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From the Editor's Desk

## **When Teachers of English Forget the Society**

The title, I know, is either misleading or ambiguous. Mostly, the readers are likely to think that this brief write up is about the teacher's commitment to society. True, teachers must be committed to society—more than any other subject teachers, teachers of English, considering the social relevance of English language.

But, here I am not entering into the ethics of teaching, but the limited circle or the space in which English is situated or located as a second language. The word 'society' here refers to two directions into which language swings—the world outside the classroom and the speech community which share English for communication. The former decides, defines, describes and above all restricts the use of English language. The latter, overflowing from the classroom to bank counters, editorial desks, business encounters, sports commentaries, newspaper reading etc. provides the immediate background on which classroom transaction can be, and must be placed. The former is rather abstract, while the latter more concrete and tangible. When the teachers of English are constantly aware of these two mutually complementary hemispheres, teaching-learning of English can never be degraded into an unrealistic ritual.

What role does the teacher's awareness of society or, to use the technical term speech community, play while engaged in teaching within the highly restricted space of the classroom? To me, the answer is that an average Indian learner

of English, or for that matter even the teacher can't 'live' in an actual speech community wherein English is the language of day to day transaction. The paradox is that, a day has come finally in which normal existence itself becomes difficult without an 'approximate use' of English language. When the teacher is caught in this paradox, the effective way of saving herself and her learners is to let an osmosis flow between the real world outside and the artificial world inside the classroom.

Let me demonstrate my point to teachers of lower class, with the help of an example. You are teaching English in your own way. A small procession passes by along the road in front of the school. That means, the society outside is vibrant and dynamic when life inside the class has turned dull. What does a conventional teacher do? What can a resourceful teacher do? The former tries, of course in vain, to get the class's attention focussed on her (teaching), while the latter allows the attention of the individual learner go grazing for some time, while she herself enjoys the freedom from the boredom of the class.

Fully knowing the working habits and the teaching style of the latter, the learners observe the procession, gather the necessary information and come back to class following the beckoning of the teacher. The ten minute session that follows is an interaction (i) among the students, (ii) between the students and the teacher, (iii) and

*(Continued on page:8)*

Guest's Column

## **How Are Local Languages Used in Schools? - Using Learners' L1 to Teach English**

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### **Abstract**

Among the local languages used in Western Odisha, Sambalpuri has more number of users. The other local languages used in this region include Sundargarhi, Sadri, Chhatisgarhi and so on. These and Sambalpuri are used in schools for certain purposes. They are viewed as substandard languages. Odia is the medium of instruction and it is considered as the standard language. Though Odia is the medium of instruction and used primarily in classroom transactions, the role of local languages in education cannot be ignored. In this paper, I would like to study what role local languages usually play in primary and secondary education. Can they be used in the classroom as part of instruction? Will they serve any better purpose if they are used? These questions will be addressed in the context of English language education. The paper will also report some results of experiments done among learners and propose ways of integrating local language particularly Sambalpuri in the classroom.

(Key Words: Local languages, Sambalpuri, Odia, L1, Multilingual, Classroom)

### **The Context**

The target learners come from Western parts of Odisha. They have multilingual background. They have their home language which is Sambalpuri. They use Odia as MOI and learn English as a subject. They use home language (also referred to L1) at home, with their parents, friends, in the village, play round and in their surroundings. Odia is used as the medium of instruction. It is available to them in text books. Other forms of exposure to Odia are television, news papers, signboards, and so on. Even in the classroom transactions such as in giving instructions, greetings, conversation, and explanation home language (L1) is used. As said earlier, learners have exposure to Odia in text books and media. The text books have many aspects alien to their contexts, but on the whole, the text books are educative. In this

paper, an attempt has been made to understand the contexts and purposes for which learners L1 is used and how it can be used more extensively to support and maximize learning.

### **The Concept of L1**

L1 is Learners' first language. It is known by various names such as Home language, Mother Tongue and so on. There are different connotations associated with it. G. Rajagopal lists these terms associated with L1.

First language-

Native language

Mother tongue

Primary language

Stronger Language

(Rajagopal, 1992, p.97).

## **Theories of Teaching and Learning**

In the 1970s, Direct Method was in place. Under this, exposure to the target language was given utmost importance and the aim was to maximize it and minimizing learners L1 as it was considered as a hindrance. But under the Bi/Multilingual approach learners' first language is used as a support. It advocates that L1 should be used in the classroom. Studies (Mahanand, 2010, 2013, Meher, 2011) have proved that the use of L1 has helped learners in developing their language skills.

## **The Case or L1**

Educationists have opined that learners first language is important for his/her education. They include Piaget (1959; Bruner, 1985; Vyogotsky, 1978; Cummins, 1986, Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981; Pattanayak, 1990). Halliday states that the environment in which the child grows up contributes immensely to the development of the child and language of the child is the main instrument of growth. According to him: "The sticking fact is that it is the most ordinary everyday uses of language with parents, brothers and sisters neighbours and children in the home, in the street and the park, in the shops and the trains and the buses, that serve to transmit, to the child, the essential qualities of society, and the nature of social being" (9). Rabindranath Tagore also suggested that children's learning should be in harmony with the milieu they are learning. He states: "The young mind should be saturated with the ideas that human world which is in harmony with the world around it" (19). When we say social milieu it includes language of the community in which the child grows up and in most cases it is the child's first language or L1.

The UNESCO (1958) advocates the use of L1 in education. The UN Declaration of Linguistic Human Rights too asks for the use of L1 in education. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas argues that teaching children in other than their mother tongue prevents learning. As she states: "educating indigenous/Tribal and Minority (ITM) children (including immigrant minorities) through the medium of dominant language in a

submersion or an early-exit transitional programme denies them access to education because of linguistic, pedagogical and psychological barrier it creates. Thus, it violates the human right to education" (9). Kangas stated the above in the contexts of the tribal and migrant learners. However, it is applicable to linguistic minority too. The linguistic minority learners are also victims of the dominant language. There is a need to integrate the learners' L1 into school languages. It is worth looking at how L1 is used at present.

## **How is L1 used at present?**

From the researcher's observation, L1 is used for different functions in schools situated in Western Odisha. For observation and experiments five high schools in Sohela Block of Bargarh district in Odisha were visited by the author and his associates. They have found that the local language -Sambalpuri is used in school for the following functions.

### **1. Personal interactions**

Odia is the school language in these schools but Sambalpuri is the home language. Children use Sambalpuri at home to interact with their parents, grand parents, siblings and friends. In schools too they interact with their teachers and classmates in Sambalpuri when it comes to personal communication or socializing.

### **2. Giving instructions**

Instructions are a common practice in the teaching process. Instructions should be clear and effective. To achieve this, L1 is used most of the time in the classroom. Instructions are given when learners are given to do some tasks and exercises. Instructions are also given in tests and exams.

### **3. Explaining meaning of words**

L1 is also used in explaining meaning of words. Sometimes grammatical elements and concepts are explained in L1.

Apart from English, L1 is being used in Mathematics, Social Sciences and Sciences in explaining concepts and problems. There have

been examples of a lot of code switching and code mixing too.

Though L1 has been used in limited domains, there is some hesitation among teachers to use it extensively as this has been seen as a sub-standard language. But L1 can be used extensively to maximize learning. Here are some more possible ways of integrating L1 in the classroom transactions and beyond.

### **Possible ways of integrating L1**

There are different possible ways of integrating learners' L1. They include:

#### **1. Tasks in the classroom**

Group activities could be given by the teacher in which learners will be encouraged to use their L1 and then shift to L2 and L3. For instance, input tasks for writing can be given in L1 for discussion, teacher can use L2 (Odia) for more explanation and re-enforcement if needed The L3 (English can be used for the target skills. Apart from these other contexts in which L1 could be used include:

#### **2. Explain concepts of ideas**

Concepts can be explained better in L1 as learners find it easy to understand. Though Odia is used, teacher can use L1 in-between and switch over to Odia again. Multilingual dictionaries can be used in this purpose.

#### **3. Explain Grammar points**

In the same way, grammar points can be better explained through L1.

#### **4. Explain meaning of words.**

Unless learners understand meaning of words well, they will not be able to use the word. They can understand it better if their L1 is used. Here also multilingual dictionary can be used.

#### **5. Extensive reading of stories, poems, drama and so on.**

We have abundant literature available in Sambalpur in the forms of stories, poems, plays and so on. These forms can be used by students to develop extensive reading. Reading in L1 will help in reading in L2 too.

#### **6. Multilingual Storytelling sessions**

Multilingual story telling sessions should be encouraged. This will enhance learners' language awareness. A multilingual approach to language learning will not only help learners English but also help them make their languages survive along with English.

#### **7. Translation and writing sessions**

Students should also be encouraged to translate short text from Sambalpur to English and vice versa. They can write critical appreciation and reviews of literary pieces.

#### **8. Using songs, stories, riddles and other folk forms in local language**

The region we are talking about is vibrant in folk songs, folktales, riddles and proverbs. Children are exposed to them and are familiar with them. These can be used in the classroom too. Some of these may be used as model for memorizing lessons. For instance, take the proverb:

1. Karma keekadasi,  
phulphutebaramasi.

Translation:

**The festival of Karma comes  
On the Ekadasi day**

**Flowers of all kinds do blossom all way**

By remembering this song/proverb a child learns and rememebers the date of the Karma festival.

2. Eka- janhamanudekha,

Dui-kathakhandebuhi...

Rough Translation:

**One, look at uncle moon**

**Two, carry a log of wood**

Here an example of another song:

3. AaJanhamaamusaragasashi

Mo kanhuhaterepadatukhasi

Mo kanhu tote helheanai

To asibabatakurahichhichahin

Translation:

Come, you moon uncle of my child.  
You are the moon of the sky  
My baby has been staring at you.  
Looking for your way to come.  
Games like "Ghoghho rani, antheantheapani"

can also be tried using bi/multilingual approach. Such possibilities are proposed in the National Curriculum Framework (2005).

In this way, we can make social discourses available to the learners. Halliday says, "Information from the social system has this property, that is typically presented in highly context-specific doses" (79). This is how a learner can learn and grow in harmony with society and Nature. Bikram Das, an eminent educationist and scholar wrote to me a mail message. Part of which I would like to quote below as it is relevant to the subject. He states: "I would like children to develop, through stories, an attitude of love and respect towards Nature and the kind of natural like we associate with... cultures of India. ... I want children to be re-connected with that world- the world that are our tribal myths represent."

### **9. Using Local culture**

Not only language, but local cultures should also be used in pedagogical practices. Lessons, festivals, legends, freedom fighters, places, arts and crafts can be used.

### **10.Extra-curricular Activities**

Extra-curricular activities such as poetry reading, story writing, debate, essay writing, etc. can be conducted to enable students use local language and English. Here also bi/multilingual approach should be followed.

### **Conclusion**

As it has been already said, home language should not be viewed as a constraint but a resource. It is through MT that learners connect themselves to their environment. They use these resources in the classroom and engage in sharing

and creating thoughts and ideas. From here they proceed to explore new things. They proceed from known to unknown. D.P. Pattanayak (1990) rightly observes: "that mother tongue anchors the child to culture." Due to certain prejudices the value and importance of L1 is not realized by teachers, parents and administrators. Though L1 is used in certain limited domains, its use can be maximized through various creative ways. Here few steps have been suggested. These are only a few suggestions. More opportunities can be created to facilitate integration. The author has experimented this among learners. His scholar has also done research among the Sambalpuri speakers and all these have proved to be very effective. It is hoped that the erudite readers will also try these!

### **Notes**

1. The researcher undertook an experiment with high school students by using familiar texts in their classroom in their L1 first and then in Odia and English. Students took a lot of interest and the learning outcome was substantial. This has been reported in a paper titled "English among the Under the Un-privileged: A Study of the Marginalized Learners in West Odisha." English language Teaching: Perspective from the Periphery. Jaipur: Aaviskar Publishers, 2013. Another experiment was conducted using indigenous Oral Narratives in Sambalpuri language and there has been significant improvement of language skills of students. This has been reported in a paper titled "Using indigenous Oral Narratives as scaffolding in L2 learning." *Language: A Journal of Language Teaching and Language Studies*. Vol.2, October 2010. Pp 143-153. Sadananda Meher's M.Phil dissertation titled "Using Home Language as a Support for English language Education" supervised by the author and submitted to EFL University in 2011 is an extensive study of how the use of Sambalpuri can enhance learners' reading skills.

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## Coloured Judgements

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A teachers, we are often told: "Think, reflect, keep an open mind; you will not grow otherwise..'. Very recently, I went through an experience which made me understand what this really meant; I realised that as teachers all of us have to also be learners, and without a 'last date' attached to it. To explain what I mean, I need to share with you one of my experiences that left me not liking myself very much, one which is etched deep in my 'racial' memory. I was in Sri Lanka a couple of months ago, the day I turned 55 in fact, to participate in a programme on teaching life skills, and make a presentation on aural/oral language assessment at the school level. Representatives from Cambridge Assessment had also been invited to do something similar.

I finished my presentation and after lunch, the Cambridge representatives were to make theirs. I was particularly interested in listening to them to find out what the stance of professional 'big time' evaluation experts on summative oral testing would be; at the same time, as an evaluation person, I was quite aware that the 'what' of the presentation was not likely to spring any major surprises. Knowing that post prandial presentations tend to have a soporific effect on the listener (yes, I only meant "we tend to feel sleepy in after-lunch sessions") and aware that I could not use the 'hand on head, eyes half-closed' ruse, I was looking for ways to stay awake when I realized that I could use this as an opportunity to listen to this language evaluation discussion in Tamil. A Sri Lankan government ruling dictates that simultaneous interpretation of all major En-

glish deliberations must be made available in both Sinhala and Tamil.

My mother tongue is Tamil and I have studied it as a second language up to the college level but my language of academics in general and ELT in particular is English. Discussing evaluation in Tamil would have been impossible, but I hoped I could make sense of it if I heard it.

