to gloss the meaning of the target word from the context in which it is used. However, for the learners to be able to gloss the meaning of the word using the clues, they need to be familiar with 95 per cent of the running words in the text (Liu & Nation, 1985). The coverage of 95 per cent implies that in every 20 running words (two lines), there is only one unknown word.

Another prerequisite for vocabulary learning from context is learner proficiency. Studies have shown that learners with high proficiency are able to gloss the meanings of unknown words from the context much better than learners who are less proficient. Richness of the context also has an impact on contextual vocabulary learning. That is to say, not all texts have equal scope for contextual guessing. Some texts are rich with contextual clues and thus make the job of the learner easier, whereas there are texts which are context-reduced. In such texts, learners might not be able to guess the meanings of the unknown words for there is little help from the context.

LEARNING IN ISOLATION

Vocabulary learning in isolation may not always result in successful vocabulary production. This is because learning in isolation does not provide scope for a learner to understand the typical contexts in which a word is generally used. Teaching vocabulary in context or integrated vocabulary teaching is a relatively new concept (Nation, 1983; Carter, 1987). In the *structural* paradigm, where language was viewed as system of systems, vocabulary used to be taught and learnt in isolation (Howatt, 1984; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The common belief was that the greater the number of words a learner remembered, the more it would help him/her in language activities such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, with the advent of communicative approach to language teaching, it was suggested by the experts of pedagogy and theoreticians that vocabulary should always be taught in integration with other language skills so that learners do not just learn vocabulary for the sake of learning; rather they learn vocabulary with the objective of using it in real world situations.

FACTORS AFFECTING VOCABULARY LEARNING

There are several factors which influence the process of vocabulary learning. Word frequency is one of the factors which determines whether a word is likely

to be learned quickly and easily or not. Research studies have shown that high frequency words are learnt faster than low frequency words. The grammatical category of words also has a role to play in their learnability. Studies (Gentner, 1982; Childers & Tomasello, 2006) have shown that nouns are more easily learnt than verbs. The imageability of a word is another factor which may affect the learnability of a word. It has been observed (Paivio, 1971; Yui, Ng, & Perera, 2017) that concrete words are more easily learnt than abstract words, as the learner can easily associate concrete words with their representations in the real world as compared to abstract words, whose representations are mostly related to emotions and ideas. Lastly, words which are cognates are more easily learnt than words which do not have equivalence in the learner's L1.

VOCABULARY TEACHING

Teachers need to be careful while dealing with vocabulary, and should design their teaching plan in such a way that it focuses on the "learning conditions of noticing, retrieval and generative use" (Nation, 2001, p. 109). Though all the words in any language cannot be taught in a formal setting covering all the aspects of word knowledge, at the very least, learners can be made to learn both the meaning and the form of a new word (Thornbury, 2002).

In fact, a well-designed vocabulary program should promote incidental learning by creating scope for explicit teaching, and include activities focusing on incidental learning. Explicit approaches to vocabulary learning, whether teacher-led in a classroom or through self-study, can provide for deeper mental processing. However, it may not help in learning all the aspects of word knowledge. "Some kinds of word knowledge, such as collocation, register constraints and frequency and can only be fully grasped through numerous exposures" (Schmitt, 2000, p.146).

While there are various techniques for effective teaching of vocabulary, the goal of vocabulary teaching should always be to make learners notice, retrieve and use the taught words successfully. Noticing can be encouraged through the use of coloured, highlighted, or flashing text; retrieval can be encouraged through the use of delay and by providing gradually increasing clues; generative use can be encouraged by meeting the vocabulary in a variety of contexts and in a variety of forms: spoken, written and pictorial (Nation, 2001).

One issue that always arises with vocabulary teaching is the dilemma of the presentation of form (orthography and pronunciation) or meaning first. As discussed by Thornbury (2002), the greater the gap between the presentation of the form of a word and its meaning, the less likely it is for the learner to make a mental connection between the two. For example, while teaching a word

like *circumvent* the teacher may ideally present the spelling, pronunciation and meaning of the word together not over a period of time so that a strong form-meaning association is made in the mind of the student. There are also some other issues which still remain unresolved—whether the written form or the spoken form should be presented first and whether words should be presented in context or isolation.

There is a strong argument in the pedagogy of vocabulary for teaching learners a core vocabulary of 2000 high frequency words as early as possible in the learning process. This core vocabulary, also known as threshold level vocabulary will serve the needs of the L2 learner in most situations. Further, most researchers recommend that the learner be exposed to a basic vocabulary of at least 3000 word families. For more specialized situations, a working vocabulary of 5000 word families is desirable (Nation, 2001).

TIME-SPACED TEACHING

Vocabulary acquisition is an incremental phenomenon. It takes years and years to build a sound vocabulary in a second language. One of the techniques for building a sound vocabulary is through time-spaced teaching. Time-spaced teaching refers to the re-teaching of the taught words at regular intervals, so that learners can learn all the aspects of the word. Research (Sozler, 2012; Nemati, 2009) suggests that vocabulary learning is mostly dependent on memory. However, the nature of memory is such that it loses information if it is not used regularly or reinforced through repetition. By repeating the same set of items, time-spaced teaching ensures that vocabulary is retained in the memory.

Time-spaced repetition is often contrasted with massed repetition. Massed repetition involves spending a continuous period of time, say fifteen minutes or so, in giving repeated attention to a word. In time-spaced repetition also a word is given repeated attention, but over a period of a few hours or days. For example, a small set of new words can be taught for three to four minutes, then these words can be taught again for another three to four minutes a few hours later. The same set of words can be taught for yet another three to four minutes a day later, two days later and finally a week later. According to Nation (2001), “...spaced repetition results in learning that will be remembered for a long period of time. The repetition should be spaced at increasingly larger intervals. (p-74)”

RICH INSTRUCTION

In the previous section, I described how instead of spending a lot of time on a particular word at one go, the same amount of time can be divided into time slots over a period of time. However, the basic question that arises here is, do we need

to spend time on individual words? If yes, how much time do we need to spend on each word? Do we need to spend the same amount of time on every word we teach? Or, do we need to be selective in spending time on individual words? What are the factors that we should take into consideration before deciding on the amount of time that we are going to spend on a particular word while teaching?

Not all words need to be given the same amount of time and attention while teaching. Some words need a short clear explanation, so that learners can continue with the main task of understanding a text. Other words might need a translation or a quick definition in the form of a synonym. In fact, sometimes even a quickly drawn diagram will be enough for the learner to understand the word and carry out the task. However, sometimes, because a word is very important or has high ecological validity, it needs to be given more attention, or what Beck, McKeown and Omanson (1987) call “rich instruction”.

Rich instruction involves spending time exclusively on a word by drawing the students’ attention to various aspects of that word, other than the context in which it is used. However, considering the huge number of words in a language, it is not humanly possible to teach every word through rich instruction. To decide whether a word will be taught through rich instruction or not, the following points may be considered. Rich instruction can be effective for low frequency words and words for which learners have special needs. Rich instruction can be provided when learners have already met the word several times, and are ready to make it a part of their usable vocabulary. Lastly, the degree of rich instruction is dependent on the learning-burden¹ of a word.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY TEACHING

From a teaching point of view, in courses not focused on well-defined areas of use, only the words in the most frequent 2000 words of English (the high frequency words) deserve individual attention. Beyond that level, that is the words in the third, fourth, fifth 1000 levels and onwards, teaching attention should be directed more towards strategies for learning and coping with these words, such as guessing from context, memorization techniques and procedures, and the learning of word parts. (Laufer & Nation, 1999, p. 36)

Given the enormity of vocabulary in the English language, the above quotation justifies the need for enabling learners to use vocabulary learning strategies to learn vocabulary on their own. There are various vocabulary learning strategies that teachers can inculcate in the learners. Some of these are:

1. Learners can be made to use the newly learnt word immediately in sentences

¹ Learning-burden is working out what needs to be taught about a word. Learning-burden differs from word to word owing to several factors such as the already existing knowledge of the second language and the ways in which the word relates to first language knowledge.

- so that they understand the context in which the word has been used.
2. Learners can be encouraged to keep a vocabulary journal where new words can be listed with example sentences.
 3. Most words in English are built from a common root, therefore learners can be helped to understand the affixation system of English language so that they begin to understand other words that use the same root.
 4. Mnemonics can be a great tool to learn new words with which learners have no prior association in their mental lexicons.
 5. Learners can be encouraged to visualize and relate the word with its real world reference so that the association between the word form and meaning is strong.

In some cases, learners might have their own strategies that may be different from the one's taught by the teacher. In such cases, the teacher needs to encourage the learners to use and share their strategies with their peers so that their peers can also benefit from them. Vocabulary learning strategies are very much a part of language learning strategies. Nation (2001) suggests a taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies, which has been presented in the following table:

Table 1 <i>A taxonomy of types of vocabulary learning strategies</i>	
General class of strategies	Types of strategies
Planning: choosing what to focus on and when to focus on it	Choosing words Choosing the aspects of word knowledge Choosing strategies Planning repetition
Sources: finding information about words	Analysing the word Using context Consulting a reference source in L1 or L2 Using parallels in L1 and L2
Process: establishing knowledge	Noticing Retrieving Generating

Source: Nation (2001, p. 218)

FACTORS AFFECTING VOCABULARY TEACHING

While teaching vocabulary, teachers must decide whether they need to devote more time to teaching high frequency words or low frequency words. They also need to decide whether they want to teach all the unfamiliar words that learners come across while reading a text or whether they should equip them with some strategies to enable them to deduce the vocabulary on their own. Further, teachers need to be careful about the grammatical category of the word(s) that they are teaching. If they are presenting the noun form of a word, they should ensure that learners learn its other forms (such as verb, adverb, etc.) as well, so that they do not treat them as new words when they come across them in new contexts. Another factor which may pose a problem for teachers is the imageability of a word. Abstract words cannot be visualized the way concrete words can be, and thus require different teaching techniques. Similarly, cognates are easy to teach compared to non-cognate words as the teacher can always provide an equivalence for them in learner's L1. Finally, the learning burden of a word also determines the teachability of a word. If a word has high ecological validity, the teacher may decide to spend more time on that word rather than another word which the learner may not use very often.

CONCLUSION

From these discussions, it is clear that in a second language learning context, how vocabulary is taught plays a significant role in facilitating vocabulary learning for the simple reason that second language learners neither have the quality nor quantity of exposure to the target language. For second language teachers therefore, it is important to be aware of the different ways of vocabulary learning and to be able to modify their teaching techniques according to learner needs so as to maximize the scope for vocabulary learning in the classroom. Finally, the teacher should always aim to reactivate the vocabulary knowledge that the learner already possesses at regular intervals, so that the learner does not forget the words due to lack of use. For teachers to be able to do that, they need to use innovative teaching techniques and plan their lessons well.

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Reading in the Indian Classroom

Veena Kapur and Megha Dang

ABSTRACT

In this paper, we will attempt to explore the implications of the implementation of an important educational policy—Chunauti 2018—an initiative of the Delhi Government to curb the dropout rate of students and to improve the quality of education with a special focus on students who are weak in studies. The division of classes into groups on the basis of performance has been done with the objective of creating an environment that facilitates effective learning. The basic premise of this division is that teaching will be more effective if the students are at the same level with regard to their understanding and capabilities. This policy has practical ramifications and has considerably influenced classroom practices. The researchers, while understanding the processes and its effect on classroom practice, developed an intervention plan for students enrolled in the *Nishtha* program for Class VI to address some of the problematic issues that result from policy and practice interface.

Keywords: Chunauti 2018, *Nishtha* program, educator-facilitator, learner literacy, reading comprehension

UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT SITUATION

Two educational policies—No Detention Policy of the RTE (Right to Education) Act 2009 and Chunauti 2018—have changed the educational terrain in India remarkably. The provisions of No Detention Policy of the 2009 RTE Act ensure that learners do not fail, but keep graduating to a higher class every year. The problem however arises when these learners face exams in class IX. The Delhi Government introduced Chunauti 2018 scheme in June 2016, with the objective of identifying the weakest learners from classes VI to IX and providing them with special attention to ensure that they successfully cleared class X by 2018. This move aimed at “leaving no child behind” in school. To achieve this, the learners

were divided into two groups based on their learning and reading capabilities. These groups were called *Nishtha* and *Pratibha*. *Pratibha* comprised of students whose performance was at their grade level while *Nishtha* comprised of students whose performance was below their grade level. The school assessments revealed that there was improvement in the reading ability of the students of *Nishtha* group, but they could still not read class VI textbooks with ease, so another intermediary level (Vishwas) was created, where these students were taught some foundation topics so that their transition to the syllabus of class VII could be facilitated.

The Government of Delhi expected that 59 per cent of students in Classes VI, VII and VIII would have started reading and learning independently from their textbooks following an intervention that started in September 2016. Chunauti 2018, the interventional initiative to improve the reading and learning abilities of students in Delhi government schools was initiated after reports showed that just 25 per cent students of class V could read and learn with ease.

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

Learners who struggle to comprehend their textbooks (this is true at all levels of school learning), are at a severe disadvantage as even though they can read haltingly, they cannot comprehend what they read. As a teacher educator, I could see that the school students were suffering because of their inability to read with facility. It was the despair of my interns that prompted the two of us (myself, the teacher –educator and my intern) to devise an intervention plan to improve the comprehension level of the learners. Reading comprehension is essential in order to ensure learner literacy in all subject areas. It is imperative that a student is able to comprehend what he/she reads and retain the information. It is therefore crucial to implement the right strategies to mitigate the reading problem.

The reality of the school system which the B. Ed. intern encountered was an eye opener for her. She was deeply shocked that the students of *Nishtha* were not able to make meaning of a simple text and were even unable to answer “how” and “why” questions based on it. Some of the students told the intern that they faced difficulty in comprehending texts, and had to rely on help books and guides to understand even simple English texts.

READING AND ITS IMPORTANCE

According to Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson (1985), reading is a basic life skill that is used both in school and in everyday life. It is the cornerstone for a child’s success in school and throughout life itself. Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfilment and job success would inevitably be

lost. Despite its importance, reading is one of the most challenging areas in the education system in any country. The ever-increasing demand for high levels of literacy in the technological societies of today makes this problem even more pressing.

What exactly is Reading Comprehension? While the definition is simple, the act of reading comprehension is not simple to teach, learn or practice. It is an active, interactive process that occurs before, during and after a person reads a text. When reading a text, a person engages in a complex array of cognitive processes, simultaneously using his/her awareness and understanding of phonemes, phonics and the ability to comprehend or construct meaning from the text. In fact, the last component of the act of reading is reading comprehension; but it cannot occur independent of the other two elements. It is also the most difficult of the three.

The complex nature of reading comprehension makes it difficult to develop the ability to comprehend texts quickly and independently. Therefore, it needs to be taught consciously by teachers and parents over an extended period of time. The teacher/facilitator (the teacher-educator as the facilitator in this action research) should have a background and understanding of how reading comprehension can be done. Support for reading comprehension can extend up to elementary school so that texts with a higher difficulty level can be negotiated with facility. As reading material becomes more and more complex, diverse and challenging, learners need to learn newer strategies to aid reading comprehension. For instance, informational texts require different comprehension strategies. Therefore, reading strategies need to be refined, practised and reinforced continually since reading is a lifelong process that changes based on the depth and breadth of the text that is being read.

Without comprehension, reading is nothing more than tracking symbols on a page with our eyes and sounding them out. However, as we know, understanding what is being read is the primary goal of reading and is essential for thriving and functioning in today's world. Reading comprehension is also a critical component of functional literacy as we all need to comprehend basic texts such as bills, leases, directions on packaging, transportation documents, bus and train schedules, maps and travel directions. With the ability to comprehend what is being read, individuals also continue to develop socially, emotionally and intellectually.

When dealing with reading, we encounter two layers of reality: one that we can see and one we cannot see. The purpose of reading is to make the inherent hidden layer of meaning visible and clear (Kose, 2006). Teele (2004), asserts that the goal of all readers should be to understand what they read. Research shows that

good readers are actively involved with the text and are aware of the processes they use to understand what they read. Different strategies can be developed for facilitating reading comprehension, such as answering and generating questions, summarizing, predicting, making connections, visualizing and inferring which are the strategies proven by research to improve reading comprehension (Block & Israel, 2005; Duke, & Pearson, 2005).

Comprehension involves the construction of ideas by the reader while negotiating the writer's ideas represented in the text. During the process of negotiation of meaning, five major aspects come into immediate play:

Vocabulary development: To understand the words used by the writer, it is essential to have a good knowledge of words and their meanings.

Literal comprehension: This involves the ability to capture the central thought and main ideas, significant details, the sequence of events and answer specific questions from the given text.

Inferential comprehension: For this the reader needs to understand the cause-effect relationships, anticipate the events that follow and form opinions.

Evaluation: This is the judgement based on the readers' prior experiences, knowledge or values and involves making studied value judgements.

Appreciation: This involves the readers emotional and aesthetic ability and sensitivity towards the written text. The reader should be able to identify with the characters and their emotions.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A learner who possesses prior knowledge about reading strategy is better able to comprehend a given text. McNamara, Ozuru, Best and O'Reilly, T. (2007), state that reading strategy is important for reading comprehension. Appropriate and effective implementation of reading strategy involves not only monitoring, but also includes guidance to achieve effective comprehension. However, it does not suffice to simply explain the strategies to a learner; one also has to ensure that there is sufficient reinforcement of the comprehension strategies.

Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist perspective gives great insight into how to support struggling readers in their reading development. It is important that the reader constructs understanding of the text by drawing on prior experiences and active construction, rather than passive acquisition. The role of the teacher in the process of active construction is that of a facilitator who fosters construction of comprehension through social interaction.

It is clear that many readers lack the reading abilities and knowledge about the genre of texts that they read in the classroom. However sometimes, learners also need domain specific knowledge about science, history or other topics. Textbook materials in particular tend to be challenging for most learners because learners lack domain specific knowledge. Moreover, they contain unfamiliar words and concepts, and have organizational structures germane to instructional textbooks. In addition, textbooks tend to have numerous cohesion gaps, posing an additional hurdle for learners. These gaps occur when there is little conceptual overlap or explicit connections between sentences. The challenges posed by poorly written texts are compounded for learners with less knowledge about the domain (McNamara, D. S., Kintsch, E., Songer, W. B., and Kintsch, W., 1996; McNamara, D. S., 2001).

Teaching reading strategies such as comprehension monitoring, paraphrasing and bridging inference is one of the most effective means of helping learners overcome the challenges of reading. In fact, the importance of reading strategies is becoming increasingly recognized. Strategy instruction is particularly effective for learners with less domain knowledge or lower reading skills (O'Reilly, Rowe, Boonthum & Levinstein, 2007).

THE PRESENT RESEARCH

Objective

To develop and foster reading comprehension in learners

To enhance the vocabulary as well as the ability of learners to communicate what they have learnt textually

Sample

Twenty students of class VI of Government Co-Education School Karampura, New Delhi were chosen as the sample for this research. The teacher educator and an intern were the researchers for the study. The period of the research spanned fifty-six days of internship that B.Ed. interns were expected to complete in their final year of B. Ed.