I therefore marched off to the interpreters' table to find out how it was being done, and whether I could listen in Tamil etc. There were 5 grey haired people sitting at that table, 4 men and 1 woman. The men were in suits, tied and booted, while the woman was in what seemed to me an untidily tied sari. The men and the women were not fair, and had a light brown complexion but the woman had darker skin, a bit scarred. I automatically assumed that the 4 men were the interpreters and that the 'unkempt clothes and hair lady' must be there to handle some clerical work. The talk began and I got myself a pair of ear phones and started listening. And whose voice did I hear first? The lady's, and she was doing a remarkable job: simultaneous interpretation is not easy. One has to listen to what is being said, and then, while the talk is going on, keep providing the equivalents, as fluent discourse, in the other language. This is done in 15-minute intervals; that is, one person speaks for 15 minutes and then the next person takes over. One just needs to look at the person who has just finished to realize how difficult and onerous this task is: they just rest their heads on their hands on the table in front of them, or lean back on their chairs and close their eyes for at least 5

minutes. After the session was over, I spoke to them about their choice of words and we had a good discussion on a variety of topics like the problems of interpretation versus translation. I don't even remember their names now, but the three of us, the two Tamil interpreters, the lady and the man, and I, had a very interesting discussion, in fluent academic English on these problems, and then continued with a discussion in Tamil, where I was the one who was at a big disadvantage. I did not have the content words for many concepts in evaluation, and had to search for them, supplied more often than not by the lady interpreter.

I felt terrible at that point, but masked it and got on with the discussion, but later, in the privacy of my room, sat down to think and did not like what I 'saw'

This was not a simple 'appearances are deceptive' issue. It was much more than that..Deeper? Ingrained? Biased?

An oldish lady in her mid fifties with grey hair, neatly parted down the middle, hair tied in a knot

and in a slightly (in retrospect) crumpled saree (later I discovered that she had travelled nearly 50 kms by bus to get to the programme in time) according to my prejudiced mind could only be a clerk! And this conclusion I had come to without even thinking about it. I did not like what I saw of myself and so sat down to think and reflect. Have I done this earlier? Have I been ruder or harsher to a student with a dark complexion? To a student who spoke with a strong regional accent? Let a pretty girl or handsome lad get away with a lot more than I would have otherwise....

I could not recollect actual instances, but in the fringes of my consciousness were traces of such prejudices...all I could do was squirm mentally and make promises to be unbiased as far as possible... to not ask, how dark? Sepia or chocolate....

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■ (When Teachers of *Continued from page:2*)

between the students and the 'text' on the board. (While interaction is in progress at the first two levels, the board will have a text on it.) The approximate number of people in the procession, their identity (party/group...), their demands, their likely destination etc. will fill the class for about ten minutes. Society has entered the small classroom and now it 'lives' in that room.

A resourceful teacher who possesses a good sense of social awareness can ruminate over the hundreds of ways of the society entering the classroom any given moment, unexpectedly. A controlled or guided interaction can be generated among the learners, teacher and the text in every

day. Ten minutes of exposure in each of the 45 or 50 minute period by all the teachers collectively a day will definitely equip the learners with adequate communication skills.

At higher levels, i.e. in the UG and PG classes, this awareness of the society, if effectively manipulated, students' rhetoric (both spoken and written) will naturally get developed. Debates, discussions, elocution, essay writing—all can be centred around social issues.

Let teachers of English always be aware of the society and its pulse beats.

## **Language Competence in Non-Language Classes – through the Hidden Chasms**

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### **Abstract**

In a multilingual country like India, teaching other subjects through English is a challenging task. More so is the case when the class is heterogeneous in terms of the English language competence of the students, wherein the subject teacher has to tackle a multilayered pressure that mainly necessitates the teacher's exercising her knowledge power among the students through this non-native language. Knowledge power, which refers to the teacher's ability to show her intellectual prowess or her subject domain competencies as an expert practitioner, dictates that the teacher is packed with all available information about the subject and thus be "head and shoulders above all" (Payne & Cangemi, 1998). Establishing the power of her knowledge is in fact an inevitable prerequisite for any subject teacher to ensure active student participation in the teaching-learning process. Surprisingly, the status quo of the subject classes gives room to think that despite the strong subject knowledge, it is the language competence that seems to enable the subject teacher to articulate her knowledge power in the class. A distressing fact is that not only one set of students remains dormant because they do not understand anything taught in English, but on the other hand, the competent lot in the class always poses a hidden threat to the subject teacher, one that involves the teacher's language, which definitely disturbs the smooth progress of the class. This paper examines the views of subject teachers of diverse disciplines, regarding teaching their respective subjects through English. The main objectives are i) to address the need to check the attitude of both teachers and students towards setting standards for teaching other subjects through English, and ii) to enunciate language competence as a potential factor to wield knowledge power in subject classes. Data collection for the analysis is done through a working questionnaire. The attempt is only to assess the current practices as found in the Educational institution that the researcher is affiliated to and not to generalize them as facts at large. Suggestions for augmentation are based only on the inferences derived from the data collected.

### **Introduction**

During the good old times, it was not uncommon to see English teachers teaching other subjects and other subject teachers teaching English in India. For an English teacher, if she is devoid of any sentiments to the aesthetics of English language and literature, it is no big issue at all to teach any matter, i.e. content, in English to teach its grammar. But for other subject teachers, who are very proficient in their respec-

tive subject/s but not so in English, it is definitely a matter of concern and difficulty to teach their subject through English. Especially in a heterogeneous class where they have students of assorted abilities, language proficiency is a big hitch for the subject teachers, when it comes to holding intact the students' concentration.

To make a successful classroom presentation, particularly at the tertiary level, the teachers need subject knowledge coupled with classroom

management skills, awareness about the contexts they are teaching and a perfect understanding of the students and their competencies, attitudes and motivational levels (Andrew et al, 2005). The one common thread that connects all these requirements is language proficiency. It is a minimum expectation of the students that the teacher should talk on their level of comprehension, that is, the learner should be able to understand what the teacher is saying (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). In second language learning, this transference from one speaker's use of language to another speaker's use of language is viewed as a contamination factor in the use of the L2. In this context, Stander (2001) rightly senses that where teachers' own L2 knowledge is not on an acceptable standard for the use of English, their poor usage and knowledge of the language are transferred to the learners.

This study creates its premises partly from this fact and takes it further to discuss how language is used as a tool by the subject teacher to wield her knowledge and how the same language effects drastic twists to the extent of spoiling the classroom cadence. Particularly in a tertiary level educational Institution that accommodates students hailing from different societal strata, it is equally challenging for both the teachers and the students alike to meet the language-related issues that are more often than not very unpredictable. With the view to addressing the need to check the attitude of both teachers and students towards setting standards for teaching other subjects through English, and to enunciating language competence as a potential factor to wield knowledge power in subject classes, the following were set as objectives:

- To examine the factors that contribute to constructing the involvement and participation of the students and the teachers in a subject class
- To scrutinize and justify how English language proficiency is used as a tool by the teachers and the students for prejudiced purposes

### **Scope and Limitations**

This study was actually prompted by the students' observations in a periodical student assessment of the faculty, wherein the undergradu-

ate students had desired that some of their teachers spoke bearable English while explaining scientific/technical concepts and theories. While one group expressed that their subject teacher had a poor proficiency in English and her use of ill-formed, ungrammatical language irritated them to go astray, another group inclined to curb the monopoly exercised by the teacher via language. Though there is every possibility that the students may be prejudiced in this regard, we cannot flatly overrule the chances of having subject teachers with low language competence too. However, this study avoids reiterating the same; it rather attempts to expose the crevices of classroom setting that have long been left unattended and therefore uncemented owing to the other pressing academic demands, thereby pronouncing the need to look into this as an issue.

This study is qualitative by nature in that the variables used for the survey do not have sharp technical definitions and therefore they are more representative than absolute. More empirical verification is required for generalization. The argument is built on the observation that at the tertiary level of education, i.e. under graduate level, of all the means that the subject teacher takes to uphold the concentration of the students, language proficiency scores high, which is used by the teacher and by some students alike for more subjective purposes.

The question of demographic details, age and gender of the respondents (learners and teachers) did not arise because the study is confined to the Government-aided Women's University that the researcher is affiliated to, which, though located in a city, accommodates students from all strata of the society. Similarly, while analyzing the involvement of teachers, extrinsic motivational factors like salary benefits, job security and physical environment were not considered for discussion. As far as the language skills are concerned, only the speaking skill is considered for analysis. The questionnaires nevertheless encompass all possible range of issues involved in the topic. Since this study is essentially qualitative the variables for the concepts may seem overlapping. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized at a larger scale. Moreover, as the

chosen area of study encapsulates several disciplines like psychology, education and the like, it requires extensive empirical accuracy for authentication and for a staunch justification of the claim made.

**Methodology**

The primary aim of this study is to discuss language competence as a potential factor that helps the teachers (and some students, at times) to exercise one's power of knowledge in subject classes. Therefore to gauge the same, two sets of questionnaires, one for the subject teachers and the other for the students, were administered. Assuming that at the tertiary level the students are matured enough to consider themselves as the major stake holders of the course of their choice, the questionnaires were administered to 314 undergraduate students and 65 teachers handling different major subjects for degree students in the institution that the researcher belongs to.

Since this study is qualitative by nature, questionnaires were semi-structured with both close-ended and open-ended questions. For pur-

poses of validation, the questionnaires were based on Gardner's 2004 model of Attitude/Motivation Test Battery proposed in the International AMTB Research Project. Few adaptations were also made from the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) of Horwitz, since a substantial part of the study is about English language proficiency.

The Teacher Questionnaire was designed on the basis of the teachers' intrinsic motivation factors, their expectations of students and the like, for which again the ideas were adopted from the models mentioned above. In addition to the Yes/No options, all the questions carried blank space for any explanation intended, and there were also completely open-ended questions aiming at a more candid expression, however subjective it could be. Absolute liberty was given to the respondents, like they did not have to mention their name and the department affiliation anywhere, to ensure more transparency, honesty and authenticity in responses.

The students' questionnaire contained 34 Yes/No questions and 6 open-ended questions. They were categorized as follows:

S.No.	Factors that affect participation	No. of Statements
1.	Beliefs about teacher's knowledge in general	8
2.	Beliefs about teacher's subject knowledge	8
3.	Thoughts about teacher's language proficiency	10
4.	Factors that affect concentration in class	10
5.	Thoughts about the class environment	4
		40

Table 1. Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire for the students was designed in such a manner that all the questions reflect their thoughts about the knowledge power and language proficiency of the teacher and the general class environment, the details of which contribute to the argument of this study. As mentioned earlier, the variables used are more representative than experimental.

Similar to the one meant for the students, the questionnaire for the teachers was used to consolidate the factors that affect the interest of the teachers and substantiate the suppositions of this study. The teachers' questionnaire contained 33 Yes/No questions and 7 open-ended questions. They were categorized as follows:

S.No.	Intrinsic factors that determine classroom management	No. of Statements
1.	Beliefs about students' knowledge in general	6
2.	Beliefs about student involvement in subject classes	7
3.	Personal involvement towards teaching in English	7
4.	Efforts taken to ensure interaction	6
5.	Anticipations about the teaching outcomes	6
6.	Factors that curtail the inclination of the teacher	8
		40

Table 2. Subject Teacher Questionnaire

### Analysis of data

It is a common belief that for all the passion that the teachers have for their respective subject, they deliver it at their best possible modes. However, in an exam-driven education system, many a time despite the positive motivation of the teachers they cannot help but just 'transmit' the subject as a set of theories, laws, principles, etc. When they have to perform the job of information-providers (Brown, 1982) like this, the result is that teaching becomes unstructured with a general assumption that all students are identical and that they can follow the same type of instruction; the students are thus indirectly forced to accept the models that their teachers were taught themselves, a process that portrays the teacher's lack of readiness about students' forms of learning and thought. (Hallbawchs, 1985) This idea has been widely reflected in the responses of the students. A good majority of the students (87%) stated that the teacher never listened to them nor gave them any scope for interaction in the class. 42% of them believe the teacher to be so prejudiced that she divides the class only into groups of brilliant learners and groups of poor learners; what differs among teachers is their choice of one of these two groups as their exclusive audience and design their mode of teaching accordingly, depriving the other group of the attention they deserve.

What matters the most here is if the teacher chooses to favour the brilliant crew, she focuses on this group and eventually ignores the other, which actually necessitates her to be bilingual in her lecture in order to ensure absolute understanding. She goes on delivering the content in English, may be as a means to maintain her high profile (43%) among these 'brilliant' or to 'satisfy' their expectations (32%). 54% of the students feel that, as a result, they are deprived of an opportunity to gain knowledge of the subject, since some of them prefer being taught in the regional language rather than in English.

Contrary to this, 52% of students stated that their teacher speaks faulty English and this takes away their respect for the teacher, as they believe that any teacher should have good competency in English. This set of students has obviously had their schooling through English medium of instruction and are proficient in English, who believe language plays a crucial role in enhancing their career prospects. 32% stated that, in a situation when the teacher uses an erratic language, they tend to discredit her by asking for explanations in English, while 21% said they would stay indifferent in the class.

On the other hand, the analysis of teachers' responses brings to light their cloaked grievances and concealed contentions, especially when it comes to deciding between language and subject. It is indeed appropriate in this context to cite some of the qualities specified by the publication entitled 'Speaking for Excellence: Lan-

guage Competencies for Effective Teaching Practice' funded by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, as the essential competencies that a teacher should possess.

- use of oral language to promote the comparison, sharing, and clarification of concepts and notions (Cormier et al., 2010; Dulude, 1994);
- ability to provide a clear and economical explanation of their own knowledge and ideas (Dulude, 1996);
- timely and strategic use of oral language for classroom and student behaviour management (Liva, 1995; Mottet & Gervais, 2007);
- ability to distinguish between explanation, argumentation, interaction, correction, refutation, and feedback and to use them appropriately (Lebrun, 2008a; Leboulanger, 2004);
- linguistic skills required for reformulation, repetition, and substitution (Armand, 2009);
- knowledge of how to consider their audience, how to evaluate the level of knowledge of listeners, how to provide clarity about new terms and to summarize main ideas, and how to make explicit their intended plan for communication (Boyer, 1985; Howe, 1994; Plessis-Bélaïr, 2004).

Considering the above as the common qualities desirable for teachers across the globe, there is every justification for the students to expect their teacher to be not just knowledgeable but also sagacious enough to ensure that even the last bencher has understood the concept being taught. The questionnaire meant for the subject teachers reflected this concern too for which the teachers had given myriad responses. In the first place, according to a good majority of teachers (69%), a low proficiency in English is not an anomaly at all, as long as they can convey the concept on hand. Nevertheless, an equally fair percentage of them (65%) state that they do use English, either to inspire the non-conversant group to interact (33%) or to establish their control over the students (31%). Stating that to hold back a handful of brilliant students and to thwart them from outsmarting the teacher, they have to put their (English) foot

down. Surprisingly, 23% of the teachers confessed that they are not competent enough in English and sometimes grope for words and appropriate language structures and forms. As a defensive measure, these teachers state they either shout at or turn absolutely apathetic to those students that demand more erudite presentation.

More than half (53%) admits that they do not take any special efforts to hone their language skills, though they are very much aware of their faulty language and the students' reaction to the same. On the other hand, during demanding occasions where they ought to ensure clarity, they (69%) only prefer simplified English to the regional language. Either way it does not serve any purpose because, the smart ones know that the teacher is not proficient in the language and so they tend to be indifferent; and the less smart stay perplexed throughout the class as they realize the teacher is uncompassionate.

More than three quarters of the teachers (79%) feels that they are comfortable with the lecturing mode in English but not so very much the same in casual communication/conversation, which exposes their lack of confidence. 70% stated though it is bad to feel so, their realization of the very presence of brilliant English speakers or students with a higher IQ drives them anxious, which in turn forces them to resort to a prosaic lecture mode. Again, 56% feels that they find themselves weak and nervous because they are not able to convey the technical concepts in English (probably because they were educated through regional medium of instruction); 53% states they get irritated when they are assailed with questions because some of them (34%) believe that students do not always ask questions with good intentions. They also feel (57%) being bilingual inside the subject classroom will definitely bring down their reputation as a teacher.

### **To conclude**

Now that it has been inferred that language proficiency is used both by the teachers and the students to exercise their knowledge power in the class, efforts can be made for a change of attitude towards language use in subject class-

rooms. Viète (1998) states "...in the context of class discussions, teachers need to be able to elaborate on the contribution of others, signal opinions, impart information or change focus, and express and defend their opinions." Unlike language classes, subject classes demand more description, explanation and elaboration of concepts to implant in the students' minds thoughts of science and technology for advancement. The teacher definitely requires a better language competency to enable the same in the students. Therefore teachers should consider honing their language skills so that the subject classes become more alive and meaningful. On the other hand, subject teachers with a higher language proficiency in English can consider the lower competence of the students and can resort to being bilingual to deliver the subject. Ultimately, a better internalization of the concept is what is desired. Furthermore, students with better language competence can be counseled for a balanced attitude towards the subject, the teacher and fellow students. To sum up, both the teachers and the students need to be oriented and encouraged to be more self-reflective about their own language use and the language use of others.

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## **Homolinguistic Translation as an aid in TESL**

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This article proposes that the homolinguistic translation exercise developed by Charles Bernstein of Language school of poetry in the United States might be helpful in engaging non-native speakers of English in their acquisition of the language. It employs the exercise as a vehicle for exploring competencies in vocabulary building. It offers examples by intermediate and advanced users of English as evidences for this methodology. It argues that language pedagogy has much to learn from theories of language emerging from contemporary poetic practice in North America and elsewhere.

Language poetry is a movement that gained prominence in the post-war America. It gets its name from the magazine L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E. The magazine was edited by Bruce Andrews and Charles Bernstein. Jeremy Noel Tod writes of the Language poetry: "Language poetry made explicit the politics of literary form and the textual nature of identity, narrative, and 'voice', often through procedural methods of composition" (651). Ian Davidson writes of the school: "The language writers operate within that tension between word without referent and word with direct referent and what they seem to do best is to bring the question of the relationship between language and the world to the fore as the primary question for poets" (16).

Thus language school writers might said to have complex ideas of language and literacy which may not be suitable for the purpose of linguistic

skill development. However on closer examination of their theories, especially their pedagogic practices, one finds a great deal of resources for mobilization of language games that might enable the non-native speaker to experiment with a foreign or second language. All their theories of poetics might seem to be incoherent with the specific need of teaching English to those who use it as a second language, however, it is the pedagogic practice of the Language school that I believe is capable of enriching learner experience of language.

In his course Experimental Writing, Bernstein lists out a number of exercises that hold pedagogic potential for being used in the language classroom. Let us look at homophonic translation, Bernstein instructs:

Homolinguistic translation: Take a poem (someone else's, then your own) and translate it "English to English" by substituting word for word, phrase for phrase, line for line, or "free" translation as response to each phrase or sentence. Or translate the poem into another literary style or a different diction, for example into a slang or vernacular. Do several different types of homolinguistic translation of a single source poem. Chaining: try this with a group, sending the poem on for "translation" from person to another until you get back to the first author.

The exercise meets the demand of language writing which lays a lot of importance on procedure and use of words. Thus the student is expected to learn the multiplicity of meaning, ref-

erents and the fluid role of words in the construction of ideas.

Here is the beginning lines of Charles Bernstein's "Whose Language":

Who's on first? The dust descends as  
the skylight caves in. The door  
closes on a dream of default and  
denunciation (go get those piazzas),  
hankering after frozen (prose) ambiance  
(ambivalence) (570)

The words 'default' and 'denunciation' are used to describe language as it is placed on stress under late capitalism. One on one language seems to fall short of meaning and on the other hand it renounces the signified. It doubly fails and loses its emancipatory potential. The discursive nature of language is explored in the homolingistic translation exercise. The exercise was offered to advance and intermediate learner of the language by offering them four stanza form Seamus Heaney's *The Crossing*. The instruction quoted above was also circulated and the participants were requested to offer a brief response about the exercise and the process they followed in translating the text.

Let us look at the first stanza of the poem "The Crossing" by Seamus Heaney:

And there in a boat that came heading towards us

Was an old man, his hair snow-white with age,  
Raging and bawling, Woe to you, wicked spirit!  
(70)

An intermediate learner of the language translated the first stanza thus:

Plus at that place a ferry, that ferry reaching towards the gathering

Inside the ferry aged man, white colored hair  
That man shouting with excitement

And that old man saying to them that troubles

and problems come to them

Note how the participant has attempted to do a word-for-word translation. The use of colloquial/Indian expression is evident. There is also a mode of poesis that is vernacular. The word "woe" for example is literally expanded into a phrase. Further, the participant fails to replace metaphors with equivalent expressions. Thus snow-white is not translated into something as cloud-white or rice-white but instead simply put as white coloured. The participant also provides us with some unlikely images such as ferry aged man. It is clear that the intended expression was an aged man in a ferry, but instead the translation joins ferry and aged providing us with a picture of a man who is as old as the ferry. These unexpected images are useful talking points in explaining to students grammatical structures, intention and correct usage.

One advanced learner described her experience of the exercise thus:

The exercise was quite exciting to do. I was surprised to see what imagery arose from the approaching of an old man, or an authority figure, in my direction. As a woman, and a feminist at that, it automatically triggered the feeling of the urge to challenge his authority. But towards the end, the desire for giving up the fight to feel lighter in my heart took over me. In other words, while I realised how important it is to counter oppressive structures like patriarchy but sometimes you just end up feeling so heavy like you're carrying a lot of baggage.

As an advance learner, her focus was more into the whole content of the work. An exercise in language becomes an experiment in developing a voice. While the task tests the learner's ability to understand a text in its completeness and showcase competency in finding synonyms and suitable expressions that parallel what is already provided, this particular participant's feedback brings to light that exercise are also fraught with ideological concerns. Contrast this with an intermediate learner's response to this task: "this task has given a nice experience and initially it

was a difficult thing to me to understand the concept of the poem, but slowly it made to think in poetically. I feel it was good poem. Thanks for the poet who penned it. It has different meanings in it." If poetry is a form of thinking that is crucial in the development of competency in a language, then the exercise succeeds in inspiring the learner to try thinking poetically.

Homolingusitic translation is an effective method of pedagogy for advanced and intermediate learners of languages. Learner with beginner level competencies might find it difficult to engage with this task. This is partially due to nascent vocabulary levels and interpretative skills. However, with the right selection of material, even students who possess only foundational knowledge of a language might engage in homolingusitic translation. The process of thinking involved in the task enables students to (1) understand the meaning of a given phrase/text both in the form of units and as a whole (2) enlarge vocabulary by engaging in the search for synonyms and word-clouds (3) receive exposure to native idioms and expressions (4) develop a sense of aesthetics and creativity. Homolingusitic translation is a humanistic approach for learning languages since the control of difficulty and familiarity lies with the learner. He or She might thus

translate a difficult text in a naïve and simple fashion, or try to decorate it with appropriate fillings from his/her cultural background.

Assessment of homolingusitic translation exercises can be undertaken by allocating different bandwidths for varying outcomes. A superior performance would be a translation that has surpasses word for word and has translated the text from the standpoint of meaning and cohesion to ideas. A good performance can be marked by the ability to find synonyms while keeping the structure of the text intact. Failure to find synonyms or summarize ideas into sentences of lesser complexity might be categorized as average performance and a poor performance in case of inability to comprehend the text. Homolingusitic translation is different from summarizing or answering comprehension questions. The teacher gets input over the specific problem that the student has in comprehending the text. It is built as a philological exercise that pays close attention to the relationship between different word units and their poetic interplay. It inspires student's to be attentive to more than grammatical structure and meaning of the words. Since one reproduces a literary text, it can be argued that the confidence of students in approaching such literary texts is also advanced by way of this exercise.

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#### **Innovative Classroom Techniques**

Reports of classroom activities which engaged the learners in your lesson are invited to the column "It worked in My Class". Many teachers do experiment various ways of teaching-some fail, while some others succeed. Report of success, when shared, reach others-thus, they reach many more classes. Please do share your experience. -Editor

## **The Role of Motivation in Oral Communication Strategy Use: A Case Study**

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### **Abstract**

The paper is based on a small case study that investigated the similarity in the pattern of strategy execution and the role of motivation in executing strategies to make the oral communication better. This investigation assumes that when the second language learners are intrinsically motivated to learn the language, they make use of different strategies to perform better in oral communication in the target language. The study found that even though the learners do not get explicit strategy instruction, the motivated learners tend to use strategies even though they do not know the nomenclature of the strategies and can reflect on their performance and can talk about various reasons for employing certain strategies.

**Key words:** Motivation, strategies, metacognitive awareness, oral communication, intrinsic motivation

### **Problematizing English Language Learning**

Every English language learner definitely has a story to tell the world about the "not so smooth course" of one's own experience with learning this language. Learning English has become unavoidable as it is the common language that connects different parts of the globe. It is also widely believed that when someone gets exposure to English, one can learn the language faster. Getting immersed in the target language context is considered as a positive attribute to the development of language skills. However, getting adequate exposure to the target language alone is not sufficient to develop language proficiency. In this paper, I argue that exposure to the language can be beneficial to the development of language proficiency only when the learners are intrinsically motivated to learn the language. Here, I would like to discuss how similar and different were the language learning experiences of two learners. It is based on a small case study conducted in India and in England.

### **Finding evidence from literature**

Motivation is an internal attribute, a drive that urges one towards a particular action. Keller (1983:289) indicates that "Motivation refers to the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect". Oxford and Shearin (1994: 12) maintained that "Motivation determines the extent of active, personal involvement in L2 learning". Gardner (1985,1988) maintained that learners who are motivated achieve higher levels of proficiency as they invest more of themselves into learning. Motivated learners learn more because they seek out input, interaction, and instruction, and when they encounter target language input they pay attention to it and actively process it however they can (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Schmidt, in press; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). In a seminal study Schmidt and Watanabe (2001) examined the link between the learners' motivation levels, strategy use and their peda-

gological preferences. The study maintained that learners with higher levels of motivation use more number of strategies.

### **Assumptions**

The study is based on the assumption that even though learners get exposure to the target language, if they do not have motivation to take charge of their own learning, they do not implement strategies to manage communicative situations. In other words, the frequency of strategy use positively correlates with learners' high level of motivation. It can also be assumed such motivated learners can reflect on their spoken performance and can modify their strategy execution.

### **Research Design**

The study followed a case study method which was an in depth analysis of all the participants' language learning behaviour. The study intended to answer the following questions.

- To what extent the learners' strategic behaviour in speaking can be attributed to their motivation?
- Do motivated learners metacognitively analyse their oral performance?

The data was obtained through interviews and teacher- researcher's notes. A voice diary of the teacher-researcher was also used in the study. The speaking tasks were assessed to understand the progress of the participants. To justify the findings, diary entries from the researcher's diary was analysed.

### **Method**

Naila, and Maria were the participants of this study. Nailawas attending ESOL classes to get her certificate to apply for the visa to get permission to remain in the UK. Maria had her BSc Nursing qualification from one of the nursing colleges in Kerala. She also took the IELTS examination and secured the job as a registered nurse in Newzeland. Both these participants were observed for a period of three months. They were given five parallel interaction tasks with the level of difficulty increasing from the lowest to the highest. After each task, the participant was

asked to talk about her performance. The responses were noted down in the researcher's diary. As the first task was designed to understand their proficiency level, it was not considered for analysis. The second task and the fifth task were marked by two assessors to establish reliability.