Procedure

The intern's preliminary interactions with the school teacher were organized with the objective of understanding what the teacher perceived to be the cause of her students' poor language abilities and what strategies and measures she employed to deal with the problem. The teacher felt that the students faced

difficulty in understanding the English language and in its acquisition as they were not “immersed” in it. The intern also observed the teacher while she taught and interacted with the students. The classroom observations were conducted over a period of ten days during which the intern wrote detailed reflections in her journal about the teaching pedagogy of the teacher and how she interacted with her students. The teacher was traditional in her approach and employed the grammar translation method, with the primary focus on text book teaching and rote memorization of answers to textual questions. It was quite evident that the teacher was not taking any concrete steps to foster reading comprehension and writing in her students. The classroom was bereft of material resources and access to reading material. A print rich environment and meaningful engagement with literature eases the transition from home environment to classroom reading and writing. These systemic barriers compounded the socio-linguistic lacunae that were the natural corollary of the students’ family background.

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM AREAS

The students were given a simple story to read and comprehend from their NCERT textbook, following which they were asked to answer some pertinent questions based on the story. This was done before implementing an intervention plan for fostering reading comprehension. The answers of the students were assessed and recorded. The issues that emerged included difficulty in:

Decoding and pronunciation: The students were not able to decode unfamiliar words. One of the students pronounced son as “soon”; he was unfamiliar with the word “soon” and thought that it meant *beta* (son). Most of the students read “sh” as “ss”, and “h” instead of “sh” in the word “show”, which consequently became “sow”. Much was pronounced as “muck”. Also, most of the students knew the meaning of the word “agree”, but did not know the meaning of “disagree”. The students faced problems in both reading and speaking.

Reading comprehension: Reading comprehension involves both word recognition and understanding the meaning of the word. While reading, the students encountered words that they could not recognize and which they consequently skipped to move ahead. The more blank spaces there are in reading a text, the more difficult it is to “make meaning of a text”; the text then becomes even more difficult to comprehend.

Negotiating the narrative (depending on the type of text): Reading also requires the ability to negotiate the narrative of the text—to comprehend the plot of the narrative, the main idea, specific details and make inferences while reading.

After identifying the major problems, the intern had intensive discussions with the teacher educator. Together, they revisited language theories and deliberated upon the processes of language learning. These reflections and discussions yielded a framework which was fleshed out in the form of a plan which incorporated the following strategies to foster comprehension:

Pre-reading: The chapter selected for reading was titled “Who did Patrick’s Homework”, from the Class VI NCERT textbook *Honeysuckle*. To create a bridge between prior and new knowledge, worksheets were given to the learners before reading the text. The theme of the story was not alien to the students—homework is something that children don’t do willingly. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were: Do you like homework?; Do you do it yourself or get help to do it?, etc. A section related to word meanings was also included with a few interesting words such as “Nintendo” and “ignoramus”, which were part of the text. The intern, acting as the facilitator, intervened when the students faced difficulties in completing the worksheets. The students found the words difficult to read, although a few of them were aware of Nintendo.

During reading:

Skimming and scanning: These are important strategies that facilitate reading comprehension. The students were asked to read and reread the story after scrolling through the textual questions to find specific and relevant information. Initially, this required the intern to explain to the class how to find the information by closely referring to the text. For example, the second paragraph posed problems for most of the students because suddenly in a real world there appeared “a man of the tiniest size”. Though the young students did not lack imagination, words like “tiniest” were not easily comprehensible, nor easy to pronounce. The accompanying picture in the textbook resolved the issue of the meaning of the word for the quick-witted among them, and they could identify, “what was the cat playing with?” The issue of pronunciation was not as easily resolved.

Fostering vocabulary: An annotated glossary was developed for the students to identify the new words that were peppered throughout the text. These included words such as “ignoramus”, “tiniest”, “britches/breeches”, “wrinkled”, “cursed”, “squeaked”, and “elf”, amongst others. The students needed to understand the meaning and usage of these difficult words while negotiating the text.

Story maps: After reading the story, the students were divided into pairs. They were asked to draw pictures and write headings to understand the elements of the story graphically by focussing on the important elements of the narrative—the characters, the setting, the events, the problem and the resolution to the problem.

They used these story maps to retell the story by focussing on the boy who hated hard work; this was an enriching learning experience and also enjoyable. Most importantly, they learnt an important axiom of life, that there is no replacement for hard work, as they retold the resolution to the problem in the story.

Questioning: Questioning before, during and after reading facilitates reading comprehension, as it requires the reader to ask questions of themselves to construct meaning, enhance understanding, find answers, solve problems, find information and discover new information (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). The questioning strategy was initiated by the intern, which encouraged the students to engage with the text throughout the reading process. The simple fact that answers need to be found to questions makes reading purposeful and aids struggling readers. The students took time to answer the questions, going back and forth within the text, but they learnt the importance of this strategy. A few students even learnt to place question marks in the margins and underline difficult words. This strategy was also used to teach the students how to ask questions, before, while reading, and after reading, thereby helping them build interest in the text. As this was their first attempt, it was a bit arduous and painstaking, but as they graduate to other texts it could become a part of the reading process for some of them.

Inferring: Through inferring, students are able to draw conclusions, make predictions, identify underlying themes and use information to create meaning (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Students were also taught how pictures can be used to aid comprehension. The students were taught how to title paragraphs, which helped them bring out the essential meaning of the paragraph.

Paraphrasing and summarizing: The process of summarizing requires the reader to determine what is important while reading, and to condense the information in the his/her own words (Adler, 2001). During the process of summarizing, the students were able to distinguish the main idea—the lesson that Patrick learnt—from the supporting ideas in the story, thereby facilitating reading for meaning.

Post reading: Post reading strategies help students to integrate new information into their existing schemata, hence allowing them to elaborate on the learning that has taken place. While questioning, before reading a text, helps to understand the level of the students' previous learning, post reading questioning facilitates understanding the information available in the text. There is an advantage in using higher-level, application type and structurally important questions, rather than questions that focus on facts or details, (Roe, Smith & Burns, 2011). Research has proven that students obtain greater gains from post reading questions if feedback is given on the answers, especially if it is on incorrect answers (Tierney

& Cunningham, 1984). Keeping in mind the findings of all these researches, post reading activities were organized. These included:

Re-telling, and discussing the story: This was done individually to glean the students' understanding of the story structure, its concept and setting. They were asked to identify and retell the beginning, the middle and the end of the story in order; describe the setting; identify the problem and the solution to the problem; identify and retell the causes of action and events and their impact, in this case primarily how Patrick became hardworking!

Post reading questioning: Provides the students with an opportunity to reflect and question what they have read, which is the core of effective comprehension (Roe, Smith & Burns, 2011). The intern asked pertinent questions, the answers to which the students had to write down, such as: Write one thing that you learned from this story; Discuss one thing that you learned today that could be used in your life. In another strategy, an interesting passage was selected from the story; in this case the closing paragraph was selected, which begins as follows: "Patrick still thought he'd made the tiny man do all his homework." This became an interesting topic of discussion when the students were asked the question, "What is the author trying to say here?", "Why do you think he says this?" These questions initiated a lively discussion, albeit in halting English, on whether Patrick was lucky or whether he learnt an important lesson that you have to work hard to succeed? The class was divided in this discussion, with most of them concluding that Patrick was lucky. The intern tried her best to make the students understand the message that the author was trying to convey. This strategy created an appropriate platform for the students to describe what they had read in the story, reflect on it and draw inferences. This strategy is crucial in driving home the point that once you have completed reading a text, you have to try to understand what you have read.

Reconstructing the story through dramatics: This helps focus the minds of the students on the nuances of character, setting and plot, while adding an element of fun to the lesson. It is essential that as the learners attempt to dramatize the story, they learn to use their understanding of print conventions such as quotation marks to interpret what each speaker is saying, and commas, periods and question marks to read with expression. This could not be achieved with these students, despite the fact that the teacher intern had demonstrated this facet of creative dramatics in front of the class. This is because the students had hardly any exposure to such interpretations of text. Nevertheless, the intern gave feedback to the learners, spelling out the nuances that they must pay careful attention to in the future.

At the end of the internship the students were given another story to read and

comprehend, in order to assess their progress with regard to their comprehension skills.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this research was to assess the reading level of the students and to improve their comprehension. The students were asked to read a short story from their prescribed textbook and explain in their own words what they had understood. This activity highlighted the inability of a few students in comprehending even simple sentences and the difficulty they experienced in negotiating complex sentences. While observing the classes of the language teacher, the truncated language learning of the students was highlighted.

The intern decided to make language learning a meaningful and enriching experience for the students and designed an intervention plan that incorporated different strategies to foster reading comprehension. The strategies employed, as described in the earlier section were that of summarizing, inferring, questioning and story mapping; these were practiced over a period of fifty days. At the end of fifty days, a second test was administered to the learners. An analysis of this performance revealed that out of twenty students, eighteen showed considerable improvement in reading comprehension. The pre-reading and post reading comprehension strategies helped the students acquire the skills needed for decoding and comprehending the story and elements of the theme, character and setting. The intern felt a sense of achievement when she saw that her students showed improvement in reading comprehension as they read and made sense of a simple text, even if it was halting.

Initially, the researchers had some reservations about how to implement the strategies in the classroom. Moreover, the students were not used to such a different approach to what they felt was a mundane task. The students had to be guided, monitored and mentored at every step of the process, especially for the questioning, inferring, and summarizing strategies.

CONCLUSION

The improvement in the reading comprehension of the students was rewarding, both for the learners and the researcher. The students developed a better understanding of the reading process and discovered the efficacy of different strategies. The combination of pre-reading, during reading and post reading strategies were extremely helpful in fostering and facilitating learning. The use of meta-cognitive strategies for developing interest in reading, coupled with vocabulary development enhanced the comprehension ability of the students

significantly.

Telling the readers why and when they should use different strategies, and how to apply them, can be effective for fostering reading comprehension. These simple exercises have an important impact on the readers, especially the ones who are struggling. For many of them these strategies could translate into the difference between passing or failing.

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Doctrine of Quiet Rebellion: Articulated Defiance in Eliza Haywood's *The Female Spectator*

Rakhi Ghosh

ABSTRACT

Eliza Haywood is an author who has been given scant academic attention although she was immensely popular in the 1720s. Like other later feminist writers such as Sarah Fielding, Elizabeth Inchbald and most notably Jane Austen, she engaged in the technique of double writing. While on the surface she wrote amorous fiction, she covertly critiqued male fiction, thereby strategically masking her feminist resistance. From being a licentious writer in the private realm, she ventured into the public domain of essays, periodicals and moralizing novels in an effort to escape from the closet of femininity in favour of rebellion and autonomy. In this paper, I propose to deal with her non-fictional works, chiefly, *The Female Spectator* that has received scant attention.

Keywords: Eighteenth century feminist fiction, amorous fiction, didacticism, feminist resistance, critique of male fiction

INTRODUCTION

A prominent figure in English literary history, Eliza Haywood (1693-1756) won popular acclaim with the publication of her *Love in Excess* in 1719. In spite of the fact that Richardson and Fielding are recognized as the canonical male masters of the novel, having established the great tradition of the modern novel for centuries to come, this is not the whole truth. According to Paula Backscheider and J. Richetti (1996), "Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess* (1719) was one of the four best-selling books of the first half of the eighteenth century: only Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), and Richardson's *Pamela* (1741) equalled it. Haywood, Aubin, and Defoe absolutely dominated

prose fiction in the decade of the 1720s". Jane Spencer also confirms Haywood's popularity in the first half of the 18th century, and it was this popularity Spencer argues, that propelled Haywood, a "prolific and versatile" writer, to make a living by writing (Spencer, 1987, p. 9).

At the time, novels were "one of the few places where women could speak for themselves, could represent women's experiences, could express their needs, their nightmares, and their utopian hopes and escape the masculine myth of the female" (Backsheider & Richetti, 1996). It is also how 18th century women novelists helped to define modern categories of gender. In her novels, Haywood incisively critiques male tyranny and presents the despair of British women, who were at the mercy of a patriarchal society that believed in and practised double standards. Though Haywood is more renowned for her fictional work, in this paper, I propose to deal with her non-fictional work, chiefly, *The Female Spectator*. I will present the argument that *The Female Spectator* can be judged as a satisfactory venture by Haywood in the realm of journalism, one in which she combines didacticism along with her invective on the injustices that women suffer at the hands of the patriarchy.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Frustratingly negligible information is available to us as far as the biographical details of Eliza Haywood are concerned. Hence, I have referred to the much-alluded to biography of Eliza Haywood by George Frisbie Whicher, and another biography by Christine Blouch, that are included in the *Selected Works of Eliza Haywood I., Vol. I.*

At loggerheads with the wishes of her family, Eliza Fowler left home, not nurturing matrimonial plans, but to make a career on the stage (Blouch, 1998, p. 9). When acting did not duly reward her with fame and money, she looked for an alternative vocation and took to writing. "As Haywood put the case in 1720, 'the Stage not answering my Expectation, and the Averseness of my Relations to it, has made me turn my genius another way'" (Haywood, 1998). True to the spirit of the age, Eliza Haywood was condemned as an unchaste writer. With the resounding success of *Love in Excess* in 1719, Eliza Haywood became an acclaimed writer of fiction.

The publisher of her first novel William Chetwood, who had known her from the days when she had been an actress at Smock Alley, went on to advertise five novels that would appear from 1722 to 1724. This fact highlights how prolific and versatile Haywood was as a writer in the 18th century, even when women's publication was a rare phenomenon. The five novels that were advertised include

The British Recluse, The Injur'd Husband, Lasselia, Idalia and The Rash Resolve. “Four titles would follow in 1723 and seven in 1724, a pace that Haywood sustained throughout much of the decade” (Blouch, 1998).

Next, Haywood devoted her energy towards compiling one of the pioneering periodicals written by a woman. The maiden issue of *The Female Spectator* was published in the 1730s. In 1744, the publication of *The Female Spectator* commenced in earnest. It was a periodical composed by a woman exclusively for women readers, though not the first of its kind contrary to what Joyce Horner (1973) asserts. The credit for the original women's periodical probably goes to the *Female Tatler* (1709) by Delariviere Manley. In her biography of Haywood, Blouch provides us with some interesting statistics regarding *The Female Spectator*: “Issued in at least eight English editions over the next ten years, *The Female Spectator* was published as *La Nouvelle Spectatrice* in France in 1751, and reissued in English as late as 1771” (Blouch, 1998). It dealt with feminine concerns, chiefly with extending the opportunities for self-improvement that lead to the greatest possible autonomy for women. In 1743, Thomas Gardner published Haywood's *A Present for a Servant-Maid*, that became an immensely popular read. Prior to the publication of *The Female Spectator*, Haywood wrote *A Present*, that was a manual containing advice for maid-servants on how to behave. Perhaps “Haywood wanted servants to have something other than *Pamela* to read” (Blouch, 1998). It also included sections on cookery and shopping. Haywood's other didactic works include *The Parrot* (1746), *Epistles for the Ladies* (1749-1750), and *The Wife* (1755). Designed to be a “Compendium of the times”, *The Parrot* consisted of two parts: moralizings on life and manners by a miraculous parrot, and a digest of whatever happenings the author could scrape together” (Schofield, 1985). In addition, *The Parrot* also addressed burning political issues of the time such as the 1745 rebellion and the cause of the Young Pretender, for which Haywood became a suspect. In *Epistles for the Ladies*, Haywood relates the cause of lack of education in women to marital dilemmas. *The Wife* considers marital problems that a wife has to encounter; it also contains advice for married women on how to behave in the best possible manner, in case of a nuptial crisis.

Eliza Haywood co-authored with Daniel Defoe to bring out *Secret Memoirs of the Late Mr. Duncan Campbell*, that was published in 1732. However, success came to her in 1733, when her play *The Opera of Operas* was staged. Haywood is also said to have authored a dictionary of theatre that ran into seven editions, the authorship of which remains disputed to this very day (Blouch, 1998). She continued acting and writing simultaneously until she embarked on the moral phase of her career with *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*. Her works of

fiction in this period include *Dalinda* and *The Virtuous Orphan*. Haywood also carried on a profitable publishing trade during this time and opened a bookseller's shop called The Sign of Fame in Covent Garden in 1741. Although she was arrested for composing inflammatory political pamphlets, she managed to avoid prosecution owing to her supposed ill-health. It is believed that Haywood died in 1756.

I have examined Haywood's biography in detail to highlight how aggressive a literary individual she had been. Though she is predominantly viewed as a writer of amatory fiction, yet being an astute and crafty judge of the tastes of the reading public, she switched to didactic fiction in the latter part of her career. That the male canon largely ignores her contribution to the realm of English fiction in particular, is due to the sheer envy of her overwhelming popularity amongst contemporary readers. She was swift to reinvent herself as a writer of instructive tales once bourgeois morality became the cornerstone for women's fiction. The daringly unconventional life that she led helps to prove the kind of radical opinions that she nurtured. Her values, which were inconsistent with the prevalent notions of morality, lay elsewhere. Haywood firmly believed that to remain virtuous was to remain inactive and passive. She struggled to maintain control over her life as she lived life on her own terms.

NON-FICTIONAL INVECTIVE

We do not know whether Eliza Haywood had ever penned down her personal and private thoughts in an epistolary format, and even if she had written letters, direct access to them seems virtually impossible. It is therefore from her non-fictional works, namely her periodicals, that we get to know her private thoughts that she was fearless enough to publish. In the days preceding the Restoration, a large number of women writers ventured into the realm of writing and publishing either for professional or commercial reasons; "...these women had written with a strong sense of vocation, which had enabled them to overcome their fears about entering into print" (Turner, 1994).

With her enormous and prolific output, Eliza Haywood experimented with all forms of imaginative writing that include a scandalous and licentious novel and a novel of domestic sentiment. Haywood was bold enough to "openly articulate her doctrine of quiet rebellion as she defines woman's role of seeming compliance but actual revolt" in *The Female Spectator* (Schofield, 1985). When Eliza Haywood titled her journal *The Female Spectator*, she was not merely trying to imitate the journals of Addison and Steele. Very consciously, she was articulating a strategy for women, marginalized, as they were, so that they could enjoy the power that

observation accrues, thus endowing them with discursive authority. In this way, Haywood undermined the conventional perception of the masculine viewer and the female object (to be viewed). Additionally, a serious moral purpose underlies the tone of *The Female Spectator* as Haywood repeatedly urges women to develop themselves as intellectual and moral creatures as best as they can. There is no definite genre followed in *The Female Spectator* as such. Though some essays develop a single theme, there are a variety of themes that hinge on the strands of the numerous stories. Each story illustrates a theme that serves as tales of warning or caution for young ladies. Additionally, they encourage women to bypass the norms of society to achieve female empowerment. This theme is evident not only in *The Female Spectator*, but also in the essays from the *Epistles for the Ladies*, *The Wife* and *The Young Lady*. Most of the essays offer counsel to gullible, young women advising them to choose the right partners in marriage and not be misled by empty professions of romance. In Book I of *The Female Spectator*, Haywood bewails:

How fatal, how pernicious to a young and unexperienced Mind must be such Maxims, especially when dressed up in all the Pomp of Words! The Beauty of the Expression steals upon the Senses, and every Mischief, every Woe that Love occasions, appears a Charm. (*The Female Spectator*; p. 12)

Haywood felt distraught that such romantic notions should propel a young lady to become a prey to a fortune-hunter. When a young lady only thought of outsmarting her friends, she was sure to land in deep trouble: “How easy were it now for a designing Fortune-Hunter to make a prey of this Bib-and-Apron Heroine!” (Haywood, 1999, p.13). Marriage was another common theme of discussion in *The Female Spectator* where Haywood laid down certain conditions for a perfect marriage. She also discussed marriages gone sour such as that of Lady Bloometta and old Pompilius, of Aristobulus and Celinda, and of Dalinda and Macro. Clearly, Haywood felt wary about Dalinda’s ill-starred marriage: “Tremble Mariana, lest your father’s clerk should prove another Macro, and rather endure the short- liv’d Pangs of combating an unhappy inclination, than by yielding to it, run the Hazard of our Miseries which death alone can put a Period to” (*The Female Spectator*; p. 34). In fact, *The Female Spectator* can be considered to be an exclusive commentary on the thorns that accompany matrimony. There were inescapable feminist overtones in *The Female Spectator*, especially in Book VIII, where Haywood looked at marriage as “a kind of precipice, which, when once leap’d, there is no Possibility of reclimbing...” (p. 97). Evidently, she did not nurture profound trust in the bonds of marriage as her own marriage came to an abrupt end (Saxton & Bocchicchio, 2000).

Haywood also depicted concern for young ladies who rush into hasty marriages in *The Female Spectator*. In Book VIII of *The Female Spectator*, a young lady named Bellamonte is confronted with three suitors, and thus confused, she turns to *The Female Spectator* for advice. *The Female Spectator* counsels her on who to choose as her lifelong companion so that she can enjoy sheer nuptial bliss (p. 90-98). In her other non-fictional works such as *Epistles for the Ladies*, *The Wife* and *The Young Lady*, Haywood (2000) metes out doses of radical suggestions for women with abusive husbands. In an epistle, Lucilla advises Calista when the latter's husband takes recourse to adultery:

She now in all Respects supplies your Place, does the Honours of his Table, has the entire Command of all the Servants, and so great an Ascendant over him, that he declares publickly he will make her his Wife, if Fortune should ever put it in his Power; - a civil Way, you will say, of wishing you out of the World; but that can have little Effect either on your Health, or Peace of Mind; on the contrary, the Insult gives you a fair Pretence of living separate from a Husband who has now proved himself unworthy of you [...] (*Epistles for the Ladies*, pp. 224-225)

Haywood's open defiance of double standards practised by patriarchy is unusual for her time. She exhorts women to refrain from indulging in the crime of tolerating the infidelity of their husbands. Her insistence that women should free themselves from the prison of silence imposed by patriarchy is enormously iconoclastic indeed in the contemporary male-dominated world of printing and publishing.

Book X of *The Female Spectator* warns women of the pitfalls of stunted learning:

Yet, I think, it would be cruel to charge the Ladies with all the Errors they commit; it is most commonly the Fault of a wrong Education, which makes them frequently do amiss, while they think they not only act innocently but uprightly; - it is therefore only the Men, and the Men of Understanding too, who, in effect, merit the Blame of this, and are answerable for all the Misconduct we are guilty of... (*The Female Spectator*, p. 123)

Haywood puts the blame for the meagre education of women squarely on men and goes on to say that men intentionally made sure that women were not well educated so that women could be confined to the domestic sphere while men would dominate both the public and the private worlds. In an age when women had barely started to write, not only did Haywood bitterly resent gender inequality, but made it evident through her works that women should be given equal opportunities with men in matters of education. A glance at certain lines of Book X of *The Female Spectator* will confirm this notion: "Those men are certainly

guilty of a great deal of Injustice who think, that all the Learning becoming in a Woman is confined to the Management of her Family” (*The Female Spectator*, p. 125). It is startling to note that almost half a century later, Mary Wollstonecraft (2004) begins her *Vindication* with a similar note of complaint. She opens Chapter II of *A Vindication* with:

If then women are not a swarm of ephemeron triflers, why should they be kept in ignorance under the specious name of innocence? Men complain, and with reason, of the follies and caprices of our sex, when they do not keenly satirize our headstrong our headstrong passions and grovelling vices. Behold, I should answer, the natural effect of ignorance! (*A Vindication*, p. 28)

Female education was an issue that appears to have haunted Haywood. She lost no time in estimating that women could overcome their limitations and acquire an ideal character once they gained knowledge and experience in the ways of the world. In this way, Haywood argues, one can enjoy old age once the flurry of youth has eluded one’s grasp. In *Epistle LXXIX*, Clio confides to Hillaria: “The only Way therefore to ward off the Sights old Age is liable to receive, is to lay up in Youth a Stock of Knowledge wherewith to entertain ourselves when no Body else will think it worth their while to entertain us” (*Epistles for the Ladies*, p. 252).

Haywood believed passionately that the intellect of a woman should be enriched as far as possible. Learning about the natural sciences would help them to understand that women need not necessarily remain inferior to men in terms of abilities and intellect. Whether the science of Philosophy improved the qualities of the mind of a woman, Haywood had this to say:

Philosophy is, therefore, the Toil which can never tire the Person engag’d in it; - all its Ways are strewed with Roses, and the farther you go, the more enchanting Objects appear before you, and invite you on.

That this Science is not too abstruse for our Sex to arrive at a great Perfection in, none can presume to deny; because many known Examples, both in ancient and modern Times, prove the Certainty of it. (*The Female Spectator*, p. 131)

Haywood adds to the list of subjects that she thinks the minds of the ladies are equipped to study:

Some branches of the Mathematicks are also very agreeable and improving Amusements for young Ladies, particular *Geography*, in which they may travel the World over, be acquainted with all its Parts, and find new Matter to adore the Infinite Wisdom....

History must not be omitted, as it cannot fail engaging the Mind to Attention, and affording the strongest Precept by Example...

These are what I would have the serious Employments of a young Lady's Mind:—Music, Dancing, and the Reading of Poetry and Novels may sometimes come in by way of Relaxation, but ought not to be too much indulg'd. (*The Female Spectator*, p. 132)

Curiously enough, Haywood does not ascertain supreme value to accomplishments in contradistinction to many of her contemporaries, as for example, Hester Chapone. Haywood's stance is echoed by Jane Austen when the latter undermines the notion of accomplishments by making the shallow women in her novels speak approvingly of them. Haywood solemnly affirms the utility of that education which makes women wise, rather than an empty one that consists of nothing but accomplishments:

Were that time which is taken up in instructing us in Accomplishments, which, however taking us in first sight, conduce little to our Happiness, employ'd in studying the Rules of Wisdom, in well informing us what we are, and what we ought to be" (*The Female Spectator*, p. 127).

Haywood feels sceptical about convention that limits the opportunities for women as she uses subversive techniques to express her voice of dissent against patriarchy. This is how Haywood contributes to the tradition of non-fictional feminist prose.

That Haywood uses the concept of gaze or "seeing" to establish gendered dichotomies was analysed by Juliette Merritt (2004) in *Eliza Haywood's Female Spectators*. She explores the relationship between vision and power; according to Merritt, Haywood allows the individual to "see" and thus assert power (Merritt, 2004, p. 16). That individual being a woman brings to the forefront Haywood's challenge to patriarchy as she theoretically allows a woman to assume power. Merritt contemplates: "A presiding issue is whether women can, from their position as objects, as spectacles rather than spectators, exert some control over their destiny. Or, conversely, can they successfully become spectators, and acquire the authority conferred by that role?" (Merritt, 2004, p. 16). While Merritt emphasizes Haywood's combative instincts, Kathryn Shevelow (1989) celebrates Haywood's pioneering spirit. According to Shevelow, Haywood recognizes in her periodical that women were barred entry in the public domain, and simultaneously urges them to forge an entry:

The *Female Spectator*, an essay-periodical, illustrates the terms upon which the first (acknowledged) woman editor began to participate in the

‘feminized’ discourse of the periodical, on the one hand extending the tendencies contained in the periodical from the beginning, but, on the other, recasting the way in which the essay-periodical persona represented her authority to address her audience. (Shevelov, 1989, p. 167)

Thus Haywood emerges as a radical writer when she urges women to recognize the merits and advantages of cultivating an ideal education. Through her periodical, she inverts the position of power that traditionally belonged to men. With women usurping the role of spectators, Haywood accrued power to them, depriving men the advantage of making women the objects of their gaze. Her text thus issues a bold challenge to women to configure their own destiny.

CONCLUSION

Eliza Haywood’s pioneering role in the realm of fiction and non-fiction writing emerged at a time when women were tentatively making their presence felt in the literary world. Her undaunted voice of protest against the patriarchal world becomes evident when she sought to reveal the injustice that women suffered with regard to education and matrimony. In her non-fictional works such as *The Female Spectator*, *Epistles for the Ladies*, *The Wife* and *the Young Lady*, she offered new alternatives to women to improve themselves intellectually and morally:

In urging women to be reflective and self-controlled, to regulate their responses and conduct, and to guard against the confusion of desire with reality, Haywood was not only consistent with all of her writings but also engaged in admonishing women to be independent and self-controlled, one of the most consistent enterprises of women writers of the entire century.” (Backscheider & Richetti, 1996, p. 6).

She discarded the traditional notions of femininity in her non-fictional writings and constructed the image of an ideal woman on clearly feminist lines. Time and again, she asserted that women should work for their ultimate personal growth. Simultaneously, she argued that overt sheltering would make young women vulnerable to predatory males. Thus, Haywood established the utility of a practical kind of education for women that would instruct them on how to preserve their chastity; for once virtue was lost, they would be irretrievably ruined. It is this kind of utilitarian lesson that Haywood wanted to drive home, thus motivating women to strive for their own empowerment.

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Dalit Canon Formation and the African American Experience

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ABSTRACT

What is a canon? Should Dalit literature, or for that matter, should subaltern literatures have an exclusive canon? Or, should they aspire to gain space in an established canon? What is it that these literatures aspire towards as far as canon is concerned? In this paper, I will deliberate on the need for a distinct canon for Dalit literature with the African American social experience as a model. “Canon” in literary criticism means a body of literary work that is traditionally regarded as worthy of study, and hence over a period of time, have acquired certain value to be established as a classic. Traditional critics argue that these classics have stood the test of time, based on their inherent greatness and other universal aesthetic criteria and include a long line of works that T. S. Eliot calls the “tradition”. Even though Eliot (1988) speaks of individual talent and texts that have the power to modify the tradition, it is only texts that *conform* to the tradition that actually fit into the tradition. Hence, it is doubtful if Eliot’s “tradition” has any place for subaltern or hyphenated literatures such as African American, Caribbean, Black-British and Dalit Literatures. As such, the notion of canon has been under attack from feminists, minority literatures and social historians, who consider it as the preserve of white, male and bourgeoisie dominance. Hence in the twentieth century, many critics mistrust the idea of canon. They argue that a number of “great” texts of minority groups and women do not find place in the canon as they were excluded on the basis of class, caste, race or gender.

Key words: Canon formation, Dalit canon, African American experience, feminist literature, subaltern literatures and religious canon

INTRODUCTION

What is a canon? Should Dalit literature, or for that matter, should subaltern literatures form an exclusive canon? Or should they aspire to gain space in the

established canon? What is it that these literatures aspire towards, as far as canon is concerned? Unless the word canon is understood and properly qualified, it will be difficult to understand how African American literature informs Dalit, or subaltern literatures. Let us consider the origin of the word canon. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2009) describes it as “a rule, law or decree laid down by an ecclesiastical council” (ratified by the Pope or the King). However, in the familiar sense of the word “canon” came to signify a list of texts, or authors, more specifically books of the Bible, by early theologians. It was therefore a collection of books, or authors of the Bible, accepted by the Christian church as genuine and inspired. This implied a principle of rigorous selection by which some authors or texts were deemed worthier of preservation than others. In the course of time, the biblical canon closed forever with texts that “measured up” to the standards of the religious community. In the case of the biblical canon, the “measurement” was based on the distinction between the orthodox and the heretical.

Literary scholars presume that a similar process takes place in the selection of classics, leading to the formation of a canon. Hence, canon in literary criticism has come to mean a body of literary work, traditionally regarded as the most important, significant and worthy of study. It includes those works, especially of Western literature, considered to be of the highest quality and most enduring value such as the Classics. Traditional or conservative critics argue that these Classics have stood the test of time as a result of their inherent greatness as well as other universal aesthetic criteria, and include a long line of works that T. S. Eliot (1988) calls the “tradition”, which has the power to direct the present. Even though Eliot (1988) speaks of individual talent and texts that have the power to modify the tradition, canon often includes only those texts that *conform or adjust* with the tradition, and not those which challenge the tradition. Hence, it is doubtful whether Eliot’s “tradition” has any place for subaltern or hyphenated literatures such as African American, Caribbean or even Black British literatures, not to mention Eliot’s penchant for racist beliefs and anti-Semitism. Not surprisingly, the notion of canon was under attack from feminists, minority literatures and social historians, who saw it as the preserve of white, male, and bourgeoisie dominance. Hence, the subaltern scholarship suspects a dominant ideological agenda behind the canon. They argue that a number of “great” texts of minority groups including women, do not find place in the canon as they were excluded on the basis of class, caste, race or gender.

DEFINING THE CANON

Much of twentieth century subaltern scholarship is filled with this polemical discourse that argues against the western notions of canon formation. However, thanks to the efforts of liberal critics such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak

and Homi Bhabha, many texts which were excluded and marginalized earlier, have found place in the canon. This is possible only because unlike the biblical canon, the literary canon is never closed. However, the process of exclusion or marginalization is not as rigorous as it is argued to be. The long history of canon formation proves that in its course, many texts have been added and subtracted, depending on the dominant ideology of the period. Hence, texts produced by minority groups, women, African American and Dalits could be accommodated only in the recent times and not earlier. For example, there is no substantial “written and published” literature by women before 1750 for obvious reasons. At the time, women in general were denied education and access to publication network. Similar reasons attest for the non-availability of Dalit writings in the pre-colonial era; Dalits were also excluded from social positions which made possible a life of literary production. Marginalized and excluded, they were denied access to literacy and publishable forms of composition. The same is the case with the African-Americans. Frederick Douglass, who escaped from slavery following the emancipation of slaves after the American Civil war and eventually went on to serve as a United States Marshall, wrote three autobiographies which have become seminal texts of African American literature. In his third autobiography, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, Douglass (1881 rev.1892), records with pain the denial of literacy and of course the birth of the African American literary tradition. As an African American slave, when Frederick Douglass was taught the rudiments of reading and writing by his master’s wife, his white master forbade her from giving him further instruction:

. . . if you give a nigger an inch he will take an ell. Learning will spoil the best nigger in the world. If he learns to read the Bible it will forever unfit him to be a slave. He should know nothing but the will of his master, and learn to obey it. As to himself, learning will do him no good, but a great deal of harm, making him disconsolate and unhappy. If you teach him how to read, he’ll want to know how to write, and this accomplished, he’ll be running away with himself. (p. 58-59)

This example foregrounds the fact that reading and writing was regulated in societies. Consequently, social institutions regulated the selection and prescription of texts as well.

However, the rise of minority literatures led to intense debates on whether these literatures should have a separate but parallel canon, or whether they should be part of a single central canon. The debate about separate or central canon opens up another debate about aesthetics and equal representation. Finally, it boils down to some fundamental questions—who makes the canon, or, how is the canon

formed? A canon is not *what* is listed, but *who* reads, and *who* writes, and in what social circumstances, and what kinds of texts are written and for what audiences. Anne duCille(1993) argues that we should not forget that canons or traditions are “made, not born; constructed, not spawned”.

AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

A text cannot be proclaimed as being a “classic” by an individual. It needs a social context, or institutional backing; it also needs to be re-introduced to the coming generations to ensure its preservation. Any argument on behalf of a Dalit canon brings in a comparison with the African American experience. Both communities have produced what is often called “poetics of liberation”. If the African American suffering dates back to colonial America, the suffering of the Dalits in India is timeless. If one overlooks the legal interpretations of slavery and untouchability, there are numerous similarities between these two communities with regard to the denial of literacy, humanity and segregation. Given the European enlightenment stress on writing as the most visible sign of the ability to reason, literature presented a way for Africans in America to prove their ability as humans and demonstrate a capacity for artistic creation and imaginative thought. Even as slaves, the African American community viewed written communication—reading, writing and print—as the technology of power. Writing therefore became the vehicle in the fight against slavery and institutionalized racism, and to seek equal status as U.S. citizens. Writing was simultaneously seen as an act of defiance and a rejection of oppression in the African American context. A similar story is scripted in the Dalit context in India. Let us take two unique (unique because neither of them have models to copy from) forms of writing that these communities have invented to re-present their experiences—slave narratives and Dalit autobiographies. These were non-literary forms of writing, which arose in a specific socio-historical context as part of the communities’ struggle against oppression. Unlike conventional genres, which due to their long history bring their weight and influence on canon formation, these forms were unique in their form.

Slave narratives were produced under highly charged historical circumstances of documenting the physical and spiritual horrors of their authors’ lives. Produced initially as a collaborative work of runaway slaves and white abolitionists, these narratives were published by the abolitionist press and promoted to serve the immediate social function of creating awareness among the Northern Whites. As an essential part of the anti-slavery movement, these narratives drew on Biblical allusions and imagery, the rhetoric of abolitionism, the traditions of the captivity

narrative and spiritual autobiography in appealing to their (often white) audiences. Each narrative told a story of self-discovery of a character that reinvented himself/herself - perhaps the underlying theme of all American and African American literature.

There were numerous accounts of slavery, written or told as narratives by former slaves in the first half of nineteenth century America. From 1760-1947, more than 200 book-length slave narratives were published in the United States and England alone. According to Marion Starling (1998), there are more than 6000 such narratives in existence, which often went through multiple editions and sometimes sold thousands of copies in the United States and throughout Europe. The best known among them was Frederick Douglass's first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845), which has been described by Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr.(1987) as an archetypal narrative. Needless to say that Douglass's narrative is now recognized as a canonical text in African/American literature. As an international best seller, it served the purpose of social awakening. Its narrative patterns and images can not only be traced in other slave narratives, but also in diverse writings such as *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) by Zora Neale Hurston and *Invisible Man* (1952) by Ralph Ellison.