### **Case 1- Naila**

Naila was twenty eight years old housewife who had been living in the UK for three years. When she was initially assessed, she was not able to produce any statements in English. She could identify some of the questions but could not answer them in English. She had a limited range of vocabulary. This mostly included very familiar nouns such as baby, milk, diaper, babysitter, doctor, medicine, bus, train, road, car, pram, seatbelt, shop, vegetables, teacher, paper, pen and oil. She was not able to understand the meaning of verbs other than sleep, run, cry, eat, and drink. She had a purpose when she came to learn English. Firstly, she wanted to get the visa to remain in the country. Secondly, and for her emotionally most importantly she wanted to talk to her husband in English. She spoke in Urdu and she said that she was a victim of domestic violence. Then, she told me that she suspects that her husband is into another relationship and he chat with the lady every night, in her presence, in English, making it loud and clear to Naila that her lack of English skills is one of those reasons for her husband to neglect her presence. Naila wanted to understand and speak English only to tell her husband in English that "Mujhaypatahaiki tum mere sathkyakarrahe ho. Tum jo mere sathkarraheho, us keliyeKhudatumheinkabhimuafnahikareyga" ("I know what you are doing and God will never forgive you for what you are doing to me"). She told me that she would go back to Pakistan after she achieves this "goal"!

Compared to the other female learners of Naila's age and background, she was more motivated to learn English and she never turned down an opportunity to speak. She simplified her Urdu for me whenever she had to get clarifications and English was not bridging the gap in under-

standing. The emotional baggage of an unhappy sojourn abroad and the cruelties forced upon her made her channel all her energy to learn English. In three months' time she achieved the fluency she wanted to. She got her permission to leave in the UK for another five years. Her life had new dimensions and she moved on bravely. It becomes clear that the baggage the learners bring to the classroom may not always be negative. With proper support from the teacher, at least some of such baggage can have a positive impact on learning English. Similarly, it is important to note here that this learner had used a number of strategies in order to learn English as well as while she had to practice speaking in English.

Naila's motivation was a strong factor which helped her in learning English. One of the techniques that I told her to try was to use as many as English words as she could when she speaks in Urdu. She tried that and spoke in Urdu with an increasing number of English words. Although she had to struggle at first, later I could see that she was steadily increasing the number of English words in her Urdu speech. Also, I noticed that she consciously created small talks or oriented the chats in such a way that a new vocabulary item she learnt can be incorporated in the chat.

Naila's case is important because it highlights how a negative emotional baggage can exert positive influence on language learning. Her case becomes important as there was a steady development in her oral communication ability. She was using a few strategies in her speech which she was aware of. She informed me that, everynight before she went to bed, she used to write down English words which she learned and spoke in Urdu (transliterated). The teaching in the academy was focussing on developing the oral proficiency. Therefore, even though the learner did not focus on writing, he/she could manage the test and get the certificate.

Naila when asked was able to reflect on the positive attributes of her speech. She said that every morning before coming to class, she used

to rehearse short conversations such as offering the customary wish, or asking a question about the food. She informed me that she thought it was "okay to use "tho" "haaji", "zaroor", "tab", "haina" in the English chat", when she tried to talk to me. These were the Urdu fillers for her to manage her communication with me. She also told me that she started to listen to her child and started learning the rhymes. Whenever she learned a new rhyme she used to come to me and ask me its meaning. She tried to keep a self-developed dictionary which had all the words she learned written down either in English or transliterated in Urdu. I noticed that she was repeating certain chunks to learn it. She was also able to replace nouns in the common pattern she learned in order to make requests. For example, she learned the statement "Can I have some water please?" and then tried to make different statements such as "Can I have some vegetables/fruits/ medicine/rice please?". She later tried to learn the use of different verbs in the same chunk and started using "Can I take your phone please?", "Can I drink some water please?", and "Can I send a parcel please?". This was a quick progress.

When asked Naila about her progress she informed me that her intention was to learn English to let her family know that she could not be taken for granted anymore. This being the drive, she made efforts to monitor her progress. When asked in Hindi about the techniques she used to learn she was able to reflect on her learning process and was able to identify some of the strategies she used. As she was allowed to speak in Urdu, she did not have any difficulty in communicating the metacognitive awareness that she had about her strategy use. She also told me that everyday while going back home after the classes she used to give her marks out of ten, which was a variation of evaluation strategy.

In short, from the interviews and the observation records it becomes clear that Naila was using planning, monitoring, repeating, rehearsing, using L1 words to code switch, using fillers and trying to take risks while speaking about a

not familiar topic and evaluating as strategies in her speech. She was aware of all these strategies and was able to provide me with the reasons for their execution. Therefore, it is understood that even though, Naila was not given any strategy based instruction, she was able to use strategies and more importantly was consciously executing them in her oral communication. She was able to reflect on her oral communication on a day to day basis and was able to evaluate her performance. This shows that the intrinsic motivation that Naila had helped her to keep the positive attitude towards learning English. This helped her to monitor her progress and to be metacognitive on her on spoken proficiency.

### **Case 2- Maria**

Maria is a qualified nurse working in Newzeland aged 34. She has been living there for more than ten years. She had managed to get appropriate score for IELTS ten years before. However, her English speaking capability is very much limited. She can frame basic sentences in English and basic questions in English. She can follow the commands of her superior staff but is unable to respond in perfectly grammatical sentences. Both of her children were getting educated in Newzeland and they spoke English very fluently. Maria, however, still not proficient in English.

When interviewed she responded that "I know enough English to live. For me I am earning, I am driving, I am happy. So I need this much English". She also told me while discussing her learning background, that she does not like to learn any further and she also mentioned that she does not think that English has a major role in her life anymore. She has got the citizenship there and she informed me that forever she will be living there. She also mentioned that "if someone makes fun of my English, I don't care. Let them be happy. At least because of me they smiled, no?". When I asked her whether she does anything to improve her language skills, she said that she does not pay attention to it. Her performance in the final task after three months was not very different from the first task. She used similar vocabulary and simple structured

with a number of fillers such as "no?" "you know" and "erm". These three fillers were constantly present in her conversation. She tended to use "and" to connect all the statements she articulated. However, after the task completion when she was asked to reflect on her performance, she was not able to talk much about it. What she said after each task was that "through practice I am developing my English, no?". Even after the third round of speech, as she was not improving in her spoken proficiency, I audio recorded her speech and played it back to her. Even after listening to the recording she was not able to identify the negative aspects of her English. What she told was that "the speech was ok". When she was asked to point out a few strengths of her speech, she was unable to do that.

From the analysis of her speech I found that she was using repetition, confirmation checks, fillers and pauses in her conversations. However, even after playing the recording back to her and asking some questions regarding her strategy use, she was not able to reflect on her speeches. Moreover, there was no remarkable improvement in her second round speech and the final round speech. It was understood that Maria was not interested in developing her language abilities anymore. Her attitude was fixed and she never tried to improve her English. Lack of motivation to enhance the English communication skill was the reason for her not to capture her strategy execution even after helping her with the audio recording. Simple questions to encourage metacognitive thinking were asked to her but even after listening to the audio recording, she was not able to improve her ability to reflect and the identification of strategy use.

### **Discussion**

Naila, though nearly illiterate had strong motivation to learn English. Although this motivation was a negative emotional baggage, she was able to channel this towards the attainment of desired English proficiency. The ESOL certificate and the visa could have been the sources of extrinsic motivation to her. With the help of the

teacher and a willingness to reflect on her own oral communication, Naila was able to develop her English proficiency. Her urge to learn to speak in English made her constantly monitor her speech, use new vocabulary in context and to identify strategies from the speech. She was able to reflect on her strategy use and was able to talk about the various purposes for executing them. A comparison of the assessment of the second task and the final task shows that there was a development in all areas except grammar. However, the researcher's diary entries denote that Naila's grammatical errors were decreasing steadily but slowly.

In Maria's case, it can be understood that her lack of urge or motivation to learn English itself is the reason for her lack of skills in oral communication in English. Although, she has been living in a country where exposure to English is accessible, Maria did not show the level of proficiency that she needed to have. Moreover, the lack of motivation and interest to learn English

was one of the reasons for not being able to reflect on her own spoken performance.

### Conclusion

Motivation, if it is intrinsic can effectively contribute to language learning. If a language learner is motivated to learn, he/she will use all the opportunities to use the language. Moreover, such a learner always plan, monitor and evaluate his or her learning process. These metacognitive strategies usually are practised within each task. Everyday such a motivated language learner plans, monitors and evaluates the overall language performance. This study also proves that having ample exposure to the target language alone cannot enhance the target language proficiency. On the other hand, a motivated learner can take charge of his or her own learning and create opportunities to practice language use. Therefore, there should be more studies in the field to uncover the connection between the role of motivation and the development of language proficiency.

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## **Positive Disintegration in Neil Klugman of Philip Roth's *Goodbye Columbus***

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### **Abstract**

The title story of the collection, Roth's *Goodbye, Columbus* (1959) was an impertinent look at the life of middle-class Jewish Americans, satirizing, their smugness, parochialism and materialism. This story explores the conflict between two generations and two ways of life, The Jewish immigration past and American present, city and suburb, lower middle class and upper middleclass. The central character of *Goodbye Columbus* Neil Klugman set out on the unexplored journey into the rebellious imperatives of self. My paper establishes his continual recurring pains and mistakes of life do not provoke endless suffering, it is seen and accepted as necessary steps in his development; to develop a new perspective, a new reality and a new self, the ability to transcend and to constantly overcome his old self. Neil's strong internal conflicts focus his attentions toward his response to the external environment and to his inner psychological experience. Ultimately, internal conflicts come to display a vertical (multilevel) component—the hallmark of resolution and of development; through the lens of Dabrowski, lifting him toward higher levels of function. My paper searches, it is not the experience of pain or suffering or the intensity of emotions that leads to growth; it is Neil's consequent self-examination and emerging insight into day-to-day life and a deeper, more conscious and multilevel understanding of his reactions.

The title story of Philip Roth's *Goodbye, Columbus* (1959) was an impertinent look at the life of middle-class Jewish Americans, satirizing, their smugness, parochialism and materialism. This story explores the conflict between two generations and two ways of life, The Jewish immigration past and American present, city and suburb, lower middle class and upper middleclass. Neil has a summer affair with Brenda Patimkin of wealthy Jewish family, expends his holidays from his job at the library in Newark with her and her family, but love issue fritters away. In the interest of providing his family a better life, Ben Patimkin has bought into the American dream, erecting a wall of commodity that has cut his family off from their ethnicity and their lower middle class roots in Newark. The Patimkin family symbolizes all the vulgar characteristic of Jewish nouveau rich. They live in ornate homes eat dinner on gourmet food and send their children to snobbish colleges. They belong to the local synagogue and Hadassah for

purely social reasons because they exploit their employees and servants and see everything in terms of the almighty dollar. Neil Klugman however represents the other side of the coin. To the wealthy the vulgarity of Short Hills, where the Patimkin live, Neil opposes the honesty and unpretentiousness of Newark, where his aunt and uncle relax in an alley, "each cool breeze sweet to them as the promise of afterlife" 1(9). Neil lives with his aunt in the backstreet of the New York, suburb of Newark, but has fallen in love with Brenda from an affluent middle class family.

Through Neil Roth allocates us to guess the psychological conflict that Neil is undergoing. His Neil meets a girl from short Hills and to enter to the world of Patimkins but is always uncomfortable. He is not also at ease with his colleagues. "Since I was Twenty minutes early I decided to stroll in the park rather than cross-over to work; I didn't particularly care to join

my colleagues, who I knew would be sipping early morning coffee in the binding room, smelling still of all the orange crush they'd drunk that weekend at Asbury Park"(29).The controlling images of the novella are all openly related through Neil's discernment, to the Patimkin's successful struggle to distance themselves from their Past, to begin membership in the national, largely gentile, elite.

In the final scene Neil instead of seizing a taxi instantaneously, walks down the street and out towards the Harvard Yard which he has never seen before. He enters one of the gates and then heads alone a path, under the tired autumn foliage and the dark sky. He wants to be alone in the dark not because he wants to think about anything, but rather because, for just a while he wants to think about nothing. He strolls across the yard and up a little hill and then he is standing in front of Lamont Library, which has Patimkins sinks in the rest rooms. From the light of lamps on the alleyway behind him, he can see his reflection in the glass facade of the building. Suddenly he desires to set down his suitcase, and picks up rock and drags it right through the glass, to destroy the progress American present symbolizes through these Jewish nouveau rich but of course, he does not.

I simply looked at myself in the mirror, the light made of window. I was only that substance; I thought those limbs that face that I saw in front of me. I looked but the outside of me gave up little information about the inside of me, I wished I could scoot around to the other side of the window ,..... What was it inside me that had turned pursuit and clutching into love, and then turned it inside out again? What was it that had turned winning into losing, and losing - who knows - into winning?(235).

Neil attains his identity. He returns to his old job at the Newark public library, taking a train that got him into Newark. He started his work like the rising sun of the first day of the Jewish New Year. Neil's emotions are the directing forces of his development. His emotions drive him to the transition from lower levels to slightly a higher

level and are stimulated by tension, inner conflict, struggle, anxiety, and despair. His intense negative emotions have a disintegrating power that is necessary to dismantle the primary integration and assist the move to secondary integration. According to the theory of Dabrowski, Neil's Overexcitability tends to exaggerate his experience of life. Dabrowski<sup>2</sup> called it 'the tragic gift' because it amplifies both the high happy and joyful manners as well as the lowest and saddest life events.

Most of Roth's protagonists are, like Neil Klugman, floating in a midpoint between past and present. Neil has 'unbound' himself from his parents and his religion, yet he has a deep though divided feeling about the city life in which he has grown up. Neil searches for his own axial lines by turning to the golden ghetto of Short Hills. He cannot transfer himself to any set of values. Such is the agitation of souls, with which Roth has peopled his fiction. Neil has made the "migration" intellectually, they are all of them refugees haunted by echoes from a not-to-be-buried past, unsatisfied by the too-tasty viands of a sterile hedonism, and confused by the uncertainties of the future. Characteristically, at the wedding of Brenda's brother, Neil and Brenda are further apart than ever, and in the gray confusion of early morning Neil sees some of the Patimkins "from the back, round-shouldered, burdened, child-carrying-like people fleeing a captured city." Although he knows what he likes, or dislikes, he believes in waiting for a "fate good enough' although he is not sure what that fate will be. His return to his vocation is goodbye to the empty values of America. Neil has no background, authority or source to confirm his judgments or to establish a social identity. Thus, he is unable to carry out any conversation with any of the characters, most of whom are, incapable of any communication.