If Douglass's *Narrative* performed its social function of creating awareness about the ills of slavery, how is it that it came to be canonized? Here comes the question that we began with. Any text, in order to be canonized, needs the backing of a social institution, and that institution according to John Guillory (1995), is the school. Academic institutions are historically considered as major social institutions that are endowed with the task of dissemination and preservation of written works. Schools, Guillory adds, are assigned "the general function of distributing various kinds of knowledge, including the knowledge of *how* to read and write as well as *what* to read and write" (p. 240). "Indeed, the problem of the canon", he says, "is a problem of syllabus and curriculum, the institutional forms by which works are preserved as *great* works" (p. 240). School or academic institutions, being part of the larger social order, are permitted to function in such a way so as to meet the latter's demands. However, if one has to speak of canonicity, John Guillory asserts, "the judgments of the larger literary culture (the community of readers and writers) must be seconded by the teachers" (246). Herein lies the reason for Douglass's narrative to outlive its immediate social function and be canonized as a seminal text of African American writing.

The historical reasons that produced Douglass's *Narrative* continued into the twentieth century; and by canonizing Douglass, the academic institutions (mostly

American) are only trying to reflect the social order. Even though, the objective of Douglass's *Narrative* was fulfilled with the abolition of slavery, African Americans struggled for more than a century to become equal citizens of the U.S. The significant motive that defined African American life and the association it made between literacy and freedom is traced in Douglass's *Narrative*. For him, learning to read was a decisive political act and literacy was the pathway from slavery to freedom. The society in general, and the academic institutions in particular, cannot ignore such key motifs, and hence the text needs to be re-introduced to generations of readers.

Further, according to canon builders, *Narrative* articulates all the key issues of slavery, racial identity, freedom and integration of African American life, and appeals to the American ideals in a lucid literary style. White America's celebration of multicultural life, democratic ideals, freedom of speech requires such texts to be promoted and made part of the canon. Often quoted for its sense of cadence, flair for the dramatic and taut narrative style which give it a lean modern feel, this text has been prescribed and thus canonized in African American and American literature courses across American universities. The attention the text received in African American scholarship reflects the prevailing forms of cultural authority. Professor Henry Louis Gates (1987), refers to Chapter One of Douglass' *Narrative* that makes the text a pioneer in African American literary tradition:

I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot County, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday. They seldom come nearer to it than planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, springtime, or fall-time....My mother was named Harriet Bailey. She was the daughter of Isaac and Betsey Bailey, both colored, and quite dark. My mother was of a darker complexion than either my grandmother or grandfather. My father was a white man. He was admitted to be such by all I ever heard speak of my parentage. The opinion was also whispered that my master was my father; but of the correctness of this opinion, I know nothing; the means of knowing was withheld from me. My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant—before I knew her as my mother. It is a common custom, in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to part children from their mothers at a very early

age. (p. 15)¹

Professor Gates (p.10) points out the system of binary opposites that deconstructs the symbolic code imposed by the master over slave, other over self, lord over bondsman, culture over nature, patrilineality over matrilineality (the slave would often only know who his mother was), day over night (which the slave metaphorically owned) and cyclical time over linear time (the slave was not permitted to know his birth date). It is this symbolic code of binary opposites, which made this text an archetype for not only slave chronicles but also for other genres in African American Literature.

DALIT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES AND CANON FORMATION

Like the slave narratives in African American literature, the Dalit autobiographies are also a unique product of specific socio-historical circumstances in India. Produced during the time of Dalit awakening in the 1980s, according to Guy Poitevin (2002), these autobiographies are more a social phenomenon than a literary event: a socio-cultural action in the form of literary performance. They are unlike the traditional autobiographies that are written by individuals at the end of their lives, looking back on life with cool composure. The Dalit narrator autobiographer never steps out of his/her historical circumstances, family and community, but constantly speaks for them. If he/she comes out as an individual to speak as part of the structural requirement of the autobiography, it is only to reflect the deplorable conditions that the family/community is forced to live in as humans. Speaking from and for the community, the narrator is in continuous dialogue with the rest of the Hindu society. These texts challenge the Varna system that effectively established, what Ambedkar termed, the “graded inequality”.

Dalit autobiographies started taking shape when conventional forms of writing such as poetry proved insufficient to convey the ageless pain of the Dalits. Though the earliest expression of Dalit pain and suffering is found in poetry, autobiography as a form was found more suitable than poetry to portray the “graded inequality” nurtured and established by the Indian caste system. The literary form of autobiography permitted the ageless, “unspeakable” truths of Dalit lives to be narrated vividly. These autobiographies also helped to characterize the term “Dalit”, and expose the instruments of ostracism and its complex effect on those communities. According to Poitevin (2002), these autobiographies could also portray other socially weak categories that were culturally stigmatized and

¹ "Douglass: Narrative", *Microsoft® Encarta® Africana Third Edition*. © 1998-2000 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

socially boycotted, such as nomadic tribes and wandering communities; female popular comedians; children, especially orphan and street children; those born out of wedlock or from inter-caste marriages; vagrants (those with neither hearth nor home) and the physically handicapped - all often treated as non-humans. Like the slave narratives, these autobiographies represented an attempt to stress upon the narrators' own humanity and the inhumanity of the caste system that marginalized her/him.

EXAMPLE OF SHARAN KUMAR LIMBALE'S *AKKARMASHI (THE OUTCASTE)*

Sharan Kumar Limbale, a Dalit writer of Maharashtra, describes in his autobiography how the oppressive caste system made him an "outcaste" or *akkarmashi* (illegitimate offspring) of a high caste Hindu father and a Dalit mother, similar to Douglass's narrative:

My father and his forefathers were Lingayat. Therefore, I am one too. My mother was Mahar. My mother's father and forefathers were Mahar, hence I am also a Mahar. From the day I was born until today, I was brought up by my grandfather Mahmood Dastagir Jamadar. My grandfather in the sense he lives with my grandmother, Santamai. Does this mean I am a Muslim as well? Then why can't the Jamadar's affection claim me as Muslim? How can I be high caste when my mother is untouchable? If I am untouchable, what about my father who is high caste? I am like Jarasandh. Half of me belongs to the village, whereas the other half is excommunicated. Who *am I*? To whom is my umbilical cord connected? (p. 38-39)

Like in the case of Frederick Douglass, the narrator's birth was the result of a "rape" permitted by an oppressive master-slave relationship and exploitative upper and lower caste relationship. Both were discarded after their birth by the fathers. Literacy and freedom, the key motif of the slave narratives, hence became the significant expression in all Dalit writings. Following Ambedkar's firm directive to "take education", Dalit autobiographies narrated the extraordinary efforts made by their narrators to attend school against all odds, which was seen as the most significant expression of social protest and personal assertion. In his Introduction to *The Outcaste*, the English translation of *Akkarmashi*, Professor G. N. Devy (2003) describes these autobiographies as "epiphanies, expression of never before mentioned intensity" (p. xxiii). Dalit autobiography, he adds, brought to Marathi literature (I would like to say Indian Literature) a larger canvas for the depiction of the social, cultural and political processes of marginalization (p. xxiii).

Sharan Kumar Limbale's *Akkarmashi* was translated into English and published by Oxford University Press, a mainstream international publisher. Professor G.

N. Devy, a reputed scholar of Indian aesthetics, wrote an introduction to the OUP edition of *Akkarmashi*, which is indicative of the process of canonization. It is a fact that a good number of autobiographies preceded *Akkarmashi*, but according to Professor Devy (2003), this text “came to be recognized as a contemporary classic immediately after its publication” (p. xxiv). He continues:

It is this depth of his response that makes Limbale’s *Akkarmashi* stand out in the genre of Dalit autobiography. And it is for the same reason, that this philosophically potent and *poetically powerful narrative* makes the readers introspect deeply, which is what all *great literary* works must do (p. xxvi).

Citing *Akkarmashi* is not to make value judgment or to be oblivious of other equally powerful autobiographies (for instance, Omprakash Valmiki’s *Joothan*, Arjun Dangle’s *Poisoned Bread*, Bama’s *Karukku*), or to valorize this particular text. It is only to recognize the process of canonization. Indeed, a majority of autobiographies are produced in vernacular languages, which may not be accessible to other language readers, and even if they are translated, the quality of translation may not be at par with the writing itself. John Guillory (1995) says, “it is perhaps more important to see how the things they say came to be said than it is to discover the secret of their canonicity” (p. 244).

CONCLUSION

As such, these autobiographies are very influential in all Dalit genres. The autobiographies have not only challenged the hegemonic conventions and value systems, but are very vocal in demanding a revision of Indian aesthetics and literary theories. Like the slave narratives, the Dalit autobiographies have an edge over other literary forms for their “authenticity” of experience, and hence will remain relevant until they achieve a structural transformation of the caste-ridden Indian society. The socio-historical forces that made the autobiographies possible will ensure their position in the canon of Dalit as well as Indian literatures.

Moreover, it is to be understood that literary works make a tradition not because of some mystical collective unconscious determined by the biology of race or gender, but because writers read other writers and ground their representations of experience in models of language provided largely by other writers with whom they feel a kinship. It is needless to assert that the African American slave narratives did indeed influence the Dalit autobiographies. In fact, it is through this mode of literary revision and influence that a tradition emerges and defines itself. I would like to conclude with a final word from Guillory (1995), “The canon is itself a historical event; it belongs to the history of the school.” (p. 244). As a social institution, the school (academia) has every reason to make autobiographies a part of the canon.

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Cosmopolitan Ethics in the Poetry of Agha Shahid Ali

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ABSTRACT

This paper critically analyzes the poetry of Agha Shahid Ali to demonstrate how Ali's poetry envisages a cosmopolitan ethos. Though the politico-legal ramifications of a cosmopolitan philosophy cannot be underestimated but the moral and cultural substratum is significant for the development of cosmopolitan attitude. Literature is a site where the real and imagined boundaries are continuously transgressed. It makes possible the ideological exchange across the most rigid and formidable borders. Agha Shahid Ali's poetry is an illustration of such a site of exchange. Though Ali writes from a specific spatial and temporal location, his poetry encompasses more than one place and speaks from a position of cosmopolitan empathy. This paper attempts to demonstrate how Ali's poetry weaves cosmopolitan ethics into its thematic and formal structure. It is further argued that he weaves his concern against oppression, violence and injustice into the cosmopolitan empathy without creating a 'contemptible other'.

Keywords: Cosmopolitanism, poetry, Forgiveness, Hybrid, dialogic, transnational.

INTRODUCTION

In the heart's wild space lies the space of wilderness.

What won't one lose, what home one won't give forever.

—Agha Shahid Ali, *The Veiled Suite*

Contemporary theory has questioned the possibility of exact and absolute definitions, particularly in the socio-cultural domain. However, one can identify certain characteristics that mark a particular idea. When the idea of "cosmopolitanism" is elucidated, it is described in terms of multiculturalism,

multiple identities, tolerance, openness, and an acknowledgement of difference and hospitality. Immanuel Kant considers “cosmopolitan right” as a rational necessity for perpetual peace in the world. By “cosmopolitan right”, he means that a human being has the right to be free from hostility if one enters a state of which one is not legally a citizen (Kant, 1996). Hegel (1991), in his *The Philosophy of Right*, declared that cosmopolitanism was a matter of immense importance because human beings had value as human beings irrespective of their group identities based on their religion, race and nationality. Sociologist Emile Durkheim (1992) envisioned cosmopolitanism as a state of being “the most just, the best organised and in possessing the best moral constitution” (p. 75). Robert Audi (2009), writes in his essay that cosmopolitans “tend to give priority to specifically human concerns”. He further adds that “although those concerns have high priority in the ethical frameworks of the world’s major religions, the human concerns central for understanding the contrast between nationalism and cosmopolitanism do not normatively depend on values that are intrinsically religious” (p. 366). Therefore, Audi (2009) astutely remarks that cosmopolitanism “gives more priority to the interests of humanity over those of nations, and the stronger the priority, the stronger the cosmopolitanism” (p. 372).

In its relation with the concepts of nation and nationalism, the politico-legal ramifications of a cosmopolitan philosophy cannot be underestimated, but the moral and cultural substratum is significant for the development of a cosmopolitan attitude. Literature, whether oral or written, plays a significant role in shaping the cultural and moral consciousness of a people. Literature is a site where the real and imagined boundaries are continuously transgressed. It makes possible the ideological exchange across the most rigid and formidable borders. Agha Shahid Ali’s poetry is an illustration of such a site of exchange. In fact, cosmopolitan philosophy is the fundamental framework of Ali’s poetry. Thematically and formally, his poetry can be seen as a metaphor that translates cosmopolitan awareness into the very fabric of its poetic being. Ali’s poetry envisages the values of tolerance, openness and hospitality towards all, as opposed to cruelty, inhumanity, intolerance, conflict and communalism. Ali is seen as an Indian English poet, but his themes and style do not establish specific identities, for instance, national and religious, of the poetic persona. He fuses the symbols, metaphors and images in his poems in such a style that it is impossible to pin it down as Indian or American.

One of the challenges to the notion of cosmopolitanism is the insistence on, or the preference of one single identity over others. The insistence on a single identity, be it national, religious or communal, often leads to conflict. It is this preference

that overrides the cosmopolitan oneness of human concerns. Hence, the foremost feature of cosmopolitan attitude is to endorse a plural identity that is transnational. Ali claims a “translocal identity” for himself when he refers to himself as a “multiple exile” with many hyphenated identities—Kashmiri-American poet, Indian American poet, South Asian-American poet, Muslim-American poet—but he always refuses to be circumscribed within any one of them. For him, all these identities designate him partly and the moment they restrict him, he loses interest in them (Benvenuto, 2002). This is captured beautifully in his poem “In Arabic” in which he writes:

They ask me to tell them what Shahid means-

Listen: It means “The Beloved” in Persian, “witness” in Arabic. (Ali, 2010, p. 226)

This couplet is from one of Ali’s ghazals. Ghazal is an Eastern form of poetry in which it is customary to use the poet’s name or alias in the last couplet. Agha Shahid plays on this “alias” of the poet himself. By utilizing the semantic ambiguity of the word “shahid”—being a beloved and a witness—in the signature line of the poem, Ali categorically refuses the restraints of a single selfhood, thereby endorsing a plural identity. That Ali believed in a cosmopolitan world becomes particularly vivid in the poem “The Veiled Suite”, in which the poet meets his own death. In the faceless ghost of his death, he does not see any particular place, rather he sees death with “...sky from Vail/Colorado and the Ganges from Varanasi in a clay urn (his heart measures like the sea)” (Ali, 2010, p. 23). When Ali was asked about his philosophy, he replied, “I don’t have a philosophy; I have a temperament” (Ali, 2010, p. 23). This is a statement that best describes his poetry. Ali is writing himself as a cosmopolitan.

One of the ways in which Ali’s poetry comes across as endorsing human concerns is the way he humanizes his poetry through inscription. Ali inscribes his poems to a variety of his friends ranging from Kashmir to America. This practice of inscription is, on the one hand, a personal statement of gratitude, appreciation, and a confession of being touched by another human being in a certain special way. The practice of inscription serves another motive in Ali’s poetry. Dedicating the individual poems to individual people humanizes his poetry beyond group affinities. It consecrates poetry as an affect rooted in human emotion rather than as serving any particular ideological affinity. The reader might not know the relation of a particular inscription to the poem but it suggests an immediacy of a human emotion that the poem endorses. The emotion by being related to a proper noun can be read as a syntactic feature of Ali’s poetry through which group affinities

such as that of nationality are undermined and a cosmopolitan ethics is endorsed. His cosmopolitan spirit not only flows through the themes but also through the very form of his poetry. Ali's poetry can be described as dialogic, heteroglossiac and hybrid; one that challenges clear distinctions about national boundaries and personal identities. He is aware of distinct cultural traditions, yet he imagines a universal condition shared by all cultures, races and times. T. P. Sabitah (2002) reiterates that Ali was not fond of any particular national, ethnic or religious identity, and made the very form of his poetry a statement of his cosmopolitan attitude. She aptly remarks:

He is no nativist; he blended Western and Indian formal traditions in his poetic oeuvre. He was as much a master of complex forms like the canzone or sestina as he was of the ghazal. He owed his lineage as much to Emily Dickinson and James Merrill as to Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Mirza Ghalib (p. 182).

The blending of different traditions of poetic form in his poetry reveals Ali's tendency of being at home in different cultures and acknowledging different ways of life. Employing different elements of poetic tradition from different cultures and fusing them into a new form is an endorsement of cosmopolitan ethics. This is further endorsed through the use of personal memory and transforming it into a metaphor for a collective human concern. Ali begins a poem with a personal memory and gradually fuses it with different events, breaking the constraints of time and space so that a collective human concern is brought into focus. The poem "Lenox Hill" demonstrates this aspect of Ali's poetry. Lenox Hill was the name of the hospital where Ali's mother, suffering from cancer, breathed her last. The poem is a poignant expression of the personal loss of the poet. It is a cry of a son at the loss of the mother without whom "the paradise . . . is a tomb." (p. 248). Ali has brilliantly woven this personal emotion into the human anguish resulting from any kind of oppression. Through the story of his personal loss, the death of his mother, Ali retells the history of oppression suffered by the Kashmiri people through the ages. This memory is interwoven with the historical memory of a tyrant king Mihiragula who, as legend has it, was so pleased at hearing an elephant's cry as it fell off the mountain cliff that he ordered more elephants to be thrown off the cliff.

The Hun so loved the cry, one falling elephant's
He wished to hear it again. At dawn, my mother
heard, in her hospital-dream of elephants,
sirens wail through Manhattan like elephants

forced off Pir Panjal's rock cliffs in Kashmir:
the soldiers, so ruled, had rushed the elephants. (Ali, 2010, p. 247)

This extension of personal memory into the historical memory of oppression makes the poem a technical feat. Mihiragula was a tyrant king from the Hun dynasty in the 6th century, who was given refuge in Kashmir and in turn, he usurped the throne of his benefactor. In this poem, even God is seen as a tyrant who has taken the poet's mother away. Further, the history of the "massacred elephants" is rewritten in the bloody history of massacred Kashmiri people during the 1990s. Ali writes, "the punishing khaki whereby the world sees us die/out, mourning you, O massacred elephants!/Months later, in Amherst, she dreamt: She was, with dia-/monds, being stoned to death . . ." (p. 247). The image of "the massacred elephants" becomes the image of grief and loss across the borders of time and space. The grief of the poet, that of the Kashmiris, and the elephants crying by the bones of their mother is envisaged in a single image that could accommodate the poignancy of loss of any human being irrespective of any particular group identity.