Neil's strong internal conflicts focus his attentions toward his response to the external environment and to his inner psychological experience. Ultimately, internal conflicts come to display a vertical (multilevel) component-the hall-

mark of resolution and of development; through the lens of Dabrowski, lifting him toward higher levels of function. Similarly, it is not the experience of pain or suffering or the intensity of emotions that leads to growth; it is Neil's consequent self-examination and emerging insight into day-to-day life and a deeper, more conscious and multilevel understanding of his reactions.

They are also probably both two very different individuals who just cannot coexist closely together, this again is a result of their different up-bringsings which makes him think that the class divide is somehow more difficult than or at least as difficult to bridge as any differences in ethnicity or race. In the final scene, Neil is probing Brenda asking, whom she is taking her home for Thanksgiving Day: "Who are you going to bring home Thanksgiving day- Linda?" Or me" as he utters, "Brenda, the choices aren't mine. You can bring Linda or me. You can go home or not go home. That's another choice. Then you don't even have to worry about choosing between me and Linda" (134). Neil is ready to face her parent even after the matter is made known to her parents, but it is Brenda who is ready to conform to her parents' values instead of giving any efforts to convince them about their affair and pretending as if ready to forget about their affair. When Brenda is asking Neil, "Can you see us all sitting around the table? Neil is ready to confront, if she gives her hand, "I can't if you can't, and I can if you can" (133). Brenda is pronouncing her parents' value by rejecting Neil's allegiance on her. The loss of spiritual values is the price they are paying for their settling in materialist America. Having been acculturated from early childhood into the socially influential, the Patimkin children have never learned about the economic struggle by which the privileged are maintained rather he appears to take pride in having made available the means to separate his children from the realities of the economic world.

Neil is scrutinizing his essence and subsequently make existential choices that emphasize those aspects of essence that are higher and "more

himself" and hamper those aspects that are lower or "less himself" based upon his own personality ideal. The critical components of Neil's development include auto education and auto psychotherapy.

But how carnal can I get? I am acquisitive. Where do I turn now in my acquisitiveness'? Where do we meet? Which prize is you?

It was an ingenuous meditation, and suddenly I felt ashamed. I got up and walked outside, and the noise of Fifth Avenue met me with an answer:

Which prize do you think schmuck? Gold dinnerware, sporting goods, trees, nectarines, garbage disposals, bumpless noses, Patimkin's Sink, Bonwit Teller .....And God only laugh that clown(100)

Neil's evolving 'new self' is not approving to pay the price for Brenda; he cannot expense his moral integrity for Patimkin's wealth, even if it means he will lose Brenda. Neil is aware of class differences and their link to the immigrant journey to prosperity As John McDaniel recognizes,

Neil, searches for his own 'axial lines' by turning, misguidedly, to the gilded ghetto of Short Hills....he does not commit himself to any particular set of values, although he knows what he dislikes about both the Patimkins (upper class) and his Aunt Gladys (lower class)...he preserves in 'in waiting for a "fate good enough" although he is not at all sure what the fate will be. He comes to realize that Patimkin way of life is not the answer he has been searching for.<sup>3</sup>

McDaniel also concurs, "The return to work is Neil's own Goodbye, Columbus, a goodbye to the sad values and empty lives that are normal in America. ....That his renewal of himself takes place on the New year is symbolically appropriate.<sup>4</sup> Helge Normann Nilsen<sup>5</sup> describes Goodbye Columbus's narrator, Neil Klugman, as a young man involved in a struggle to develop and preserve an identity of his own amid different environments and conflicting impulses within him. Neil loses Brenda, but he avoids an

existence on the surface with the wealthy Patimkin family. As McDaniel accurately points out, "He does not commit himself to any particular set of values, although he knows what he dislikes about both the Patimkins (upper class) and his aunt Gladys (lower class)." 6

Instead of emotional stability, Neil is always plagued by the fear of losing Brenda though he knows he is always criticizes their way of life not comfortable with their style of living; though he has pretended everything is going on fine, his torment comes to the surface in the pretext of buying a Diaphragm, Neil's accusation that Brenda left it deliberately, is not the first quarrel Neil is having. His inner upheavals only upraise in this way. His inner anguish becomes out of proportion to the circumstance of his life. This causes Crisis in his personality. It impairs his functioning in virtually any areas his life, relationships, or external affairs, but it is not severe enough to incapacitate him.

Dabrowski along with others believe that gifted individuals only experience the world from different perspective, with qualitative differences including intensities, sensitivities, idealism, perceptiveness, Overexcitabilities, asynchrony, complexity, introversion, perfectionism and moral concerns. He observed that most people live their lives in a state of "primary or primitive integration largely guided by biological impulses ("first factor") and/or by uncritical endorsement and adherence to social convention ("second factor"). He called this initial integration Level I. At this level there is no true individual expression of the autonomous human self. Philip Roth's Neil is at Level I, is integrated at the environmental or social level (Dabrowski called them average people); Individual expression at Level I is influenced and constrained by the first two factors. The first factor channels energy and talents toward accomplishing self-serving goals that reflect the lower instincts and biological ego - its primary focus is on survival and self-advancement.

At least now after his reflection in front of Lamont library, Neil can think that it was not

'loving' that bonded them, but casual lust. Neil, a highly intelligent philosophy graduate of Rutgers University with intellectual Overexcitability, approaches these questions not from perspective of one seeking technical information, but as a philosopher asking about the Good. It is probably just the boredom of a summer and the excitement of crossing certain moral boundaries that get them together and once that is done they both lapsed back into their own worlds which could not be reconciled for any great amount of time.

Neil cannot commit to life in an environment that he feels will limit his personal development and play too great a role in defining his identity. He retained his Jewishness instead of forgetting the values of the past he keeps alive the possibility of a vital American Jewish historical Consciousness.

Neil accords to Dabrowski, instead of succumbing to the nothingness and despair of existentialism though previously "without locomotion"<sup>7</sup>, lacking "the energy that Ron the athlete has for competition, and he lacking the gusto with which Mr. Patimkin attempts to beat out the competition in his quest for the everlasting dollar"<sup>8</sup>, but now achieved the power to surpass his present existence and make a value laden choice to progress his essence to that of a higher, he is not carnal or acquisitive to develop to the better level, i.e. to transform his essence he has his Newark library. Neil Chooses and sculpts ("shapes") his newly chosen essence. Neil chooses a better level, a newly chosen essence, enhanced than his previous one. Neil Klugman, who is governed by the first factor and primarily influenced by heredity, impulses and social and environment forces, has gone through primary integration. As this level is marked by selfishness and egocentrism; seeks only self-fulfillment above all. Then moved to Unilevel disintegration as he shows a lack of inner direction, submission to the values of the group, relativism of values and beliefs, and in the final scene standing before the Lamont Library above Harvard Yard also realizes his transformation, he shows his ambivalence and ambivalent tendencies.

*(Continued on page:36)*

## **Neil Gaiman's *Tempest* as Postmodern Metafiction**

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### **Abstract**

Over the years, Shakespeare's works have evolved into palimpsests. Perhaps no other writer has been examined, adapted and rewritten as much as Shakespeare. Neil Gaiman's acclaimed comic series, *Sandman*, is riddled with intertextual references to literary works, including those of Shakespeare. The paper seeks to place Gaiman's *Tempest*, the final comic in the series, within the framework of postmodern metafiction. Metafiction explores the nuances of the making of fiction, fitting comfortably into the self absorbed movement called postmodernism. Postmodern metafiction thus becomes the perfect vehicle to study the writer- reader-text continuum. In using the comic medium to probe, speculate about and re-examine the intricacies of theatre, Gaiman falls in with the postmodern tendency of bridging the gap between high-brow and low-brow literature. The paper also examines how the comic complies with Linda Hutcheon's theories of historiographic metafiction and adaptation, making it an interesting take on the Bard's life, times and work.

### **Shakespeare, his mind and his craft: Gaiman's *Tempest* as Postmodern Metafiction**

#### **Introduction:**

"Words and pictures are yin and yang. Married, they produce a progeny more interesting than either parent." - Dr. Seuss

It was in the 1980s that the term graphic novel began gaining attention among people. Comics so far had been confined to an audience of teenagers and were considered for the most part as a juvenile form of entertainment. The leap for comic books came when three books broke the shackles of existing comic book norms and introduced serious themes in their books. Moore and Gibbon's *Watchmen*, Spiegelman's *Maus* and Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* were all published in 1986-87, and are considered pioneering works of the graphic novel medium. Neil Gaiman arrived right after the first

wave of talent gave the world a new perspective about graphic novels. In his foreword to *Prince of Stories: The Many Worlds of Neil Gaiman*, Terry Pratchett compares the effect that Neil Gaiman had on the world of graphic novels to J.R.R. Tolkien's influence- "He'd left the comics world shaken, and it'll never be quite the same. The effect was akin to that of Tolkien on the fantasy novel" (xii). *Tempest* is the companion story of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and marks the end of the *Sandman* series. The second part of the bargain between Morpheus and Shakespeare, where Shakespeare has to write two plays for the former is completed with the *Tempest*. The first play he produces is *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a play for Morpheus' world, but now Morpheus requires him to write *Tempest*, a tale of "graceful ends... about a king

who drowns his books and breaks his staff and leaves his kingdom. About a magician who becomes a man. About a man who turns his back on magic." (42) The process of writing the play turns out to be a journey of self discovery for Shakespeare and a process of discovery for the reader as well, of Shakespeare's mind, and the ways his craft was inspired by the world around him.

Tempest also introduces the character of Ben Johnson to us as both Shakespeare's critic and his admirer. While Johnson openly acknowledges Shakespeare's tendency to draw the inspiration for his plays from ones already written by predecessors and contemporaries alike, he does not fail to concede that Shakespeare's talent and says to him- "You are a born playwright Will. It's in your blood, and in your bones. I am sure it will take the cold of death to tug the pen from your hand." (20) Just like the Dream introduced Will's son Hamnet, Tempest has Anne Hathaway and Judith in it, and a bit of a flashback sequence with Susan as well. The dynamics between Shakespeare and his family are further explored in the comic. Shakespeare is shown as a man of the world, hardly available to his family and longed for by his children.

The story culminates with a final meeting with Morpheus in his own castle where they speculate on Will's life had he not been a playwright. The hard facts of reality sink in as the possibility of a happy and prosperous family is laid before Will. However, the end point is that Will has no regrets about his time spent away from the family, for every experience has inspired him in some way or the other, he has truly believed that all the world is a stage.

### **Metafiction and Postmodernism**

Simply put, metafiction is fiction about fiction. Abrams in his Glossary calls it "an overall term for the growing class of novels which depart from realism and foreground the role of the author and reader in inventing and receiving the fiction" (196), attributing its popularity to theorists such as Robert Scholes. Metafiction serves as the central plank in any discussion about

postmodern literature. The term was coined by William Gass in his 1970 essay *Philosophy and the Form of Fiction* and refers to the fact that the novelist's business is no longer to render the world, but to make one from language. Metafiction shows that the work of fiction is no longer only mimetic, but constructive. It is often seen as an alternate term for *surfiction*, a term proposed by Federman for fiction that tries to explore the limits of fiction, and according to Tim Woods in *Beginning Postmodernism*, explores the fictionality of reality (70). The lowest common denominator of metafiction is to simultaneously create a piece of fiction and to make a statement about the creation of that fiction.

Ihab Hassan's *Dismemberment of Orpheus* (1971), one of the first major studies of postmodernist literature argues that postmodernism rejects the commitment to realism behind modernist experimentation in favour of literature of ludic self reference. Hutcheon, whose theory will be applied to the study of Gaiman's *Tempest*, writes similarly of "narcissistic narrative", a self conscious attitude toward literary structure and writing that often serve as the central theme of the work itself. Castle in *The Literary Theory Handbook* agrees with what many literary theorists have argued that the "postmodern literary text is not interested in the world at all" (41) and its main concerns appear to represent its own operations. One such case in point is that of Gaiman's *Tempest* which represents several, though not all, chief characteristics of a metafictional work. These characteristics include the story being about a writer composing a piece of fiction, the story containing another story within itself, addressing the specific conventions of story, such as title, character conventions, paragraphing or plots etc.

### **Hutcheon's theory and Tempest**

*Tempest* is an examination of both Shakespeare the man, and his craft. A postmodern study of it as a work of metafiction is in order to explore how efficiently it talks about both these aspects of Shakespeare. For Linda Hutcheon, postmodern fiction is interrogative and instruc-

tive rather than a reactionary cultural production. She concedes to the ideological limitations that it has and chooses to call it "Janus two-faced" with regard to the dominant culture. Describing it as 'historiographic metafiction' Hutcheon describes postmodern fiction as a mode which consciously problematizes the making of fiction and history. It reveals the past as always ideologically and discursively constructed. Tim Woods explains Hutcheon's views further in *Beginning Postmodernism* when he says that it is directed "both inward and outward, concerned both with its status as fiction, narrative or language, and also grounded in some verifiable historical reality" (69-70) Based on Hutcheon's theory of Metafiction, *Tempest* can be analyzed as a work with some historical verité in it, and as a self reflexive piece of fiction.

### **Historical Truths and Fictional Reality**

*Tempest* explores several historical truths in it, and they include both a reflection upon the Elizabethan times and upon Shakespeare's personal life. As the comic begins, Shakespeare visits an inn for a drink. He is greeted by the sight of two men gossiping over his entry-

-Ahh it's the plague crow.

-Plague-crow? And for why is it a plague crow?

-The cause of plague is sin. The cause of sin is plays. Thus plays cause plagues. Ergo those who cause plays... well, they are the veriest plague crows. (8)

Despite the rapid growth of theatre in the sixteenth century, there also existed a negative attitude toward players and playhouses due to the influence of the Church. It was an ungodly act to participate with plays and players. This thought is reflected in the attitude of the men in the inn when Shakespeare stops by for a drink.