The cosmopolitan character, "a sense of boundarylessness" (Beck, 2003, p. 3) in Ali's poetry, is further entailed in the concept of mourning which is undeniably universal. In the tragi-comedy of life, mourning lies at the heart of universal brotherhood because human beings are vulnerable to loss. As Judith Butler puts it, "Despite our differences in location and history, . . . it is possible to appeal to a 'we', for all of us have some notion of what it is to have lost somebody" (p. 20). Ali appeals to this collective human "we", when he weaves multiple historic and personal events of mourning into a cosmopolitan ethos of empathy. In his long poem "From Amherst to Kashmir", Ali mourns the death of his mother, whose body is brought from Amherst to Kashmir for burial. He uses "Karbala" as a frame for mourning because it enables him to absorb into personal grief the grief of others and vice-versa, breaking through the boundaries of time and space. He has used the "Karbala metaphor to communicate his own hyphenated existence, his personal pain, his experience of exile, a communal loss caused by political apathy (strife-stricken Kashmir), and the universal phenomenon of pain" (Zaidi, 2007, p. 153). "Karbala" is a city in southern Iraq. It is the site of the tomb of Hussain, grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who was killed there in 680 A.D. "Karbala" therefore becomes a figure of speech to designate "intense grief and sorrow". To express the sense of grief at the loss of his mother, the poet evokes the grief of Zainab, Hussain's sister, who was taken prisoner along with the other women of her clan in the caravan, after all the men, except for one who had been ill, were killed by the Caliph Yazid and his military. Zainab laments:

Over Hussain's mansion what night has fallen
 I alone am left to tell my brother's story
 On my brother's body what dawn has risen
 Weep for my brother
 World, weep for Hussain. (Zaidi, 2007, p. 255)

In these lines, Ali is trying to find expression for his own grief in Zainab's lament, but he does not stop there. The lament is not enough to carry the intensity of his grief at the loss of his beloved mother, which has created what he calls the "geography of separation". He forages for the possible images of grief in the personal, public, literary and mythic memory, to express its poignancy. While Zainab's lament continues as the refrain in the poem, it is merged with the tears of Jesus and Abraham for the prophesied martyrdom of Hussain, and is further intensified with the longing of Radha for Krishna in bhajans, the Hindu devotional songs, in which Radha entreats, "Dark blue god don't cast me into oblivion" (Zaidi, 2007, p. 256). In the same poem, using the technique of intertextuality, Ali invokes the laments of Faiz and Ghalib for the separation of the beloved. This personal geography of loss and trauma is further intertwined with the trauma that people in the sub-continent suffered during Partition, and the people in Kashmir suffered during the 1990s. Ali mourns the suffering of people during Partition when he writes:

. With thunder, a train –
 from Pakistan? – would crash and bring down the refrain,
 and your tears. The train's whistle, years later, would rend
 the heart. (Zaidi, 2007, p. 256)

Reflecting on the suffering that the memories of those who depart create, Ali remembers visiting Kashmir where, "In every home, although Muharram was not yet here/Zainab wailed. Only Karbala could frame our grief/ . . . Karbala was chosen for Kashmir's seasons" (Zaidi, 2007, p. 265). As he establishes suffering as a cosmopolitan emotion in which one is all and all is one, he writes:

. . . For
 where there is farewell,
 You are there. And where there's a son, in any
 Language saying *Adieu* to his mother, she is
 You and that son (*There by the gate*) is me, that
 Son is me. Always. (Zaidi, 2007, p. 263)

Pain has no identity It is a sense shared by all. Even when Ali is comparing his pain with those of others, he does not underestimate others' pain but rather

brings it into sharp focus, as when he writes, “for compared to my grief for you, what are those of Kashmir . . .” (Zaidi, 2007, p. 249). Through comparison, he is not exhibiting his pain as more serious than others’, but he invites the reader’s attention and focuses on the larger aspect of it. Thus, in writing the story of his mother’s separation, he depicts in poignant detail, the “geography of separation” that is inhabited by all. The “geography of separations” makes all equal and gives way to what Ulrich Beck (2006) calls “cosmopolitan empathy” (p. 7). Ali finally brings the memories of personal and public suffering and mourning together in the trope of God as “the only and final assassin” to create a homogenous space in which the tyrant is the one that forces the beloved apart from the lover. Ali writes:

And the Beloved Leaves one behind to Die

.....

They are not the dead, we are the poor at dawn. (Ali, 2010, p. 274)

What enables Ali to create the topography for this cosmopolitan emotion in his poetry is his ability to break free from the constraints of self that remains mired in narrow identities. It builds within the very form of the poetry a possibility of cosmopolitan ethics that respects human survival.

Ali writes about diverse subjects such as memory, death, history, family, ancestors, nostalgia for a past he never knew, dreams, Hindu ceremonies, friendships and self-consciousness about being a poet. One of the persistent concerns in his poetry is human rights and their violation. Ali’s poetry is constantly haunted by oppression, injustice and crimes against humanity. The guarantee of basic human rights lies at the heart of cosmopolitan human coexistence. Ulrich Beck (2006) in *The Cosmopolitan Vision* writes:

Faith in the secular religion of human rights makes no distinction between Germans and French, *citoyen* and *bourgeois*, Christian and Muslim, circumcised and uncircumcised, men and women, people of colour and those whose skin is white. All positions involving the negation of individuals—of ethnicity, caste, class, religion and gender—are transcended in the equality of the basic rights of all human beings. (p. 141)

The concern for human rights in Ali’s poetry again goes beyond the boundaries of ethnicities and nationalities. In his poem, “A Wrong Turn”, the poet sees himself in a massacred town and writes:

In my dream I’m always

In a massacred town, its name

Erased from maps,
No road signs to it

Only a wrong turn brings me here . . . (Ali, 2010, p. 60)

The “massacred town” becomes a symbol for all those who have died in or lived through atrocities and tyrannies. The citizens of this town are not just Kashmiris, with whom Ali shares an ethnic bond, but it includes those massacred in Las Cruz, Jews, Palestinians, Chechens, and those deported in the Bisbee Deportation. The fact that this town has no name and no road signs leading to it is significant. It is an assertion of oneness, of the oppressed beyond the narrow identities of race, color and creed. “In Arabic” Ali addresses the Israeli writer, Yehuda Amichai:

I too, O Amichai, saw everything, just like you did—

In Death. In Hebrew. And (please let me stress) in Arabic. (Ali, 2010, p. 373)

Bringing in a single verse the expression against injustice in the two languages, Hebrew and Arabic that stand for the two identities in conflict, Ali empathizes with those who suffer, irrespective of their identities. What is striking about Ali’s poetry is that he creates a cosmopolitan space of speaking for victims without creating a “contemptible other”. When he writes of injustices and human rights’ violations, he does not create any scope for hatred and violence. This is particularly revealed in the tone of his poems. Recounting the tales of interrogation centres in Kashmir, Ali writes:

. Yesterday at Hideout
Café . . . a doctor who had just treated
a sixteen-year old boy released from an interrogation centre—said: I
*want to ask the fortune tellers: Did anything in his line of Fate reveal that
the webs of his hands would be cut with a knife?* (Ali, 2010, p. 194)

We can see the grief and pathos in these lines, but not the passion that evokes hatred. The use of “fortune tellers” and “fate” is significant here to get across the point that the poet is making. It is not the expression of helplessness of man in front of the vagaries of what is referred to as “fate”. The use of the words “fortune tellers” and “fate” is deliberate, to turn the reader’s focus more on the wrong than the wrongdoer. When he writes about the Palestinian suffering and the Civil War of Lebanon, he uses the images of grief of the legendary lovers Laila and Majnoon to express the anguish:

And Majnoon . . . with bare hands

Digs graves in the desert

Crying out for his dead Laila

His back broken by a giant teardrop

Inside it the ruins of Jerusalem and Beirut. (Ali, 2010, p. 149)

Using the symbols of Majnoon and Laila, Ali reiterates oppression as a hurdle in nourishing one of the primary human necessity, that is, love. Ali deliberately leaves the space occupied by the oppressor empty, so that the tyrant is not fossilized in any group identity and violence is not exhorted. In the poem “Wrong Turn”, the poetic persona, while surveying a place of total massacre wonders:

Who were these people

Who finished them to the last?

If dust had an alphabet, I would learn. (Ali, 2010, p. 60)

The alphabet may as well proclaim the tyrant, but Ali’s motive is not revenge but forgiveness. Therefore, even if the tyrant is proclaimed, the responsibility of forgiveness does not need it. The empty space is allowed for the tyrant to come into the fold of a collective humanity where he will not be alone. This is emphasized in the couplet in which Ali writes, “If my enemy’s alone and his arms are empty/Give him my heart silk-wrapped like a child by exiles” (Ali, 2010, p. 298). The refusal to create a “contemptible other” is the beginning of forgiveness. According to Molly Andrews, “the responsibility to forgive is directed towards something outside and greater than the forgiver and the would-be forgiven” (Andrews, 1999, p. 112); and for Ali, the basis of his forgiveness lies in his loyalty to the wider community of humanity rather than to a religious or national one. Going beyond the constraints of absolute identities allows him to create the possibility of imagining the enemy as part of the self. Ali wonders:

Will the Enemy smile as I pass him on the street?

I’m still searching for someone to forgive forever. (Ali, 2010, p. 370)

Ali makes forgiveness an important necessity of human nature as human beings are vulnerable to their own fallibility and the capacity to transgress. He is an artist who stands for “healing” rather than for vengeance. He sees forgiveness as the “first condition of humanity”. That is why, instead of creating a contemptible other, he turns to prayer in the face of the overwhelming anguish triggered by violence and bursts out: “Outgunned Chechens hold off Russian tanks—/They have a prayer. Are you listening, God? (Ali, 2010, p. 368). Prayer is evoked as

a source of power that will not destroy but preserve what is human. Ali is a poet of hope, hope in the goodness of human heart. No matter how many identities struggle to constrain his poetic spirit of cosmopolitan ethos, he promises to forcefully break free from such heritage of rigidity:

No they won't let me out of winter,
 And I've promised myself,
 Even if I'm the last snowman,
 That I'll ride into spring
 On their melting shoulders (Ali, 2010, p. 23).

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Interview

“Translation Should be Seen as a Dialogue Between Cultures”: An Interview With Prof. M. Asaduddin

Professor M. Asaduddin is an author, academic, critic and translator in several languages. His books include: *Premchand: The Complete Short Stories* in four volumes (editor and translator), *Premchand in World Languages: Translation, Reception and Cinematic Representations*; *Filming Fiction: Tagore, Premchand and Ray*; *A Life in Words: Memoirs*; *The Penguin Book of Classic Urdu Stories*; *Lifting the Veil: Selected Writings of Ismat Chughtai*; *For Freedom's Sake: Manto*; and (with Mushirul Hasan) *Image and Representation: Stories of Muslim Lives in India*.

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Kalyanee Rajan (KR): Thank you so much for agreeing to this interview with FORTELL. Let us start with what got you interested in translation.

M. Asaduddin (MA): To begin with, I was always interested in language and had great fascination for people who could write in or speak many languages. More languages meant annexing more worlds, more world views and more perspectives. Apart from Bangla and English, I studied Hindi, Urdu and Arabic in school. In my childhood, I read a lot of literature in Bangla translation [*sic*]. Apart from the tales of Arabian Nights and Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyyat*, I read European and Russian literature in Bangla translation. I had a fascination for creative writing as well. But I soon realized that creative writing was not my forte. So, the next best thing was translation, which allowed me to stay in the world of letters.

KR: Did you feel that translating texts required a formal training in translation methodology?

MA: No. I didn't come to translation through any formal training. Of course, in school we had to do translation exercises as a part of the curriculum where we had to translate sentences and passages from Bangla to English, as part of learning English. This made me aware of how languages behave whimsically and arbitrarily, as human beings do. It was intriguing to discover that the same thing cannot be said in *exactly* the same way in a lot of languages; that there are *faux amis* (false friends) which means, you assume that you know the words, but you do not know them, actually. Formal training in translation might help some at the elementary stage, but ultimately it is one's sense of language and instinctive understanding of the way a good sentence/paragraph is written and works in the target language that will determine the quality of translation. Among the great translators in history, very few had any formal training in translation.

KR: So we could say that ultimately, translation is more of an intuitive activity. As a translator in these global times, in your opinion, how far is the knowledge of the two cultures important? Is there a clash of cultures felt while translating?

MA: Well, translation is both a bilingual and bicultural activity. It is seminal that the translator should not only know the two languages, in case of bilingual translation, but also the two cultures well. As a matter of fact, linguistic transfer is easier than cultural transfer. Cultural specificities are more resistant to translation. As cultural information is easier to find and access in the current globalized world, translation has become a lot more fun and easier than before. Translation mitigates clashes of cultures and establishes bridges between them. Translation should be seen as dialogue between cultures rather than a clash between them.

KR: Talking about the actual process of translation, generally, what considerations go into choosing a particular text for translation?

MA: There may be a number of considerations, and these may vary from translator to translator. Professional translators, who depend on translation for their living might translate any material they are asked to do, provided they have the required expertise to do so. An amateur translator might choose his texts for translation depending on his interest in a particular text, the significance of the text in a literary and cultural tradition and his desire to take that text beyond its linguistic boundaries, etc. Texts are translated to bring to light and the notice of a larger audience, [the] lives of people who face marginalization and discrimination of one kind or other, e.g. minorities, Dalits, women. Religiously inclined people undertake translation because it would help them spread the message of their faith and earn them merit in the eyes of God. Academics undertake translation to build a corpus of reading materials for their students, etc. Similarly, strong ideological orientation might drive translators to choose ideologically aligned texts for translation.

KR: What is your opinion about omissions made by translators while translating a text? Do such omissions go against the very spirit of representing the parent text in another language?

MA: A translator is not entitled to take recourse to omission or addition in her translation. It is simply unethical. But in actual practice, omissions are sometimes resorted to by mutual consent of the author and the translator. While translating Amrit Rai's Hindi biography of his father, *Qalam ka Sipahi*, Harish Trivedi was instructed by Amrit Rai to leave out certain portions of the original. The translation was published in 1982 by People's Publishing House with the title, *Premchand: A Life*. Similarly, Aruna Chakrabarty excised significant portions of Sunil Gangopadhyay's historical novels, *Sei Samai* (Those Days, 1997) and *Prothom Alo* (First Light, 2001) with the author's consent. Abdullah Hussein, one of the greatest novelists of Urdu from Pakistan has described how he was persuaded by the editor at Oxford University Press, London, to omit several portions of his monumental novel, *Udaas Naslen*, 1963 (The Weary Generations, 1999), while translating it from Urdu because, those portions, in the editor's opinion, did not "work" in English. One can cite any number of examples of this kind. Such omissions happen more often when authors themselves are translators of their texts. But as I said, translators should not undertake such surgical operations on their own.

KR: That is a crucial point for translators to pay attention to. What is your opinion about self-translations by authors? How far are they to be trusted? I have in mind cases of self-translations by the likes of Premchand, Qurratulain Hyder and others.

MA: Right. Self-translation is a part of our literary history, and is usually treated as a separate category within Translation Studies. In India, to my knowledge, Tagore is our first great self-translator (Bengali to English), followed by such others as Premchand (Hindi-Urdu/Urdu-Hindi), Qurratulain Hyder (Urdu-English), Krishna Baldev Vaid (Hindi-English), Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya (Assamese-English), Manoj Das (Odia-English/English-Odia), and a host of others in different Indian language combinations. Writers translating their own work feel less inhibited in tampering with the original, and often, their translations turn into re-writing. There could be different motivations for such an approach—a certain notion of the perceived readership in the receptor language, to look in sync with the current trend (if the translation happens after a long gap), a desire to improve the work, to align it with the ideological position of the author at the moment, and so on. For TS scholars, such translations/re-workings provide much more fun to work with. The original and the translation, taken together, may be taken as an optimal or cumulative text, and can reveal the author’s anxieties in a way that a single version may not be able to do.

All this may be acceptable, particularly, if the author-translators are upfront and honest about it. What, however, is unacceptable, is the publication of the translation as though it were an original creative work in the target language. Sometimes, the author-translator may be complicit with the publisher in marketing the translation as an original work which, to me, is unethical and unacceptable. It might be a great boost to the ego of the author, particularly if the target language happens to be a dominant one, with global penetration, but it does not serve the cause of translation and does not enhance the status of the translator in any way.

KR: So, self-translations are complicated activities. What could be the standards of judging the validity or quality of translations in these times, especially when we have moved away from the fidelity narrative?

MA: There are several valid criteria for judging non-literary translation, accuracy being the most prominent among them. However, in [the] case of literary texts, which are, admittedly, amenable to multiple interpretations, judging the quality of translation is not easy. Fidelity should not be defined in narrow, limiting and reductive terms. Fidelity to what, the letter or the spirit? Form or the content? Individual parts or the whole? Moreover, apart from the points of formal, structural, semantic, cultural, communicative and tonal congruence, factors which must be taken into account while evaluating a work of literary translation: how to evaluate the “literariness” of the source text, coming from a foreign/different literary tradition, against the “literariness” of the target text sought to be assimilated in a different literary tradition? Yet, we must develop

or have awareness of some evaluative criteria for judging the quality of literary translation, given the fact that we are often called upon to distinguish between good and bad translations, and translated books are selected for awards and other distinctions. The comments made by jury members who judge/select translations for awards are often too generalized to give the reader any clear idea about why a particular translation is selected against so many others. One needs both sound multilingual literary scholarship and translation scholarship to properly judge a work of literary translation, failing which such works will continue to be judged on personal preferences and idiosyncratic grounds.

KR: Sir, again looking at the process of translation, which kinds of translations are more difficult to undertake in terms of genres, whether it be poetry, drama, fiction, prose, etc.?

MA: There cannot be any generalization regarding this. It depends on what kind of prose and what kind of poetry one undertakes to translate. Some kind of prose may be more difficult to translate than some forms of poetry. However, in general, as prose is more expansive and poetry is cryptic and distilled, as poetry tends to be more suggestive than prose and makes use of more figurative language like symbols and metaphors than prose, it is commonly understood that poetry is more difficult to translate than prose. This may not always be the case. However, in poetry translation, additional demands are put on the translator if she decides to translate the form along with the content. There are two general strategies of translating poetry—metrical translation and prose translation. Each strategy has its challenges, advantages and pitfalls, which have been discussed in detail by André Lefevere in his essay, “The Translation of Poetry: Some Observations and a Model”. In fact, he has a book-length study on the subject. In the translation of plays, the translator has to keep in mind the performative aspects of the original text and must endeavour to recreate the same aspects in the receptor language version, to achieve what Eugene A. Nida has called “equivalent effect”.

KR: In the same vein, what according to you is the role of para-texts, like the translator’s note, introduction, foreword, afterword, etc., in literary translation?