Among other verifiable truths in *Tempest* is the relationship Shakespeare had with his family, especially with his wife Anne Hathaway. During a long walk that he takes with Ben Johnson, the latter asks him, after some hesitation if everything is alright between Shakespeare and his wife.

Shakespeare answers, "We remain civil. And I sleep on my bed, in my room, and she sleeps in her room, in hers." (15). The conversation continues to dwell on Shakespeare and his women as seen in his sonnets. Shakespeare refuses to acknowledge that the dark lady of his sonnets was a shrew, and much later, accepts to Morpheus, "Whatever happened to me in life, happened as a writer of plays. I'd fall in love, or fall in lust. And at the height of my passion, I would think, "so this is how it feels" and tie it up in pretty words... My heart was broken by my dark lady and I wept in m room, alone; but while I wept, somewhere inside I smiled" (34).

The reader speculates over the truth in these lines, for there is not much evidence to show what Shakespeare really thought about his own adultery. Thought the sonnets addressed to the dark lady give us proof enough that Shakespeare did have an affair, whether he treated the experience as mere impetus for his writing is questionable and leads into a discussion about the process of writing itself. If anything, it reinforces our belief in Woods' conception of metafiction as revealing the "fictionality of reality" (70).

Judith's conversations with Shakespeare are very reminiscent of Hamnet from *Dream*. One recalls Hamnet talking about Shakespeare's long absence from home and how he had no time to invest in the father-son relationship. Judith continues in a similar vein when she says "I would have given the world to have you here, when I truly was a little girl." These reminiscences by both his children on part of their mother as well (who "wept the most" (18)) become a motif of Shakespeare as an alienated hero with much to sacrifice for his dream to come true.

### **The Postmodern Hero**

Ihab Hassan in his book "Paracriticisms: Seven Speculations of the Times" lists five features of what he calls the 'new hero' of the American novel of the late 20th century. The features carry forward some conditions of the modern age, including the existentialist outlook of man. Niall Lucy, in her book *Postmodern Literary Theory*

suggests that they are universal and can be applied to most literary protagonists in postmodern fiction. These features of the hero, as paraphrased by Lucy are the following: the hero's acceptance that

1. Human actions are ruled by chance and absurdity.
2. There are no norms of moral conduct.
3. Alienation is the condition of human life.
4. Human motives are characterized by 'irony and contradiction'.
5. Human knowledge is limited and relative. (83)

Gaiman's Shakespeare fits all these features to the hilt. His actions, at least the most recent, those of writing the two plays are commissioned by Morpheus, a character from another realm whom he only meets by chance. Similarly, his knowledge is only relative to the happenings around him. He concedes to pinching his storylines from what he hears and what he has read, and as far as the comic goes, does nothing to verify the truth of these hearsay snips of conversation. Thus human knowledge becomes limited, and governed by what happens in one's personal universe.

There is no evidence to show that Shakespeare was alone or isolated in real life. However since the sonnets have been taken as proof enough for his friendship with the "Young Man" and his affair with "The Dark lady", the rest of his writing may be considered to be a reflection of his own feelings as well. The many tragic characters that have sprung alive from Shakespeare's quill give us an inkling of his empathy and complete understanding of the tragic sense. One only has to look at plays like Hamlet and Lear to know that Shakespeare had a deep insight into the workings of the mind of a lonely and alienated man who at his best, still felt Kafkaesque. These characters often delved into an inner discourse that became their dialogue with themselves or, because of the technique of the theatre, with an unknown audience that seemed to share their tragic state.

This unknown audience is ironically known in *Tempest*, and is none other than Morpheus. Morpheus is a very isolated being as reflected in his dialogues towards the end of the comic- "I am the prince of stories, Will, but I have no stories of my own, nor shall I ever" (36) Gaiman indulges in some serious doubling of characters here, drawing parallels between Morpheus and Shakespeare, but also between Morpheus and himself.

### **The Creation of Fiction**

Apart from the insight one gets into what Shakespeare's life must have been like, *Tempest* is important because it gives the reader an insight into the mechanism of creating fiction and the role of the author and his muse in the creation process. The second part of Hutcheon's favourite phrase, historiographic metafiction, where the making of fiction is problematized is given the lion's share of attention in *Tempest*.

In the short story collection *Lost in the Funhouse* (1960), considered to be an exemplary piece of metafictional work by James Barth, the author brings forth the question of whether the self can or cannot be separated from the piece of writing, as well as with notions of authorial control over the text. This question of the presence of the self has been widely debated by theorists of postmodern literature. Roland Barthes, for example, strongly comments on the complete absence of the author from the story in his essay *Death of an Author*. In her book *Practicing Postmodernism Reading Modernism*, Patricia Waugh takes forward this discussion and calls metafiction "a basic tension in all novels between the illusion of self-sufficiency and the unveiling of that illusion." (71)

*Tempest* explores the relationship between the author and his craft, the author and the muse, and the muse and the work and debates about whose role is dominant and who should be given due for the final output of the art. Waugh's "illusion" is clearly seen as Shakespeare is at odds with himself in giving credit to himself, his tools

or his words, and his sources. However, there is no final unveiling and the question is left hanging for the readers to come to their own conclusion.

The early part of the book concentrates on how much inspiration one needs to start working and impart an element of reality to the work. This is seen in the talk Ben Johnson has with Shakespeare, where he extols the merits of going through different walks of life to be able to truly understand life. It has already been mentioned the Ben Johnson did not shy away from criticizing Shakespeare; he takes a dig at the latter's tendency to borrow plots and how Johnson's experience helped him stay "original"-

In my time, I've been a soldier, a scholar, a pauper, a duelist, an actor, a translator and a spy. I've killed a man in a duel. I've thrice been imprisoned. Risking my life for my religion, I proudly take communion from the Church of Rome, God look you. I've lived life to the full. What've you done Will? A little tanning, held horses, a little acting, a little writing. (..) But I have met all sorts of people... from the lowest to the most high. Thus I understand them. (13)

Shakespeare however appears undeterred by Johnson's monologue. His opinion is that the understanding of people comes from an understanding of oneself. He compares a writer to a carpenter, during a conversation with a clergy man, who relies not on inspiration but his own tools to work to support this opinion of his. However, Shakespeare is not fully convinced about his statement and Gaiman makes use of the comic medium to reflect upon the battle in Shakespeare's mind about who gets due credit for his work- his muse (Morpheus) or his craft.

Shakespeare concedes during his conversation with Morpheus that the people he has been with have indeed inspired him. He gives credit to his heartbreaks as well, for only then could he take his tears to "the stage of the Globe, and make the pit cry tears of its own. (34)The moment serves as a partial unveiling of the illusion of self sufficiency for Shakespeare, when he realizes that it isn't just the tools that help the carpenter,

it is also the inspiration to work.

The question of the existence of the self in writing is dwelt upon in the last few pages of the comic. *Tempest* has been analysed by scores of Shakespearean scholars to have been found at least partially autobiographical, and Gaiman endorses that view. Gaiman's Shakespeare says,

I would be a fool if I denied it. I am Prosper, certainly, and I trust I shall. But I am also Ariel - A flaming, firing spirit, crackling like lightning in the sky. And I am dull Caliban. I am dark Antonio, brooding and planning, and old Gonzalo, counselling silly wisdom. And I am Trinculo, the jester, and Stephano the butler, for they are clowns and fools, and I am also a clown and a fool, and on occasion, drunkards (...) There is some of me in it, some of Judith. Things I saw, things I thought. I stole a speech from one of Montaigne's Essays. And closed with an unequivocally cheap and happy ending. (29-30, 34)

The entry of Morpheus here is also an interesting narrative device which adds to the appeal of the comic as a piece of metafiction. According to Abbott's *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, this device is called *Metalepsis*, which is-

A violation of narrative levels, usually in which the *diegesis* or storyworld is invaded by an entity or entities from another narrative level or even from outside the narrative altogether eg. when an extradiegetic narrator enters the action, or a "spectator" leaps on stage and becomes part of the action, or the "author" appears and starts quarreling with one of the characters. (237)

The technique was already used in the *Dream* and is used here again with the sudden appearance of Morpheus. It is here that things become more interesting. In the original *Tempest*, though Prospero is the magician, well learned in books of his art and all powerful, all his assignments are carried out by Ariel, the spirit. Ariel also inspires him to be forgiving. It is from Ariel's actions that Prospero's actions stem. Gaiman cleverly mirrors the characters of Ariel and Prospero

with those of Morpheus and Shakespeare. Though Shakespeare does not wield as much power over Morpheus as Prospero does over the spirit, Morpheus depends on Shakespeare to write him the two plays so he can feel whole and finally claim a story for himself. Inversely, Morpheus may also be seen as Prospero and Shakespeare, Ariel. It is on the former's bidding that Shakespeare writes the two plays. Prospero gives up magic after he frees Ariel. Similarly Shakespeare puts down his pen once Morpheus' bidding is done. This reflects on the real time relationship between the muse and the writer. The relationship is symbiotic. The muse requires a voice to be heard; the author- a muse whose story he can carry.

In keeping with the ruminations about whether Morpheus represents the author himself, a spectator observing Shakespeare, Ariel from the original *Tempest* or simply the character from the main plotline of *Sandman* which is isolated from the Shakespeare comics, Morpheus becomes the extradiegetic character who throws light on the self reflexivity seen in the play.

The view on Shakespeare's 'inspiration' for his plays also gives an interesting view on the epilogue to *The Tempest*, which Gaiman also has Shakespeare write after Dream has ended his bargain with him: "Now my charms are all o'erthrown, and what strength I have's mine own, which is most faint" (Epilogue 1-3). This instance of intertextuality lends the essence of metafiction as well to the narrative. The lines used are no co-incidence, for *Tempest* is both Shakespeare's last solo venture and Gaiman's last comic in the *Sandman* series. The reader is left musing if Gaiman is Shakespeare, Prospero or Morpheus- or a culmination of the three. *Tempest* succeeds in raising two important questions about the making of fiction- Who may claim

credit for acts performed-is it the one who inspires or the one who acts upon this inspiration? How much inspiration does the actor need to start working? Both of these are partially answered; the postmodern debate on the question of authorship still continues.

The play with doubling and mirroring of the characters with the aid of techniques like intertextuality and metafiction only reinforce the views of the postmodern critic Jean Lyotard, who believed postmodernism to be less a period of time and more "a set of strategies" undertaken by artists to infuse a new sense of the sublime. Gaiman cannot solve the question of Shakespeare's authorship, and when one cannot bust the myth, there is no harm in playing with it.

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#### ELTIF Teaching-Learning Materials

ELTIF is planning to develop a 'Material Bank for Rural and Backward Learners'. Teachers and researchers, who are willing to share their teaching-learning materials (print and electronic) are requested to mail them to [eltifjournaleditor@gmail.com](mailto:eltifjournaleditor@gmail.com). They will be first published in the Journal, and later compiled as a handbook for teachers with the name and details of the contributors. – Editor

## **Arab-Jewish Conflicts and Racial Politics in Leon Uris' *The Haj***

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### **Abstract**

Even though the Arabs and the Jews are considered to be two hostile communities, one could find them living in friendship and compassion in the novel *The Haj* by Leon Uris. But this comradeship lasts only for a few decades as the need for a separate Jewish state worsens the world Arab sentiment against the Jews. Leon Uris narrates the creation of the state of Israel and its separation from the Arab Palestine from the point of view of an Arab Muktar, Haj Ibrahim who befriends the Jew Gideon Asch. Their friendship and the co-operation in the midst of the increasing turmoil of Arab-Israeli conflicts and the disruption of the smooth relationship due to internal as well as external politics become the main scope of the novel. This paper analyses the hospitality as well as hostility of the two communities in the name of their races from a neutral angle. It finds out that even if people are unconcerned about the external racial politics, they are forced to indulge. Hence race and communalism becomes an unavoidable facet of life. The study proposes to arrive at a conclusion that includes the current politics and the intolerance by analyzing issues of assimilation, alienation and the idea of a home and homelessness.

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Although the Jews were considered to be the worst race of the world by all other races, they remain as the selected lot of Lord, the people of God's Promised Land. The age long forbearance and tolerance endured by the Jews could be highlighted as evidence for the accomplishment of the Logos of Holy Bible. About two thousand years ago, the Jews had been scattered in almost all the parts of the world and their consequent journey as Diaspora signifies their vigor in accomplishing the goal of creating their own land- Israel and also constructing a Holy shrine at Jerusalem, of which they have attained the first. This long journey proves to be a success only because of their endurance and blind submission to their culture and tradition. In spite of all the hardships they suffered under many rulers like Hitler, they followed their

culture and belief which made them the rivals of others.

On the other hand the Arabs are following their religion and customs that has been written in Quran and their submission to it is not only blind but rather violent. They follow their teachings vigorously without thinking of the aftermath. They are called as 'Islam' which in Arabic means 'submission' to the Allah's will and to His law. Islam is a strictly monotheistic religion that keeps Allah in the centre, which is unquestionable, omnipotent and immortal. Islam is that God's final word. Muhammad is God's Prophet, not to be worshiped but to be respected. Muhammad's through his life and actions showed the believers how an Islam should be. The Arab concept of revenge has a strong religious backup through the passages of Quran that advocate "an eye for

an eye, a tooth for a tooth".

Leon Uris, the Jewish American novelist, experiments with these two entirely different cultures in his most controversial novel *The Haj*. *The Haj* (1984) tells the tale of a Palestinian Arab family that lives in the midst of the historic events of the 1920s-1950s. It revolves around the domestic and local affairs of the Arab village of Tabah in the Ayalon Valley, a former British mandate on the way to Jerusalem from Jaffa, very crucial and vital in that case. The lives of the Arabs there is affected and influenced by the proximity of the Jewish settlement, Shemesh and the leaders of both the clans, Haj Ibrahim and Gideon Asch share a comradeship. When the novel begins, Uris portrays the warm relationship between the two communities and the way they share land, water and even knowledge. But as the story progresses the innocence is lost and the two communities stand in opposition due to the crucial historical mishaps. The extensive pressure of their Arab leaders and feeling of the humiliation of being refugees make them the enemies of the Jews. The shrewd leaders convince them that the Jews are the reason for their hardships.

*The Haj* refers to the pilgrimage to Mecca by the able-bodied Muslim. As the title reminds the story represents the both the physical and psychological journey undertaken by Haj Ibrahim and his family from their home to the refugee camps near Jericho. The trauma they experience inside and outside ends up by them witnessing the erosion of their values and tradition.

Uris begins the novel by emphasizing the culture and tradition of the Arabs. He portrays their notion of giving respect to people who go for the Haj, humiliation to a man without a son and also the practice of assigning duties to children on the basis of their age. Traditional life is altered permanently with the establishment of a Jewish settlement nearby on land sold to Jewish farmers by Effendi Fawzi Kabir, a rich Palestinian landlord. Uris mocks the Arabs on their affectation of proudly proclaiming the victory of their brave warrior ancestors. Ibrahim's toler-

ance of and even friendship with Jews does not fit in with the general mood during the 1930s and 1940s. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Mohammad Amin al-Husseini calls for hatred towards the Jews through his fiery speeches. Their school classrooms are infused with disgust against the Jews.

As a response to the criticisms he faced after the publication of his Jewish novel *Exodus* as anti-Arab, here Uris narrates the story from the point of view of an Arab youngster, Ishmael, son of Ibrahim. Yet the fact-Uris' Jewish favour-remains unaltered where one could find underlying sarcasm and mockery towards the Arabs. As the novel progresses the scene becomes worst where in the Arab leadership allied with Hitler calls for vengeance on the Jews for they considered the Jews the reason for all the mishaps they suffered. All the treaties between them remain withdrawn against the background of the United Nations General Assembly passage of the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine (United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181) on 29 November 1947. The historic stance leads to the evacuation of the village by Haj Ibrahim and his people, being chased by his enemy Al-Qawuqji's Arab troops and the rival Jewish forces, Haganah and Irgun, later saved by Gideon Asch, his Jewish ally who helps them escape to Tulkarm in Samaria on the West Bank, yet the women were being raped by Qawuqji's men. Later they live in cave, desert, and refugee camps. The proposal for negotiation with the new State of Israel for the return of Palestinians to their homes by Ibrahim and the like-minded people fails and consequently his elder son Jamil is murdered. Later he himself murders his daughter Nada and dies of heart attack when he comes to know of the gang rape of his family's women narrated by Ishmael. The novel ends with the insane Ishmael who contemplates his diseased sister.

The novel talks about the Arab-Israel conflict, which is purely racial and geographical. When the Jewish dream of an independent state is accomplished, the Arab's territory is being ques-

tioned and many of the Palestinians remain as refugees. When the Jewish dream for a shrine at Jerusalem is on the move, the Arab Temple of Omar is under menace. Even if they could arrive at an agreement of neighborhood despite the differences, the fact is that people around the world would never let that happen. That becomes evident through this novel.

Uris reveals the differences between two cultures by placing them in the same situations and showing the ways they behave. The mindset of the Arabs towards the Jews is clear when in the villagers headed by Ibrahim undertaking an attack on the Jewish kibbutz only to receive humiliation. This set back creates no difference in the pompous nature of the Arab as they proclaim their victory proudly contrary to the truth. Also they look at the neighbouring Jews with suspect even when receiving aids and favours from them. Uris intentionally or not, portrays the Jews as much civilized, cosmopolitan, disciplined and cultured in contrast to the Arabs whom he pictures as savage, uncouth, and of following a raw, desert culture of hatred, vengeance and sexual violence. This difference is evident throughout the characters in the novel where in one could find only bad Arab characters, and good heroic Jewish characters. Even the Protagonist Ibrahim remains partially good, but proves to be savage by murdering his own daughter to keep the respect of his family.

The water treaty that remains as a major clause between the two villages could be taken as a good example to show their attitudes. Even when the outside world is fuelled with Arab-Israeli riots, the valley seems to be unaffected and when Gideon mentions this Ibrahim responds by condemning that they do not have a choice as their water is controlled by the Jews. When Gideon asks if the situation is reverse where in if the Arabs are controlling water what might be happening, Ibrahim's reply opens to a fact of the Arab mindset which is purely based on hatred towards the Jews:

You see Gideon that is why you are fooling yourselves. You don't know how to deal with us.

For years, decades, we may seem to be at peace with you, but always in the back of our minds we keep up the hope of vengeance. No dispute is ever really settled in our world. The Jews give us special reason to continue warring... There is a clause in our water agreement we did not ask for. It says the agreement can be terminated only if it were proved that someone from Tabah committed a crime against you. That proves you are weak and that will be your downfall. You are crazy to extend us a mercy that you will never receive in return. (The Haj, 55)

This expression is relevant in our own day. Israel provided food and electricity to Gaza, while Hamas-led Gaza used the land vacated by Israel in 2005, to fire rockets to southern Israel. Also Hamas kidnapped an Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, and has, for several years, held him and denied the Red Cross from visiting him. If the situation was reversed, the Arabs of Gaza would murder outright any and all the Jews they would have encountered. Furthermore, they would not have provided food or electricity to be supplied to the Jews.

This statement shows the difference between their attitudes. Ibrahim's words show that if the situation were reversed, the Arabs would shut off the water to the kibbutz, to let the Jews die of thirst. When the Arab hospitality is shown, soon one could expect hostility towards the Jews which is inborn in them. Differences are there among Arab states in relation to what their relationship to Israel should be but it should be noted that the majority of the people of these states have hard feelings against Israel

Home seems to be a problem for both the communities. Their struggle is towards building up an independent and peaceful home, without sharing any hateful boundaries. When that dream is attained by one community, the other will end up in homeless state. Hence these ideas of home and homelessness remain problematic for both the Arabs and the Jews. Problems of assimilation and alienation is also causing a dilemma for them as Diaspora, Jews were struggling with situations of alienation and isolation. Their iden-

tity was questioned and they were forced to assimilate the cultures of their surrogate countries. The Arabs were also gone through such stages and discrimination and subjugation in the name of race might be a reason for their cultural savagery. In the midst of these entire physical and psychological traumas, both Arabs and Jews are moving towards their dream; and when one attains definitely the other will lose. After a clear understanding of the two histories and also the story line of Uris' novel, anybody could sympathise with both the people.

One could always speculate the news related to the Arab-Jewish issues as it becomes a part of the current politics. Whenever a problem arises, related to these two communities countries take sides and the issues become international and more sensational. Most recently, the United Nation's anti-Israel resolution is refused to have vetoed by Barack Obama in the Security Council. The 15-member Security Council voted 14-0 on the proposed measure on Friday, December 23, 2016, showing a withdrawal of the US policy in the past supporting Israel. The new resolution demands Israel to cease all the settlement activities immediately in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. This incident shows the age long support of the US for Israel is withdrawn and one could look forward to Donald Trump, the newly elected US President, for further favoring towards Israel.

Recent politics along with the long history car-

ries forward the future of the two countries- Israel and Palestine. Their never ending rivalry and conflict finds its root in race and religion. This struggle for land in the name of community seems to be the most crucial one in comparison with other similar issues. Leon Uris attempts proved to be only partially successful as he shows his Jewish favour at times. Also the historical backup is not much strong as he wanders and finds himself lost in character building and long narrative passages. Even though the novel *The Haj* remains prejudiced, any reader could find out traces of culture, manners and behavior of both the communities. The fact that their conflicts related to race and religion is too old and is still on the move. As a reader and an onlooker one could only watch out and speculate things that are going on. This paper concludes on a hopeful note where it anticipates a peaceful ending for this age old crisis and an ultimate solution for both the sides without compromising the other.

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■ (Positive Disintegration in... Continued from page:26)

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## **Ten- minute Activities as Motivational Triggers for Primary School Students**

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### **Introduction**

We are at the threshold of changes in our approach to education as the idea of constructivism is served as the basis. A distinguishing feature of this approach is that it constructs knowledge in a natural manner through learning activities based on acquired knowledge and conceptual background of the learner. Many researchers point out the poor level of language acquisition and communicative skill among the students of primary classes. It is found that the teachers give more importance to complete the portion in stipulated time to satisfy the department and moreover the parents. In this situation, the learners are not motivated properly and they show inhibition to communicate in English. So it is very essential that teachers should create the situation and ensure the participation of all students in class room activities. In addition, learners are to be motivated properly and their special skills and talents are to be identified by the teacher. This paper is limited to the relevance of the ten-minute activity, Reporting, for primary school students in native context.

### **Memory and knowledge**

The Dictionary says: If you know a language, you have learned it and can speak it. And defines Memory is the ability to retain and recall information, ideas, images and thoughts. But memorising is not done by anyone while learning a language. It may have done in later child-

hood while developing earlier knowledge of language. A language was learned in practical use of whatever is accessible in concrete situations.

Fuster's statement that memory is made up of many pieces of knowledge named mental cognits and their biological correspondence consisting of neural networks. These memory networks operate dynamically and generate at appropriate moments. Each cognit activity supported by other cognit's cognitive networks. Fuster's principle is justified by stating that knowledge is the power of dynamic memory and structured dynamic network power is knowledge.

### **Influence of motivation**

There are a number of language learner motivation models with relation to second language acquisition in a classroom setting. The different perspectives on second language motivation can be divided into three distinct phases as the social psychological period, the cognitive situated period and the process oriented period. The social psychological perspectives on second language learning motivation emphasize the role of the individuals social context and social interactions.

The Cognitive perspectives focus on how the learner's mental process influence their motivation. During the late 1980s and 1990s, the cognitive revolution takes place in psychology and it leads the language learning motivation field towards cognitive models. Cognitive psycholo-

gists argued that how one thinks about one's abilities, possibilities, potentials, limitations and past performances has major influences on motivation.

Noels and colleagues explored self-determination theory in the language learning context and developed the language learning orientation scale which categorises a person's motivational orientation as either intrinsic, extrinsic or amotivated based on the continuum of self determination. It was found that in the language learning classroom, which the learners feel non-controlling, promoted intrinsic and self-determined orientation of motivation in students.

Attribution theory contends that the casual reasons which are attributed to the past success or failure plays a critical role in motivation and in future endeavours in that area. Process model of second language learning is marked by three distinct chronological steps; pre-actional stage, Actional stage and post actional stage.

Pre actional stage is associated with setting goals, forming intentions and launching actions and attitude towards second language speaking community. The actional stage includes sustaining one's level of motivation throughout the language-learning process. Post actional stage, the major motivational influences are the learner's styles of attribution and biases, self concept beliefs and received feedback during the second language learning process.

### **Need of Triggers**

Triggers are the actions or events that play a role in prompting particular behaviour. Triggers can be used deliberately by teachers to elicit the expected student behaviour. For example, if a teacher wants students to listen, he/she will generally call for their attention (sometimes using a signal) and wait for them to be quiet thereby triggering the derived attentive behaviour.

Sometimes actions or events in the classroom may be a trigger for the students with learning difficulties to exhibit challenging behaviour, which could reveal that they are struggling. The challenging behaviour will depend on the indi-

vidual student, the environment or setting in which the action takes place. The crucial element in second language classroom is identifying the suitable triggers for the students. When any triggers are identified as challenging, teachers should avoid these and start to develop and use other triggers to elicit positive behaviour. Positive student behaviours are effectively developed and supported through relationship-based whole-school and classroom practices. Schools have the ability to define their own set of behavioural expectations as there is no common set of behaviours that can be universally regarded as challenging.

### **Nature Related Hobbies of Kids**

According to Family Activities Expert Dr.BravadaGarett-Akinsanya, kids love the idea that they are positively impacting the natural world. They have the hobbies of making bird-feeders and bird houses. They are not averse to getting muddy and seeing sprouts from seeds is a pure magic. Kids show interest in insects and they love to recognise patterns in nature. Our solar system will always be fashionable bedroom accessories. With the digital revolution, videography and photography are easier than ever to master. Traditional stamp and coin collection are still favourite with young kids. They have fun and enthusiasm in sharing these collections.

These interests may change over time, but even temporary, ones have a significant impact on a child's development. Teachers can identify how the child prefers to learn and think and what special skills or talents he/she might have by using the theory of Multiple Intelligence of the Psychologist Howard Gardner.

### **Present Scenario**

The curriculum provides activity oriented language learning on the basis of constructivism. It is found that the activities are designed by the curriculum committee. But it provides freedom to teachers for the modification of the activities to the level of their learners. Unfortunately it is not happened. The learners will not get enough chances to express their feelings and experiences

in their classroom.

Most of the Primary School students possess huge treasure of matchbox labels, cartoon stickers, tattoos and marbles. They never get a chance to show off these treasures. Neither they get a chance to share their personal feelings such as the injury of their pet bird/animal or any jovial incident at their own home. So it will be a great motivational trigger if they are allotted ten minutes everyday either at the beginning, middle or at the end of the class for reporting their experiences, preferably an immediate past: that means what happened to them between last evening and that morning.

### **Conclusion**

There is a greater need at present to develop communicative skill among primary school students and it is the duty of teachers to give them enough exposure and confidence to speak. So the classroom activities should be related to their lives and the learners should have the provision what they speak in the class.

It is clear that the ten-minute activity, REPORTING personal experiences and feelings, helps the students to develop listening and speaking

skills. The students will be highly motivated if any external factors are set by the teacher.

Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence helps the teachers to identify how the child prefers to learn and what special skills/talents he might have. Then the teacher can do the adaptation and design the activities suitable for the children with special needs.

The students will get chances to hear other's experiences and feelings and to develop empathy. It is the chance to know others and many moral values are sprouted in their heart without any external factors.

Positive behaviours will be developed among the students when they are provided enough chances to expose their feelings and experiences to a group of students. It is an opportunity that they feel they are listened by others. So this activity is a motivational trigger which promotes positive behaviour and prevents behavioural issues.

It is important that REPORTING makes the classroom active and enthusiastic and it will be a strong stepping stone to the world of communication.