MA: Para-texts are extremely important to contextualize a translated text in a foreign literary environment, and they often indicate the seriousness of the translator’s engagement with his subject. All scholarly/academic translations are accompanied by an array of para-texts to help the reader enter the life-world of the alien text. When Tagore translated *One Hundred Poems of Kabir* in English, it was accompanied by a forty-four-page introduction written by Evelyn Underbill, Tagore’s assistant, explaining Kabir’s historical circumstances and thematic

concerns, to prepare the western readers to appreciate his *dohas* in their true spirit. In this context, I may mention two extremely well-crafted volumes of translation of Ghalib's and Mir Taqi Mir's poems in Bengali that I had read long ago, and I dip into them occasionally. The translator is Abu Sayeed Ayyub, an extremely erudite Tagore scholar of Bengali literature, who received appreciation and encouragement from Tagore himself. The two volumes—*Ghaliber Ghazal Teke*, 1976 and *Mirer Ghazal Teke*, 1987—are rather slim, about 130 pages each in crown octavo size, out of which about one third is taken up by paratextual materials consisting of the poets' brief biographies, the literary tradition they belonged to, their historical circumstances and their thematic engagements. Ayyub has tried to introduce both the Urdu poets (they also wrote in Persian) to the Bengali readers by explaining their couplets in terms of Bengali poetic tradition from Tagore onwards. Not only that, he also knew that Bengali readers were by then familiar with Charles Baudlaire's poetry through the translation of Budhadeb Bose, and T. S. Eliot's poetry through several translations. He used this entire poetic tradition as a referential framework to establish correspondences between it and the two newly translated poets into that tradition. But for his erudite and imaginative introduction, much of the Bengali translation of Mir and Ghazal would have remained hazy or inadequately understood to [*sic*] the Bengali readers. Other Bengali translations of Ghalib and Mir have appeared since, but the appeal of these two volumes have remained intact.

KR: These days there is a spate in cinematic and stage adaptations of canonical authors like Shakespeare. I have in my mind films like *Haider* and *Omkara* for instance. Do you think translation is in anyway losing its ground to transcreation and adaptation?

MA: Transcreation and adaptation are also modes of translation. They were there in the past, and they will continue to remain so in the future too. It depends on the medium to which a text is translated and the readership or the viewership (in case of films) to which it is addressed. Just as some universal plots are adapted in different languages and cultures, depending on their local situations and demands, translation will continue to be adapted to serve local and specific needs. For his Kannada play, *Hayavadana*, Girish Karnad drew upon Thomas Mann's novel, *The Transposed Heads*, which in turn was based on a tale from *Kathasaritsagara*. Adaptation studies is a fairly developed field, sometimes explored within the framework of TS. It offers important insights to translators, and expands the ambit of TS, rather than narrowing or undermining it in any way. The term transcreation, attributed to P. Lal of Writers Workshop fame, is of Indian provenance. The expression, not yet included in many dictionaries, serves

to explain a mode of translation where there are wide divergences between the original and the translated version. P. Lal demonstrated this translational practice in his book, *Transcreation: Seven Essays on the Art of Transcreation* (1996). The term also provides a fig leaf to those who want to escape being judged through the conventional, standard criteria of translation. Qurratulain Hyder was hugely criticized for mangling her works in the process of translating them into English. So, when she translated her magnum opus, *Aag ka Darya* (1959) into *River of Fire* (1998), she used the phrase, “transcreated from Urdu”, in an effort to silence her critics.

In the western tradition, such a practice is called Re-creation or Re-writing. Like adaptation, translation is in no way threatened by transcreation. On the contrary, it may bring new life to translation, as the volume, *Ghazals of Ghalib: Versions from Urdu* did. Aijaz Ahmad paraphrased Ghalib’s ghazals to a dozen or so young American poets, providing them all linguistic and cultural information needed, and asked them to recreate the ghazals in English. They did so, with varying degrees of success. It was an interesting experiment. Harivansh Rai Bachchan’s transcreation of Omar Khayyam in *Madhushala* revitalized the Hindi poetry scene, and its impact travelled from Hindi to Marathi and other Indian literatures.

KR: Moving on to another vital area of great interest to the readers of FORTELL, what are the specific issues faced while teaching translated texts? Is there a different pedagogy, should there be a different pedagogy?

MA: Teaching translated texts puts much greater demands on the resources of the teacher than teaching a text in the original. The teacher and the students have to be aware of the languages and the literary traditions of both the texts involved.

A text assumes its meaning in its contexts. When it is translated from the source language, it is de-contexted from its source traditions and has to be re-contextualized in the literary tradition of the receptor language. So, a knowledge of both the traditions and their contexts becomes important in the teaching of a translated text. It will, of course, involve a different pedagogy. The teacher should be able to give the students some idea of what Juliane House terms, “the source text with its linguistic-stylistic-aesthetic features that belong to the norms of usage held in the source lingua-cultural community, (and) the linguistic-stylistic-aesthetic norms of the target lingua-cultural community”. Sometimes, a text, to be understood in all its dimensions, requires that its reception history in the source language be taken into account. All this may be a tall order and the kind of scholarship and commitment it requires may not be easy to come by. But given a certain commitment and the technology available at hand now, it is not impossible either. What it also requires is that the classroom should be a multilingual space in

the true sense of the term. Teaching a translated text as though it were originally written in the target language will defeat the very purpose of teaching it.

KR: What is your opinion about the efficacy of translation studies courses and their growth across the universities in India and abroad? Do you think they serve their purpose well?

MA: Translation Studies has assumed the nature of a discipline deserving independent study and research, rather than being studied as an adjunct to Linguistics or Comparative Literature. It is as efficacious, or has the potential to be as efficacious, as any other human discipline, provided the syllabus makers, course designers and finally, teachers teaching these courses bring appropriate knowledge and rigour to bear on it. The objective of Translation Studies courses is to explore the history of translation in different languages and cultures, engage with different kinds and categories of translation, translation strategies, multiple translations and their roles, the concept of re-translation, translation and representation, translation and gender, translation and interpretation, translation reviews and criticism. Practice should be an important component of all TS courses, because most, if not all our formulations in TS emanate from practice. However, the primary objective of TS is not to produce translators, as sometimes people tend to believe, but to enhance and promote translation scholarship. For producing translators, we should have good translator training programmes. Certificate and diploma courses in translation endeavour to do that to some extent. But in India, a lot needs to be done to provide value addition to these courses, wherever they are administered.

KR: Sir, I often review translated texts and this question has bothered me: how should translated texts be reviewed? Do you think the current scenario is producing fair and justified reviews?

MA: This is an important and pertinent question. Though translation has grown phenomenally in India, reviews of translated works and translation criticism have not kept pace with it. Too often, translated books are reviewed as though they were written originally in the language in which they have been published. Sometimes reviewers even comment on the style of the original writer, forgetting the fact that it is the style of the translator and not the original author that is under discussion. Even relatively informed reviewers would give just a paragraph at the end of their reviews to comment on the process of translation, and that too may be couched in clichéd phrases like how well it reads, or how close it seems to the original. Often, they are simply opinions and does [*sic*] not give any insight into the actual process of translation. The climate of review and criticism of translated works needs to change.

KR: Sir, you were awarded by Katha, the Central Sahitya Akademi and Crossword Book Award for your translations. Please tell us, what are the other major awards instituted to recognize and encourage translation?

MA: In addition to the Central Sahitya Akademi, many state Sahitya Akademis also have introduced awards in translation, which is a welcome step. Then there are Crossword Award, DSC prize, SAARC Literary Award, Hindu Literary Award, and possibly others that I do not know about. In fact, there is a general move to recognize and award translated works both nationally and internationally. Translation cannot be considered a secondary literary activity, as the works of Nobel Prize winners are judged, year after year, in translation, to award them the prize. Sometimes, writers of great reputation also undertake translation as another facet of their genius, which only goes to prove that for them, translation is as important as their creative writing. The latest example in this regard is that of Jhumpa Lahiri, who has recently been nominated for the National Book Award, not for her original work, but for her translation of Domenico Starnone's Italian novel, *Trick*, into English.

KR: So many prizes and counting! Maybe translation-themed literary fests are not so far away. Finally, sir, what advice would you give to budding translators?

MA: Why not! And, the only advice that can be given to translators, budding or otherwise, is to read more and more in the source and the target languages and never lose their humility. Language demands unquestioned commitment and can both trap or liberate translators, depending on how much efforts they have brought to bear on their art and craft. Translations by many well-known translators are replete with howlers. Each text brings with it its own kind of challenges, and those challenges can be met only when the translators have brought to it a wide range of literary, linguistic and cultural experiences.

KR: Thank you so much sir for this fairly exhaustive interview. I am sure our readers will not only get fresh insights, but will also be able to look at translation differently.

MA: It is my pleasure.

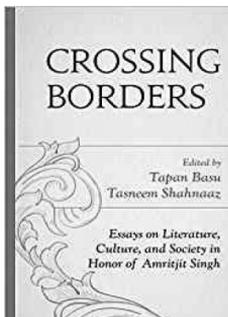
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Book Reviews

Crossing Borders: Essays on Literature, Culture, and Society in Honor of Amritjit Singh

Reviewed by Nilak Datta



Tapan Basu and Tasneem Shahnaaz (Eds.) (2017). *Crossing Borders: Essays on Literature, Culture, and Society in Honor of Amritjit Singh*. The Harlem Renaissance and its New Avatars. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc. (XXI, 353 pages)

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Marsha L. Dutton, one of the authors of a series of reminiscences on the life and career of Amritjit Singh, comments on his tireless commitment to teaching and writing across the grain. She writes that Singh “works energetically to expand and deprovincialize students’ educational experience”, so they may take their learning experiences beyond the classroom (p. 325). After reading the volume *Crossing Borders: Essays on Literature, Culture, and Society in Honor of Amritjit Singh*, it can be said that the commemorative essays follow in the footsteps of Professor Amritjit Singh’s work as a teacher and scholar. They “deprovincialize” considerations of literary expression, re-investigate theoretical intersections of race, gender and notions of author/authority, question the socio-political nature of borders, and demonstrate the broader implications for a “post-racial” order.

In an interview with Nibir K. Ghosh (appropriately named “A Native Son Abroad”) Professor Singh seamlessly connects the contributions of Wallace Thurman to the changing cultural demographics in contemporary Harlem, and recent “exclusionary practices” in “banking and housing, schooling and law enforcement” (pp. 276-280). This intellectual move has wide-ranging implications for an overall sense of minority empowerment. He notes how “new Asian

immigrants” have not been able to free themselves from an overwhelming (if unstated) sense of “white privilege”. This is evident in the way they have aspired to take up positions of hegemonic cultural and racial dominance, and failing to do so, have sought “over-compensation in real estate or material goods” (p. 281). The issue of “white privilege” also spills over in the essays by Catherine Rottenberg and Martha J. Cutter. Rottenberg’s reading of Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room* focuses on the way white privilege erects borders and recreates existing racial hierarchies. Cutter delves into a different aspect of the problem when she examines how the vulnerabilities of interstitial characters in Sui Sin Far’s stories frequently lead them to privilege one side of a mixed racial heritage at the expense of the other (p. 32). Such hybrid re-evaluations can also bring in unexpected liaisons between peoples across the racial divide. As Fred Gardaphe’s article shows, there occurs an impromptu sense of bonding between African American men and Italian men in Willard Motley’s fiction, since both communities are not perceived as mainstream.

Such sympathetic border crossings can sometimes be quite literally imagined in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continental region, where complex intercultural, intersubjective and interloping borders become part of the heritage of colonial rule. Zubeda Jalalzai shows how the Durand Line (drawn between the former British dominions and Afghanistan) can limit as well as liberate those affected by it. If Jalalzai advocates that such borderlines be envisaged as safe passages rather than as barriers, Rahul K. Gairola’s approach to the “fictive witness” representations of life across the Radcliffe Line (that divided India and Pakistan) as a “borderless genre” is an effective theoretical rallying point (p. 121). Emotional border crossings across the borderlines are marked by amity and tenderness rather than by disharmony and violence (pp. 119-121).

In giving art and literature a chance to heal the unhealable breaches of the past (for instance, see Robin Field’s fiction essay on strife-torn Kashmir), the scholarly contents of the nineteen essays do yeoman’s service to the expressions of profound grief, joyous artistic rebellion, deep empathy and sympathetic, self-effacing irony that were the hallmarks of the Harlem Renaissance. Their wide-ranging implications for artistic expression are highlighted in the application of a border epistemologies concept in the essays by Silvia Schultermanndl and Peter Schmidt. These two essays complicate the notion of borders through their textual analyses of works as diverse as James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Pioneers*, Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, Karen Tei Yamashita’s *Tropic of Orange* and Ruth Ozeki’s *A Tale for the Time Being*. The presence of borders reiterates the understanding, as Peter Schmidt shows, that borders are not only ubiquitous in the cultural imagination of the United States, but they are also better understood as “polyvalent metaphor[s]”

in an attempt to understand “global power asymmetries” (p. 13).

Powerfully asymmetrical relations are expressed in Auritro Majumdar’s theoretical treatment of modernity. The diversity and range of interconnections between border epistemologies and modernity can be understood by contemplating the possibilities offered in the brilliant essays by Nalini Iyer, Ayesha K. Hardison, and Thadious M. Davis. These essays show that border-crossings between private and public spaces operate in a diasporic imaginary, the (dis)location of an author’s racial affiliation, and the fluid spatial politics of “transgressive subjects” (p. 173).

Such transgressive activities also concern contemporary work that incorporates the narrative of voices-in-performance texts such as Udai Prakash’s *Mohandas*, G. Kalyana Rao’s *Untouchable Spring* and Kavery Nibasan’s *The Story That Must Not be Told*, works considered by Jasbir Jain who argues for criss-crossing the borderlines between poetics and aesthetics. Following a parallel intellectual trajectory, Robert B. Stepto’s article emphasizes that reading is not a solitary exercise in untangling lexical complexity; rather, it involves an engagement with the narrative’s visual design. Concerns about the nature and function of conventional literary texts are expressed in Arnold Rampersad’s meditative essay on Langston Hughes’ populist writing and the challenges of negotiating the discursive expectations of erudite cultural production. Rampersad’s focus on Hughes’s movement away from mainstream poetic visions allows the reader to make sense of the latter’s clash with Countee Cullen’s radical unmooring from an African “heritage”, especially since Werner Sollors examines the *longue durée* search for a usable heritage in America.

In similar ways, novelist Charles Johnson’s focus on the significance of Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* highlights the precariousness of racial others in post 9/11 America. Cheryl A. Wall’s meditation on Jessie Fauset’s (and other women writers’) contributions can also be read in the light of mainstream (mis) constructions of a heritage version of the Harlem renaissance. It is fitting that the final “essay” should be an interview with Elleke Boehmer, where the novelist-scholar questions the nature of borders between creative writing and academic writing. Boehmer speaks of border criss-crossings (in the way Professor Amritjit Singh has spoken of his personal and professional experiences in the final “essay”) as liberating for writers even as readers and scholars want to limit an author’s expression within the narrow confines of nation or ethnicity. As the editors Tapan Basu and Tasneem Shahnaaz note in their introduction, the Borders School relies on the notions of a hybrid culture, embraces its attendant contradictions, and leads hopefully, to a “more interactive, cooperative world” (p. xx).

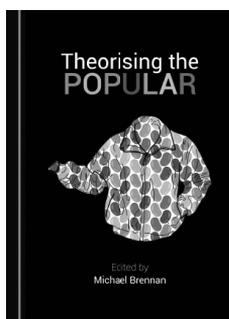
In closing, I would like to highly recommend this *estschrift* that criss-crosses various disciplinary borders: American/African American literature, South Asian literature, postcolonial studies, performance theory, and diaspora studies. In reading this veritable cornucopia of illuminating essays, I was able to criss-cross the boundaries provided by the editors of the volume who portioned the contents into six parts: “Multiculturalism and its Discontents”, “Nation and Sub-Nation”, “Diaspora and Trans-Nation”, “Gendered Identities”, “Art: Between the Popular and the Populist” and “Journeys Across Art and Life”. Lastly, it is possible to enjoy the book without regard to the borders all editors must paradoxically champion.

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Theorising the Popular

Reviewed by Indrani Das Gupta



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ISBN-10: 1-4438-5182-5

Since the 1960s popular culture has become enormously significant, with Leslie Fiedler and Susan Sontag's path breaking analysis of a "new sensibility". Set against the backdrop of this "new sensibility" and understood as a kind of anti-authoritarian, illegitimate and subversive strain within popular culture, Michael Brennan's new edited book titled *Theorising the Popular* emerges from the conference of the same name, hosted annually by Liverpool Hope University. Drawn from humanities, social sciences, cultural studies, creative industries and the performing arts, this book provides a theoretical reflection on popular culture through the prism of gender, class, race, war, history, new communication technologies, and interventionist politics. In Brennan's words, popular culture is an example of "creative bricoleurs" (2017, p. 2); a fascinating read on how meanings are contested, affirmed and resisted.

The essays in this book are arranged thematically, whereby the first three chapters traverse the disciplinary borders between high and low art to explore the immersive and interactive forms of new theatre particularly popular in Europe. In chapter 1, Russell Anderson in his essay explores the interactive forms of theatre adapted from Bertolt Brecht's epic theatre and Paul Auslander's notion of "dominant media epistemology" to represent a shifting terrain of theatrical art forms and styles influenced by new genres such as ICT, hypertext, gaming,

“renaissance fairs”, role-play evenings, and re-enactment weekends. Chapter 2, by Catriona Craig addresses the issues of gender and race through the improvisation wrought in the genre of comedy by focusing on the long-term improvisation troupe “Austentatious”. Laurie Slegtenhorst, in Chapter 3, focuses on the Dutch musical, *Soldier of Orange (Soldaat van Oranje)* about the Dutch resistance to Nazi occupied Holland during the Second World War. These three chapters focus on destabilizing the notion of tradition and authenticity by examining writing as a feminine gesture that escapes the stranglehold of phallogocentric culture, popular culture’s role in politics in terms of wider participation, and the idea of “staged authenticity” to “engag[e] post-war generations about war” (Slegtenhorst, 2017).

In the next three chapters, the author discusses the issues generated within the realm of television, as situated in the shifting terrains of post-television landscape, where cultures/sites and meanings are constantly in a flux. Chapter 4, Michael Brennan’s essay, deals with what Geoffrey Gorer describes as the “pornography of death” (Terceir, 2013). Using the figure of Christopher Hitchens, Brennan explores how the public spectacle of one’s imminent death has reformulated the public sphere. In Chapter 5, Ann Boleyn’s representation on television through the popular primetime television show *The Tudors* has been discussed by Alison Offe as history itself being transformed through these cultural fabrications of historical and political imagination. Chapter 6 by Pavao Parunov discusses the representation of the trope of anti-hero in the critically acclaimed series *Breaking Bad*. Parunov discusses how satellite television networks have shaped the debates surrounding masculinity and gender issues. These three chapters, while reflecting on the fluidity, multiplicity, and heterogeneity of identity, explore how history, gender and even death is more a matter of interpretation and performance rather than being a study governed by fact and evidence.

In the last four chapters, the author examines popular culture within the domain of literature. In Chapter 7, Eric Saldberg discusses the value and significance of a popular literary form such as crime fiction by Dorothy L. Sayers against the charges levelled at her work by Q.D. Leavis. Eric reads Leavis’ dismissal of Sayer’s work as being more a handiwork of academic dons to “contain” a said popular work, rather than being an attestation of literary merit. Estelle Vallas, in Chapter 8, reads Arthurian legends as refracted through Bernard Cornwell’s historical *Warlord Chronicles*. The representation of Guinevere by Cornwell is read by Vallas as traversing both the Celtic past and the discourses surrounding gender debates during the 20th century. In Chapter 9, Zlato Bukac and Jelena Kupsjak, similar to Offe’s essay in Chapter 5, address the standalone representation of super heroines of comic books genre such as Ms Marvel within the changing

gender equations of our society, including as Michael Brennan suggests, “the hypersexualisation of female protagonists” (2017, p. 6). Kasandra-Louis Paterson, in the final chapter, examines the problematic issue of identity within the fabric of social activism and social engagement in two very popular young adult novels, Suzanne Collins’ *Hunger Games* and Veronica Roth’s *Divergent*.

The collection of ten essays in this volume offers a unique insight into the terrain of popular culture in these global times of intense digitalization. Imbricated within the terrain of agency and re-production, popular culture as understood in these essays is a site of “insurgency” (Brennan 2017, p. 2); a dynamic site of revision and co-narration; and an exploration of the intersections of history, memory and education to debunk the demarcations between disparate genres, styles, forms and registers.

This book is a must read for students and scholars alike on the intersections and interfaces of literature and social fabric, history and memory, and democratic politics and audience response to aesthetic representations.

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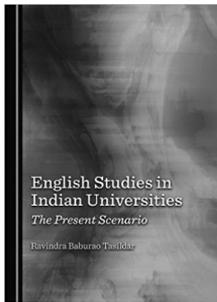
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English Studies in Indian Universities: The Present Scenario

Reviewed by Digambar M. Ghodke



Tasildar, Ravindra, B. (2018). *English Studies in Indian Universities: The Present Scenario*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

ISBN 978-1-5227-1166-8

In his ambitious research work on English Studies in India, Ravindra Tasildar reviews the development of English studies and investigates its present scenario in the Indian context. The book is an outcome of systematic investigation of historical perspectives to classroom-specific pedagogies, from sociological and political hierarchies to the dynamics of intellectual development in the English language teaching in Indian universities. Interrogating both policy and practice pertaining to English Studies in the context of Indian higher education, the chapters in the book seek to formulate contemporary perspectives to these debates and envision alternative possibilities.

Ravindra Tasildar has been teaching English to students at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Maharashtra (India) for more than 20 years. In addition to two books on the teaching of reading and reference skills in Indian universities, he has published research papers on the syllabi of English courses in Indian universities, ELT and comparative studies. His book breaks new ground for discussion as it examines the development of curricula in English in Indian universities vis-à-vis the needs of second language learners studying in Special English, the term used by Gokak (1964) and Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) for English (1989), programmes of Bachelor of Arts (BA). It also reflects on how globalization has strengthened the connection between English and

employment.

Through his arguments in the book which are based on systematic research, the author has taken a standpoint that English studies in India has failed to meet the needs of rural learners. The author reviews English Studies in India and its history of more than 190 years, and explores the views of Meenakshi Mukherjee (1993), Gauri Vishwanathan (1990), Rajeswari Sunder Rajan (1992), Sudhakar Marathe (1993), among others, to support his standpoint. Referring to Mukherjee (1993), the author underlines the status quo in English studies in Indian universities. Questioning the relevance of teaching British literature in post-colonial India, Tasildar refers to two monumental works- Viswanathan's *Masks of Conquest* and Sunder Rajan's *The Lie of the Land*. The author expresses his disappointment over the fact that even the serious critiques of English Studies in India restrict themselves to postgraduate teaching in the elite academic institutions in the Indian metropolis. Unfortunately, these studies scarcely explore the scenario at the undergraduate level in rural India. Hence, the study can be best described as a significant contribution to the field of English Studies in India and other South Asian countries where more or less a similar scenario persists.

Reviewing the aims of teaching English at the undergraduate level, the author attempts to examine the Special English courses from a utilitarian perspective. With scholarly analysis of the course content and supported by empirical data, Tasildar tries to prove that while designing syllabi of the undergraduate courses the requirements of the learners are not taken into consideration.

The book is divided into six chapters. Beginning with the critical examination of the main arguments in the much-discussed books on ELT in India, he examines whether the Special English papers in Indian universities cater to the globally changing academic and vocational needs of the students of the Special English courses. The survey of the state of English Studies in Indian universities, as put forth in the second chapter, compels the author to remark that in comparison with the General English (GE) courses, enough attention has not been paid to enhance the employability of the students of Special English courses. In the third chapter, Tasildar provides an overview of a typical ELT syllabi and evaluates the contribution of various commissions and study groups to the evolution of Special English courses offered in Indian universities. Here he reminds the teachers of English of their changed role in syllabus designing. While in the fourth chapter, taking the objectives of Special English courses into consideration, the author argues that the process of revising the syllabi of the Special English courses is mostly restricted only to changing the course content, ignoring the needs of the students. Here, the author rightly points out that the proportion of literature papers

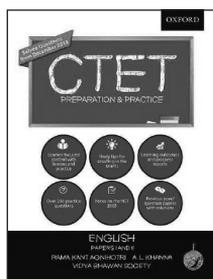
is more than that of linguistics papers. In the fifth chapter, the author, through the analysis of student responses, brings out the mismatch between the assumptions of the syllabus designers and students' preferences. In the final chapter, Tasildar, while suggesting a revamping of the existing syllabi of Special English papers, emphasizes the need of introducing new optional papers and reviewing the policy of promoting add-on courses in English in the conventional degree programmes.

Overall, the book is an excellent source of ideas; it is an interesting and informative account of English Studies in colleges in the context of globalization. It breaks new ground for serious academic contemplation on the course content of the Special English papers offered by the selected universities in India. The book will be of considerable interest to those who follow the English for masses approach. Considering the insightful research and observations put forth by the author, the book is strongly recommended to the BoS members of Indian universities, policy makers, syllabus compilers, teachers, scholars and researchers of English literature and language studies, linguistics, and culture studies, and others interested in exploring new paradigms of engagement with the disciplinary formulation of English Studies in India.

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CTET: Preparation and Practice



Reviewed by Nupur Samuel

Agnihotri, Rama Kant & Khanna, A. L. (2019). *CTET: Preparation and practice*. New Delhi: Oxford. (135)

ISBN: 0-19-948676-X

A quick refresher for ELT and CTET

Agnihotri, Khanna and Vidya Bhawan Society have brought out a one-stop quick refresher for English language teachers preparing for Central Teacher Eligibility Test, or what is popularly known as CTET. This is one in the series of CTET preparation books on all teaching subjects published by Oxford University Press, competitively priced at INR 165. This 135 page long book has four sections: (1) a general section, (2) solved CTET question papers, (3) content chapters and (4) model test papers for practice. This makes it a very comprehensive book, which uses simple, comprehensible language to reach out to its readers. It has an extremely reader-friendly layout, with boxes and arrow markers to guide readers in the *How to Use this Book* section, and text boxes for notes on NCF 2005. Key information is aptly highlighted in bold, and bullet points used wherever necessary. The *Tips for preparing for CTET* and *General Tips for Exam Preparation* sections gives some useful advice to teacher-aspirants such as perusing NCERT textbooks and doing a quick review of NCF to shed some light on how to solve pedagogy questions.

The authors are sensitive to the readers' needs, experience and background as they realize that most CTET aspirants are working professionals with limited time, who may have studied theory of language learning some time ago. Thus, they provide a summarized version of important texts such the National Curriculum Framework 2005 and Right to Education Act 2009. An interesting section on *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* adds value to the early section. Like other sections, this section also has *Questions for Practice*, accompanied by an answer key for self-assessment. In a book that is meant primarily to support test takers in their preparation, these questions at the end of each section are important

indicators of the readers' progress and the areas that need further attention. The *Model Test Papers* with the answer key at the end of the book provide enough questions for self-assessment.

The second section has six solved papers from 2016, 2017 and 2018, which give an idea about the level and kind of questions asked in the exam. On the basis of these the authors have identified some key content areas which are dealt with in the next section, titled *Chapters*. Under this section, the authors have chosen fourteen topics, ranging from language acquisition, language learning and teaching to language skills, errors, role of grammar, disabilities, multilingual classroom, teaching methods, technology, assessment and finally a chapter on comprehension. This is probably because comprehension passages in both Language I and Language II papers carry about fifty per cent weightage. In each chapter, the authors discuss or list the over-arching points of the topic. At the end of each chapter there is a text-box titled *Look Back*, which provides a crisp summary of these points and is likely to come in handy for last minute revision. *Check your Concepts* and *Questions for Practice* allows the reader to do a quick self-assessment. A *Progress Evaluation Checklist* helps to check the preparation for each chapter and can be used effectively by the readers.

The book begins by warning that CTET questions are tricky, and then illustrates it by framing questions at the end of each section that require understanding and application. However, what is missing is content on the teaching of each language skill. For instance, questions on writing, brainstorming, roleplay, storytelling, etc., are included in the previous papers, but these find no mention in the content chapters. These are important areas that are increasingly finding space in English language education, and teacher education programmes are also focusing on developing teachers' competence in using innovative techniques in the classroom. Similarly, a section on activities which help the test-taking teachers to extrapolate their understanding of key concepts through activities would have been an asset to this book. To give an example, the chapter on teaching materials and textbooks has a section on authenticity of materials with reference to Eklavya, Tulika, etc.; an activity which required teachers to bring in similar authentic material to class and plan a short lesson around it, would have been suitable. This suggestion aims to serve the dual purpose of helping teachers think creatively with regard to their classroom planning as well as prepare for CTET. Other than some minor editing and the missing answer key to Solved Question Paper 1 (2016), this book is extremely useful not only for CTET aspirants but for anyone who wants to have a quick reference book of key topics in English language teacher education.

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Activities

Gothic Horror Word Cloud

Amanpreet Sawhney

Name of the Activity: Gothic Horror Word Cloud

Skill Focus: Writing

Sub-skill focus: Descriptive writing

Level: Year 7 students (Secondary)

Estimated time: 1 hour

Group size: 20

Learning Objectives: To learn descriptive writing

Materials: A 4 sheets, coloured pens, and images that provoke horror

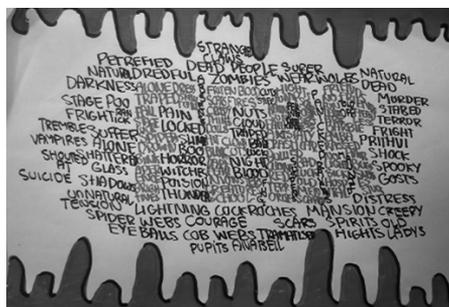
Methodology:

1. Teacher has to display 3-4 gothic horror images on a smart board and then write the word “Horror” on the white board. Give the students two to three minutes to come up with as many words as they can to convey fear. (5 minutes)
2. Divide the students into groups of four. Ask them to share their words with each other. They have to put these words in the form of a word cloud. They can write one word and design it with other horror vocabulary. Encourage the students to use fonts that create a spooky effect. (15 minutes) (student work sample attached)
3. Ask the students to put up their word clouds on the soft board and then walk around the class and make a list of at least 10 new/favourite words they have learnt. (10 minutes)
4. Get the students to write an opening paragraph (80-100 words) for their gothic story using their 10 favourite/new words (15 minutes). The teacher has to walk around and review the work of the students.
5. Ask the students to read their opening paragraph and share their work with the class. (10 minutes)

6. Ask the students to reflect on their work. Get them to write one thing they could achieve, and give them one target to work upon. Example of student reflection: I picked 10 new words, however, I could only use 4 words in my writing. I should aim to use sophisticated vocabulary to create a scary mood. Example of a target: Aim to use strong adjectives to describe the place and create a spooky mood (5 minutes).

Follow-on Activity: Students can use the horror word bank to describe their gothic character. This will reinforce the use of new words.

Evaluation: Students will be encouraged to read their work in class. They will assess their own work as mentioned above. As a class, the work done by the students (both word clouds and opening paragraph) can be put up on the display board which will serve as an opportunity for both peer assessment and peer learning.



Gothic Horror Word Cloud



Horror Images

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Word and Phrases Scavenger Hunt

Ima Kazmi

Name of the Activity: Word and phrases scavenger hunt

Skill Focus: Vocabulary building

Sub-Skill Focus: Reinforcing parts of speech, idioms, alliteration, similes

Language for Which the Activity is Designed: English

Level: Secondary (Class 8)

Estimated Time: 1 hour

Group Size: 20 students

Learning Objectives: To develop the vocabulary of the students

Materials: Newspapers, magazines, word and phrases scavenger hunt task sheets, online timer.

Classroom Set-up: Place ten tables across the room at equal intervals to create ten distinct workstations. Label each workstation with numbers from 1-10. Each workstation should have the following material already kept on the tables as students enter the classroom: 1 magazine and 1 newspaper.

Methodology:

1. Explain the objective of the activity and divide the class into pairs. Distribute the “Word and Phrases Scavenger Hunt” task sheet (sample given here), with ten tasks listed on it. Assign a workstation to each pair and explain to them that after every five minutes, they have to move to the next workstation (5 minutes).
2. Set the online timer for 5 minutes and ask each pair to begin with the first task at their assigned workstation. After every 5 minutes, when the online timer buzzes, the students have to move to the next workstation and work on the next task on their sheet. The teacher/language activity facilitator should move around the class to assist the students. (50 minutes)
3. Once all the pairs have finished all ten tasks, ask the students to share their work by swapping sheets between pairs. (5 minutes)

Follow-up Activities: Put up the completed task sheets on the classroom wall/

notice board. Assign a descriptive writing task to the students, asking them to describe a person or a place using words and phrases from the completed task sheets.

Table 1
Words and Phrases Scavenger Hunt Task Sheet

<p>Task 1: Find 5 words from the newspaper/magazine which begin with the prefix '-in-'. Note down the sentences in which they are used.</p>	<p>Task 2: Find 5 words from the newspaper/magazine which end with the suffix '-ion'. Note down the sentences in which they are used.</p>	<p>Task 3: Locate and note down any 5 adjectives from the newspaper/magazine used to describe a place.</p>	<p>Task 4: Locate and note down any 5 adjectives from the newspaper/magazine used to describe a person.</p>	<p>Task 5: Locate and note down any 5 adjectives from the newspaper/magazine used to describe an event or incident.</p>
<p>Task 6: Locate and note down any 5 verbs from the newspaper/magazine used to describe an event or incident.</p>	<p>Task 7: Locate and note down any 5 adverbs from the newspaper/magazine used to describe an event or incident.</p>	<p>Task 8: Identify and note down any 5 alliterative phrases from the newspaper/magazine.</p>	<p>Task 9: Identify and note down any 3 idiomatic phrases from the newspaper/magazine. Write down their implied meanings.</p>	<p>Task 10: Identify and note down any 3 examples of similes from the newspaper/magazine. Write down their implied effect on the reader.</p>

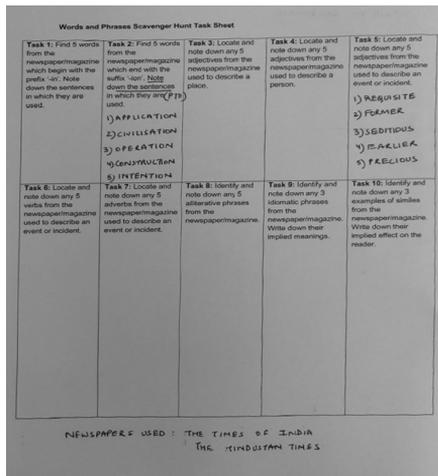


Figure 1. A partially filled sample sheet of the Words and Phrases Scavenger Hunt Task Sheet.



Figure 2. A newspaper cutting from The Times of India.



Figure 3. A newspaper cutting from The Times of India.

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Freeze Frame

Yogita Tomar

'Freeze Frame' encourages collaborative reading, understanding and appreciation of a play. This activity fosters interactivity among peers and engagement with the text. Through the process, students learn to take ownership of their learning experience through multiple readings of the text, by framing insightful questions and probing deeper into plot development and character formation in their attempt to convincingly answer the questions asked while giving students an opportunity to improve their speaking skills.

Skill focus: Reading and Speaking

Level: Classes IX to XII

Class size: 25-30 students

Material Required: Reading textbook, small paper squares and pen

Learning Objectives: 1. Dramatic reading
2. Analysis of the characters and plot

Methodology:

Stage 1: (Time required: 25-30 minutes)

- i) Introduction of the playwright and the context of the play, followed by a brief discussion on the basic plot of the play.
- ii) Students read an excerpt from the play individually to gain a primary understanding of the text.
- iii) A small paper square is given to each student where they write FREEZE in uppercase to make their Freeze Pass.

Stage 2: (Time required: 35-40 minutes)

- i) A small group of student volunteers is selected and each student is assigned a character. Two students are assigned the roles of 'Moderator' and 'Time-keeper' (the teacher could also become the Moderator).

- ii.) Discussion with the volunteers aimed at drawing in depth character sketches.
- iii.) A trial reading to work upon dialogue delivery (intonation, voice modulation etc)

Stage 3: (Time required : 1 hour)

Description: The small group working with the play- text comes forward to do a dramatic reading of the play. While the reading is in progress, rest of the class listens/reads along. The student-audience now has an opportunity to halt the reading at any point and ask a few questions to any of the characters. Each student is given not more than one chance lasting a minute (hereafter referred to as the Freeze interval). The teacher must note that when a student chooses to freeze the reading, they must deposit their Freeze Pass to the Moderator. The following points must be taken into consideration:

- i) Each student in the class has the freedom to ‘Freeze’ the reading of the play.
- ii) One ‘Freeze pass’ will be given to each student and the same is deposited to the Moderator, once it is utilised.
- iii) Not more than two questions per student will be entertained.
- iv) The Freeze interval must not exceed one minute.
- v) The Moderator must ensure rules are followed and time keeper must tap the desk twice to indicate time is up.
- vi) Students are encouraged to use their chance sensibly to gain a deeper insight into the plot/structure and/or attitudes/motivations of a character(s).
- vii) Once Frozen, the actors/readers will suspend the reading and respond to the questions asked.
- viii) The student who has used his/her ‘Freeze Pass’ will go to the reading group in front of the class and tap a character gently.
- ix) A character once tapped must then answer the questions asked by the student.
- x) Once the Freeze interval is over (time keeper claps once to indicate time is up), student-actors resume the reading of the play.

Note: Stage 1 and 2 of the activity are preparatory stages. Freeze comes into play only in stage 3. Simply put, it is similar to the ‘Pause’ button. While watching an audio/visual, the viewer has the discretion to play, pause and then play the narrative as and when they desire. This activity, in principle, tries to apply the same to the in-class learning experience through ‘Freeze’.

The following example outlines how the activity proceeds.

Target group: Class X

Play: An excerpt from *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare (Act III , Scene I)

Dramatic reading of the play is under progress. When Brutus is about to stab Caesar, one student puts up their ‘freeze’ pass. Reading is immediately paused (student-volunteers can freeze/become a statue, to add more fun). The teacher/moderator allows the student a minute to pose and seek an answer to his/her question to the chosen character. Questions to Brutus could be - Why did you conspire to kill Caesar? Was he not a loyal friend to you? How do you think Caesar would react to your betrayal? In what way was Caesar a threat? and so on. Once the questions are answered to satisfaction, reading of the play is resumed.

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Reports

Indian Popular Fiction: Redefining the Canon – National Conference at Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi

A report by Indrani DasGupta

The Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi, in collaboration with FORTELL, organized its 4th Interdisciplinary National Conference titled “Indian Popular Fiction: Redefining the Canon” on 16 and 17 January 2019. The highlights of the conference included the presence of luminaries from the world of Hindi and English popular fiction such as Vishwajyoti Ghosh, Advaita Kala and Devapriya Roy. The keynote address was delivered by the doyen of Hindi crime fiction, Sri Surendra Mohan Pathak.

The Principal, Dr. Sunil Sondhi, in his welcome address, opened up the debate surrounding the notion of “popular” with the question, “Is Popular always good?” Dr. Gitanjali Chawla, the convenor of the Conference, highlighted the controversial status of Indian popular fiction. While academicians have for long scoffed at this genre calling it vulgar and devoid of aesthetic value, its avid consumption by the masses merits rethinking as the “popularity” of these literatures challenges the idea of literary merit itself. The co-convenor of the conference, Dr. Prem Kumari Srivastava stated that earlier these works of fiction were found only at places such as bookstands at railway stations and pavement bazaars. However, now, they were also being promoted at places such as the Oxford Bookstore. This underscored a need to focus on the transition, shifting paradigms and perspectives surrounding the terrain of Indian popular fiction.

Delivering the keynote address, Sri Surendra Mohan Pathak shared his observations and experiences from his own journey of six decades as a writer of crime fiction. Contesting the validity of the literary canon in terms of the wide readership of pulp fiction as against the confinement of canonical work only within the academia, he argued that the commitment of the “pulp” writer

and content of these popular works were not a matter of debate. The best-selling author, columnist, screenplay writer and the guest of honour at the conference, Advaita Kala, questioned the veracity of classifying writers under labels such as “chick-lit”. Kala bolstered her argument with her personal experiences by stating that these generic categorizations served to restrict writing, while also denying legitimate attention from literary pundits. Kala stated that if publishing a book was an insular process, working as a screenplay writer was quite different as many factors such as “age” served to weigh down one’s writing within the world of cinema.

In the first plenary session titled “Experimenting with form”, the relationship of textual strategies with content was foregrounded. In this session, Devapriya Roy, the author of the critically acclaimed novel, *Heat and Dust Project*, underlined that Indian popular fiction was not merely a commercial venture, but a form of writing that encapsulated a personal touch borne from one’s subjective experiences. She posited that the style and content of this subjective writing was often experimental in nature and demanded more than instant gratification from readers. In the same session, Deepa Agarwal, the well-known children’s fiction writer, argued that the idea of children’s literature being a didactic piece directed at instilling moral values in children was completely unacceptable. She posited that children’s literature involved resisting stereotypes and exploring one’s quotidian existence; at times through the lens of fantastical and folkloric themes.

The second plenary session titled “Who is writing?”, held on the second day of the conference focused on the relationship between an author’s work and his art and the importance of influence in the development of a particular style. Vishwajyoti Ghosh, one of the most notable speakers in this session, discussed his growth as a graphic novelist tracing his journey from being an avid comic book reader to being influenced by calendar art iconography and the urban milieu of Delhi. Ghosh argued that pictures are not supplementary to the content of the text, rather pictures are the “text”, suggesting that style and content are inextricably interwoven. During the same session, Dr. Anuradha Marwah, the well-known writer and academician, stated that her novels were different from the so-called chick-lit novels. She added that a writer discovers one’s true calling in the process of writing and any text is located within oneself.

In the third plenary session titled “The art of writing”, the process and strategy of writing was documented. This session featured Niraj Srivastava, debut writer of the historical novel, *Daggers of Treason: The Curse of the Mughals Series - Vol. I*. Niraj Srivastava explained that historical fiction entailed writing in the fashion of the fictional characters and positioning oneself in the same milieu. To bring

history alive, he stated that the writer must share the perspective of the characters. The second author of this session was Karan Verma, who is well known for his novel *Jack and Master: A Tale of Friendship*. Verma stated that his art was an ode to his choice of unconventional careers. His writing mirrored his struggles as well as his learning from his experiences in working in different professional fields.

Several papers were also presented by delegates in thematically varied sessions over the two-day conference, offering wide-ranging critical insights into the various debates surrounding the literariness and legitimacy of this terrain taking into account the proliferation of various genres such as detective, crime, suspense, erotic fiction and the reinterpretation of mythic narratives and folktales restated in contemporary idiom. These papers sought to explore the intricate network of relationships between political beliefs and this literature of the masses as also the role of technology and digitization in concomitantly reformulating the idea of the literary canon itself.

The valedictory session was chaired by Prof. Raj Kumar, Head, Department of English, University of Delhi and the panel included Prof. Simi Malhotra from Jamia Millia Islamia along with notable decision makers from the publishing field—Ms. Aditi Maheshwari-Goyal, Director-Copyrights & Translation, Vani Prakashan; Ms. Karthika V. K., Managing Editor, Westland Publications; Ms. Mansi Subramaniam, Senior Commissioning Editor, Penguin Random House. The panel debunked the idea of literature being outside the purview of market forces and restated the dominance of canon as being shaped not by literary concerns but by the symbiotic relationship between readers, authors, the publishing industry and political ideologies.

The valedictory session, was followed by a cultural event in association with SPIC MACAY, with a Kathak dance performance by the noted danseuse, Ms. Rani Khanum.. A book exhibition was held on both days of the Conference, highlighting the interface of popular literature and other popular cultural art forms with commerce. The conference ended with an interrogation on genres and parochial classifications with a view to position popular fiction as dynamic and interdisciplinary. The conference widened our understanding of the various debates surrounding Indian popular fiction.

Indrani Das Gupta is a Doctoral Fellow from the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. She is currently working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. Her areas of interest include popular culture, Victorian, modern British and post-modern literature, science fiction and detective fiction.

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From Page to Stage: National Seminar at Rajdhani College, University of Delhi

A report by Bharti Sharma

The English Literary Association, Rajdhani College organized a National Seminar on “Text to Performance: Drama in Classroom and Beyond” in collaboration with FORTELL on 27 February 2019. Despite notions of superiority of the written word, there has always been a fascination for the audio-visual medium of expression. With literature being treated as elitist and theatre as being treated for the masses, the idea of transforming a text into a performance is to make it more approachable to the people and also to impart a more synaesthetic appeal to the text.

The aim of the seminar was to analyze the pedagogical nuances related to reading, studying and teaching drama in the classroom, and also to take drama beyond the classroom for better understanding of the text. The seminar addressed drama in all its modes and variations, including literary drama, amateur theatre, realist theatre and folk theatre. One of the objectives of the seminar was to decipher the role of drama in social and political contexts, particularly in the current digital era, in which the young generation of playwrights and performers constantly endeavour to make their productions available to a large audience. The discussion also revolved around the relationship between theory and practice, and brought together academics, researchers and practitioners of drama to understand the process of evolution from text to performance.

The seminar began with a “Welcome Address” by Principal Dr. Rajesh Giri, who observed that the topic was of interest to all as we have a natural tendency to learn better from visual experience. Dr. Rachna Sethi, Convenor, English Literary Association, outlined the idea and concept behind the topic of the seminar. She highlighted the performative aspect of theatre that is often neglected or ignored when teaching drama in the classroom. She also talked about sensitizing students

to the vibrant Delhi theatre scene.

Professor G. J. V. Prasad from the Centre of English Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University was invited as the Keynote Speaker. He discussed drama as being an inseparable part of human experience; he observed that drama has always been in and beyond the classroom since we all are born performers. The Guest of Honour, Professor Raj Kumar, Head, Department of English, University of Delhi focused on the representation of the Dalits in Indian regional drama. He opined that Indian playwrights have usually been prejudiced in their portrayal of Dalit characters, pushing them into marginalized and minor roles.

The first session, chaired by Dr. Varsha Gupta, had enlightening and stimulating presentations by Dr. Sanjay Kumar (Hans Raj College), Dr. Payal Nagpal (Janki Devi Memorial College) and Mr. Siddharth N. Kanoujia (Hindu College). Dr. Sanjay Kumar emphasized that the history of theatre is the history of defiance and resistance, and in the present time, it is a mark of resistance against the State and the market. He talked of drama as an expression of radicalism in political and social contexts and shared his experiences as a theatre practitioner while talking about the challenges he has to constantly face. Dr. Payal Nagpal discussed the changes and experimentation in theatre that are in tandem with the socio-historical transitions. She traced the trajectory of theatrical forms, starting from the naturalistic and expressionistic theatre to illusionistic theatre to the epic theatre of Bertolt Brecht. Mr. Siddharth N. Kanoujia led an interesting discussion on the pedagogical challenges of teaching Shakespeare to a heterogeneous group of students. He observed that while diversity should be encouraged, it poses its own challenges when it comes to teaching drama in the classroom.

Ms. Divya Bajpai Jha chaired the next session that focused on performance as an art. The resource persons for this session had two theatre actors and practitioners, Mr. Bhaskar Jha (an alumnus of Rajdhani College) and Mr. Piyush Kumar. They highlighted the importance of observation, ambience, costume and voice modulation among actors. They suggested that actors should be open to understanding the director's perspective while retaining their individual expression. They emphasized the need for actors to establish a dialogue with the audience in order to have an impactful performance.

The day ended with an entertaining Indianized adaptation of Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, by the students of B. A. Eng. (H) II year under the direction of Ms. Neha Gaur. The play conveyed a powerful message by connecting the theme of the performance to the current #MeToo movement. The professional theatre practitioners present shared feedback and insights with the amateur-student actors.

The day ended with closing observations by Mr. Shafiqul Alam, who discussed the transformation that a text undergoes as it moves from words to a multi-layered performance.

The seminar was successful in realizing its objectives. During the course of the day, the speakers discussed various aspects of text and performance, including different types of dramas; technical aspects and reception of a theatrical performance; the problems that activist theatre faces; and the theatrical challenges that the performers have to deal with while representing a textual character on stage.

Dr. Bharti Sharma teaches English literature and language at Rajdhani College, University of Delhi. Her areas of interest are romantic poetry, feminist writings, postcolonial literatures and American fiction. She specializes in Canadian fiction.

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Call for Papers

January 2020 Issue

Special Theme:

Teaching and Learning of English in Multilingual Contexts

As a result of globalization and exponential growth of information and communication technology English has become the language of higher education, international trade and upward mobility all over the world. This has led the education planners to focus on English as a compulsory subject from very early stage as part of curriculum. English language has thus occupies a dominating role in multilingual societies, and has evolved itself into a complete language with distinct features resulting from its active association with dominant languages in those teaching learning contexts. It is, therefore, imperative to note that English is not just a language but a composite of many variations based on region, culture, and competence of the users of English. It need not be seen as a deviant form but as another language in its own right, heavily influenced and coloured by the languages prevalent in a specific multilingual context. We invite papers addressing this linguistic complexity and issues relating to English as a medium of instruction and tool for construction and dissemination of knowledge.

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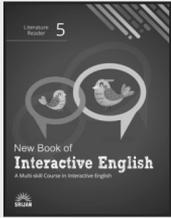
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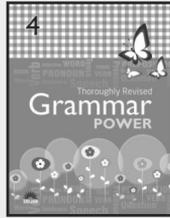
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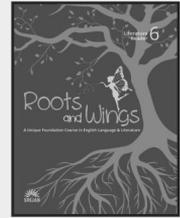
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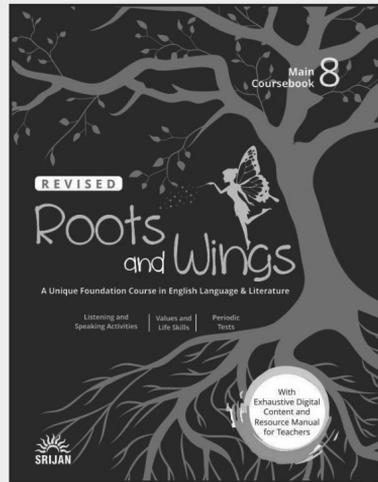
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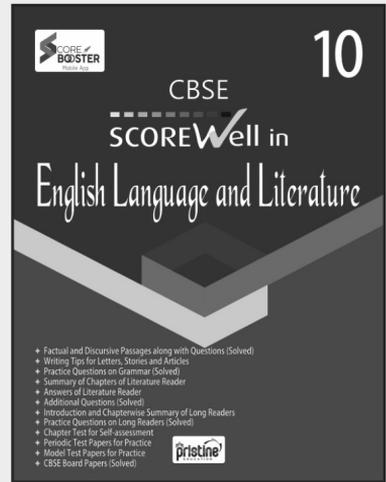
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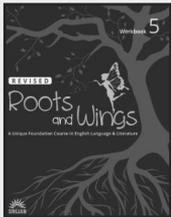
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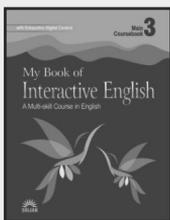
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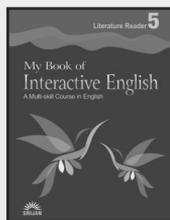
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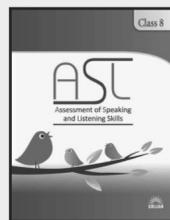
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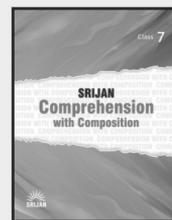
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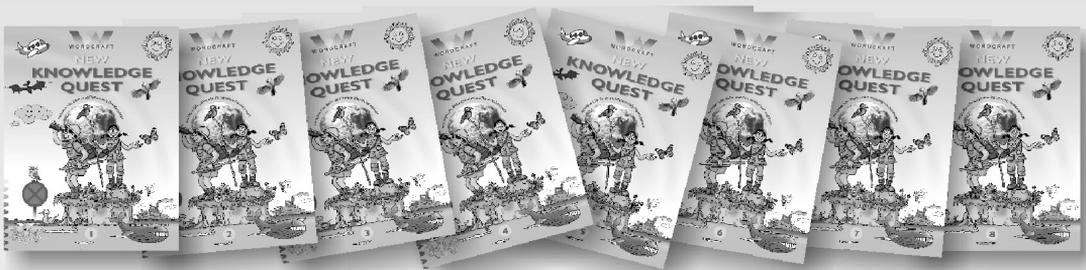
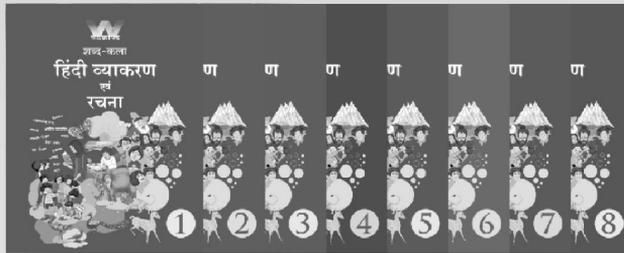
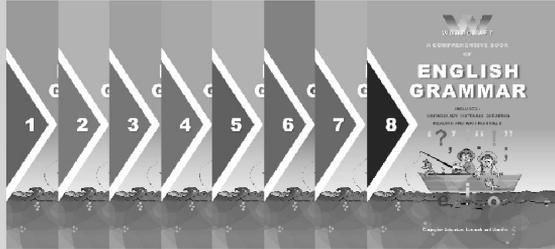
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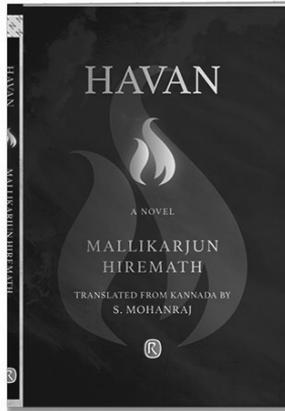
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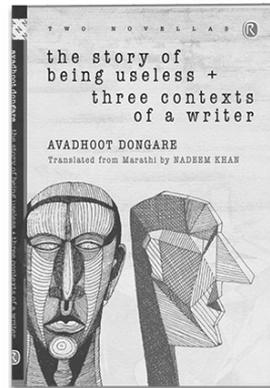


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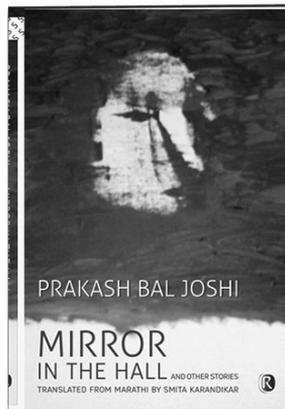
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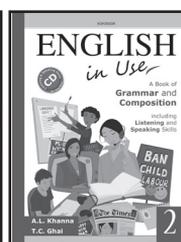
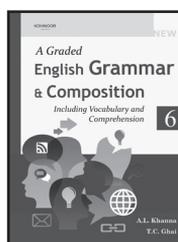
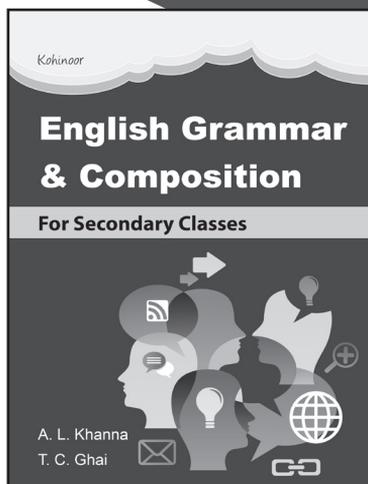
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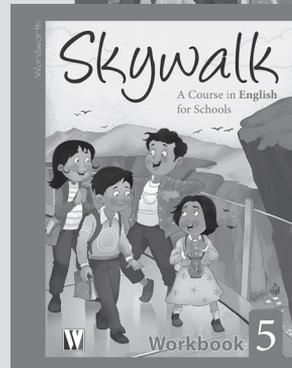
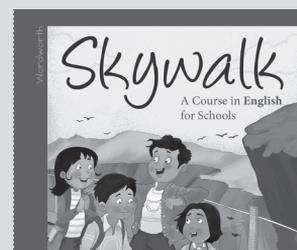
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FORTELL has organized numerous workshops and seminars over the years in areas of teaching methodology, materials development and curriculum design for professional development of teachers of English. Its resource persons are academically recognised for training programmes in English Studies. Moreover the journal published by **FORTELL** is its most visually recognised face in academia. *Fortell* journal is a bi-annual, peer-reviewed journal available in both print (ISSN 2229-6557) and online (ISSN 2394-9244) versions. It has published 38 issues so far, and the entire archive through its open access policy is available on the website (www.fortell.org). The journal, with its thrust on pedagogical issues, is a pioneer in attempting to bridge the fields of literature and language and in linking theoretical concerns with classroom practices. Catering to both college and school teachers, it plays a significant role as an interface between school teaching and higher education.

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