### **Guidance & Assistance in Organizing Workshops & Conferences**

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## **Audiobook for Enhancing Listening Skills**

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### **Abstract**

Audiobook is one of the technological tools that can be utilised for the teaching-learning of English language skills. Of the four macro-skills of the language, listening is seldom taught since it is the most taken-for-granted skill. Since the 21st century youths are tech-savvy and tech-maniacs, gadgets can sustain learners' motivation. Motivation and concentration are socio-psychological issues that teachers of English confront in every other English class. Audiobooks can be exploited for the purpose of enhancing listening skills. Instead of traditional lecture method, audiobooks can be used as a means to enhance a few micro-skills of listening.

**Keywords:** Listening Skill, Audiobook, Second Language learning, Concentration

### **Background of the study**

Listening skill is the most common activity that need not be taught in the classroom. The importance of listening extends far beyond academics and career and it helps to communicate effectively with others in day to day life. Acquiring listening skill takes time because as such it is a tough and complex skill, which includes the other three skills viz. speaking, reading and writing. Being an active process listening requires the ability to absorb information, understand, remember, evaluate and respond. Therefore it takes a lot of time to master this skill. Listening is sometimes boring because effective listening requires cognitive skills. In today's curriculum, teachers sometimes ask the students to take notes which eventually results in the students' inability to listen to what is being taught to understand and analyze it. Learners may partially listen and switch off their minds from the task. Classroom listening needs to be intensive as it involves the students' attention on the sounds, stress and intonation of the teacher. Teachers should train the pupils to focus on what is being spoken in the class. Nevertheless, it is

a difficult task to monitor this in over-crowded classrooms. A child always learns to speak through listening. The child listens to the words which mother utters. When the child cannot follow, the mother repeats the word many times so the child picks up. Thus listening can be easily acquired with extra efforts. One should only understand that listening takes place not only inside the classroom but also beyond the four walls. To enhance the listening skill, audiobooks can be a good strategy for L2 Learners. A great majority of people will listen to the audiobooks for entertainment but it can also be a pedagogical tool for improving listening skills.

### **Introduction**

Audiobook is a recording of a text being read. It is used to improve one's pronunciation and vocabulary. Audiobooks are considered as valuable learning tools because of their format. If one has the access to audiobook, they not only develop their pronunciation and vocabulary but they can also familiarize themselves to the different modes of reading, stress and intonation patterns and the native accent. Today's students

are tech-savvy and they have unlimited access to the internet. There are plenty of apps for audiobooks and the learners can download and use them, thus becoming independent in their learning. Using audiobooks will also improve one's multi-tasking skills; one can listen to it even while doing household works, exercising, driving, etc. Listening being a natural means to acquire a language can be effectively developed through audiobooks.

### **Literary Review**

Frank Serafini (2004) has explained that much research validates the importance of reading aloud to students, positing that the act of reading aloud introduces new vocabulary and concepts, provides a fluent model and allows students' access to literature that they are unable to read independently. He adds that audiobooks are an important component of a comprehensive reading program. Kylee Beers (1998) has endorsed that audiobooks, when used with reluctant, struggling, or Second Language learners, serve as a scaffold that allows students to read beyond their reading level. The use of audiobooks is a natural extension of the assisted-reading strategy used with struggling students. Audiobooks expose these readers to something they have never experienced before, by allowing them to experience what fluent readers feel every time they read a book (Stone-Harris 2008). According to Wolfson (2008), since the reading process develops through oral language experiences, audiobooks benefit struggling readers by increasing comprehension and appreciation of written text

### **Hypothesis**

The study began its investigation with the following assumptions:

1. Listening to audiobooks help learners to improve their vocabulary, pronunciation, and accent.
2. The learners' listening skill is enhanced through audiobooks, a new pedagogical tool.

### **Research Questions**

1. How is an audiobook different from a printed

book?

2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of listening to audiobooks?
3. What are the constraints of listening to audiobooks and how to overcome them?

### **Discussion**

Listening to an audiobook is different from reading a print book in many ways. Pamela Varley (2002) has posited that reading is more intimate than listening, and that because listening is more rigid, engagement to an audiobook deters negative reading habits and allows a reader to hear a book exactly as it is written. Yet, the findings of this review demonstrate varied outcomes of audiobook use among different adolescent groups. For individuals learning a second language, comprehension tends to improve as a result of using an audiobook. Audiobooks are easily accessible than print books, and they can be used anywhere. In fact, both audiobooks and print books are equally great ways for one's brain to absorb and comprehend information. But since audiobooks have to be intentionally paused, unlike the eyes wandering involuntarily off the page, and one has the option of speeding up the narration, audiobooks lend themselves to more focused and efficient consumption of books.

Audiobooks are read by the author or they include the commentary by the author. *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key* is read by author Jack Gantos and also includes his commentary about why he wrote the book. This information can provide the students with a connection to the author as well as insight into the author's thoughts and the writing process. The teacher or facilitator can thus introduce the students to the books even above their reading level through which they can be taught interpretive reading and critical listening. The teacher can also highlight the humour in books, new genres used, new vocabularies, unfamiliar dialects or accents and literary styles. A peer group can be formed and they can listen together and try to interpret the topic. Learners are introduced to new vocabularies and dialects, come across different pro-

nunciation patterns and unfamiliar accents, which differ from the learner's real life. The learners are eager to listen to audiobooks - it acts as an entertaining activity. On the other hand, learners acquire listening skills.

Using audiobooks as a teaching tool has its own advantages and disadvantages. As a coin has another side, this too has its limitations. While using audiobooks the individual learner's pace may vary - it may be too fast or too slow. The narrator's voice can be irritating or the use of the cassette or CD players can be awkward when compared to the flexibility of the book. One more reason that may hamper the use of audiobooks in classrooms is they are quite expensive.

Listening to an audiobook has its own constraints; when the learners are not able to follow the narrator, listening gets disturbed and diverted. The speed of reading may attract or irritate, both are equally precarious while listening. Sometimes the learners may not be able to follow the dia-

logue or words spoken in the audiobooks which are too faster. Some stories are funnier and more comical that make them more attractive to the listeners. In such cases, learners start to laugh at the fun and forget to listen to the terms or phrases. To overcome these constraints learners need to listen to the audiobooks repeatedly, so they master the listening skill. Some audiobooks are likely to be more professional and some may not be understood. Therefore, learners may not have the interest to listen to it. The facilitator needs to guide and to train the learners to listen to the audiobooks. Repeated listening to audiobooks improves the learner's skills and fluency.

### **Summing up**

This study theoretically analyzed enhancing the listening skills of the second language learners through audiobooks. It gives a positive attitude to using audiobooks as a new pedagogical tool. Further research may prove that this tool can be practically successful in larger classes and may be includes in the curriculum.

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### **Book Reviews Invited**

Reviews of books are invited to be published in the journal. Preference will be given to ELT practice books, which will be useful to teachers for enhancing their professional competence. Books, which are useful to students, and which follow current thinking in learning-teaching, especially those which promote self study approach, are also welcome. Reviews must be original, highlighting the pedagogic features of the book chosen. Length limit around 1000 words. The full details of book, including current price must be provided.

**Mail : [eltifjournaleditor2010@gmail.com](mailto:eltifjournaleditor2010@gmail.com)**

## **Learner-centred Classrooms: Teacher Attitude**

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### **Abstract**

Present day learners have an easy access to knowledge and so they are more updated. Every single day, they grow as technical as possible with upcoming innovations. Sometimes, they even outsmart their teachers. While teachers become facilitators, learners are imposed with too much responsibility. The duties of facilitators are not compact still. The requirements of being a facilitator are comparatively equal to that of a teacher. With this background, the paper makes a study on the attitude of facilitators and their new dimensions in learner-centred classrooms.

**Keywords:** facilitator, teacher, new dimensions.

### **Introduction**

When there is an advent of a new approach, there is always scope for misconceptions and overconfident remarks. Learner-centred classrooms came into existence and it worked on the basis of the interests and needs of a learner. Learner independency was instilled and instruction was forbidden. Teachers were upgraded as facilitators. With these major characteristics, it also kindled an idea that teachers' burden is reduced. Or rather teachers need not involve fully in the activities of a learner. This assumption that the role of teachers is lessened in a learner-centred classroom is the centre of my study. Verifying this, the various dimensions of a facilitator are explored.

### **Review of Literature**

McCombs (1997) identifies the positive relationship of a facilitator and a learner and emphasises on learner experience. This, in turn suggests that in a learner-centred classroom a facilitator should give importance to what learners experience. She has contributed more to learner-centred teaching and learning. Ahmed

(2013) concludes his study that learner-centred classroom is effective and highly influential. He affirms learner-centred style of teaching to be superior to teacher-centred style of teaching.

### **Research Questions**

Following are the research questions framed to investigate and explore.

In a learner-centred classroom,

1. How far is the role of a facilitator different from that of a teacher?
2. Does a facilitator feel less burdened? If yes, in what way?
3. How does the role change lead to new dimensions?

These research questions have led into the formulation of these hypotheses.

1. Facilitators are overburdened in learner-centred classrooms.
2. The role of facilitators extends widely to the role of teachers.
3. The responsibility of a facilitator is equal to that of a learner.

A discussion was made with the young professors who have an updated knowledge about learner-centred classroom. Some of the barriers of a learner-centred classroom were noted. A learner-centred classroom does not mean that the facilitator can sit and relax as the learners work out tasks and learn by themselves. The facilitator has the biggest problem of managing a classroom. Learners make noise and the facilitator should make sure that it is a meaningful noise. Even though the facilitator makes up his mind, that the learners already know something, he has to provide them with information that is new and useful to learners. At this instant, a facilitator has to know something more than the learners and be equally competent enough, since the learners are already tech-savvy.

The next important duty of the facilitator is to assess the performance of learners individually and give necessary feedback. This would need a lot of time since it is serious work that attributes to the growth of the learners. The feedbacks are given on regular basis.

In the context of an Indian classroom, it is not easy to be a facilitator for the following reasons as per the current professors.

1. Learners in classroom are heterogeneous in terms of culture, background and also knowledge level.
2. The number of students in a classroom is approximately sixty.
3. It takes a lot of time for the facilitator to concentrate on each learner.
4. The Indian education system gives more importance to the product than the process. The learners are expected to score marks than acquire language.
5. The gap between the facilitator and a learner is large in the Indian context.

The role of a facilitator reaches new dimensions at this juncture. A facilitator's input should fetch him a position where learners get motivated. Since, interest is the underlying principle of a learner centred classroom, a facilitators' method

should be suitable to the heterogeneous class. Here, the facilitator has to think aloud, be innovative and kindle the spirit in the learners.

When the number of learner is quite big, the facilitator should organise pair works and group activities with the assurance of making them do it with minimum noise. This is quite a difficult task though. The activities should be in such a way that less noise is required. Giving individual concentration for the learners is again time consuming business wherein the facilitators can go for self-correction. Self-correction can go hand in hand with facilitator's feedback and weekly assessment. In addition to this, feedback can be offered by fellow learners which actually can reduce fear. Learners feel comfortable when they are in a peer circle.

There is this constant ideology that teacher is superior in terms of Weimer "sage on the stage". The existence of this idea interrupts the friendly atmosphere between the learner and the teacher. Sharing is dominated by instructing. Even in a learner centred classroom, the facilitator unconsciously starts lecturing thinking that it is his duty.

Under the shelter of Indian education system, professors feel that learner-centred classrooms are in dilemma. The classrooms become mark-centred factories where learners ought to score well. When this becomes an objective, learner-centred classrooms are not appreciable.

### **Discussion**

Analysing the data collected, three aspects of a facilitator in a learner-centred classroom are identified which can be described in three terms.

#### **1. A Role-playing facilitator**

Transforming into a facilitator from a teacher is not simply narrowing down the position instead it is expanding the circle. A facilitator should be a good role player who is expected to take up different roles in order to construct a good learning atmosphere inside the classroom. In this aspect, a learner's place is stable whereas a facilitator has to change roles accordingly. Leaver, Ehrman and Shekhtman (2005) discuss four roles of a teacher in a classroom which aims at

learner autonomy. They are guide, cheerleader, role model, and motivator. In addition to these roles, few more can be included. A facilitator assuming a role of a learner is possible. This provides space where the facilitator sits next to the learners, views things from their perspectives and guides them in their growth. A role-playing facilitator thus becomes a part of a learner-centred classroom.

## 2. An Altruistic facilitator

When a facilitator is compared to a teacher, the latter loves himself and his voice that he wants to listen to it always. As a result, he feels superior, develops pride and hardly recognises learner's individuality. On the other hand, a facilitator is altruistic. He does not care for his voice instead he speaks less and observes more. He sacrifices boasting and showing off his own knowledge. This nature enables the facilitator to get used to learner-centred classroom. The learners in turn profit more by doing every assignment on their own using their own creativity without the pressure of the facilitator's opinion. Also, an altruistic facilitator is not obsessed with fault finding, but encourages learners to identify the faults on their own and self-correct. Thereby, a positive environment is assured and the gap between a facilitator and a learner is reduced to nil.

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## 3. Facilitator homework

Homework is a duty not only to learners, but also to the facilitator. The facilitator has to prepare every single day and study the progress of the learners. The preparation is not meant for giving a lecture, but to be efficient enough to monitor the interaction of learners who are rich with information. The facilitator should have an overview of the topic for discussion. Preparation other than reading involves arranging feedbacks of learners, collecting available materials and setting question formats for testing learners.

## Conclusion

A facilitator's role remains as significant as a teacher's role in a learner-centred classroom. Everyday preparation is forced and classroom management becomes another issue. So, a facilitator's efforts contribute to the success of learner-centred classroom. In addition to foregrounding the interests of the learners, it is also in the hands of facilitators to scaffold them and guide them. Without the co-operation of facilitators, learner-centred classrooms cannot yield good results. Hence, a facilitator's job is not over-burdened but still difficult and it ranges widely from being a teacher. Facilitators and learners share the responsibility in learner-centred classrooms.

## **Cultural studies and Gender Issues in Gloria Naylor's Novels**

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### **Abstract**

In Naylor's novel it explains about the individual situation of women in the society is slowly and steadily changing. To achieve their goal women have to travel for a long path. A romanticized image of woman is presented in literature screens the bitter reality of her position in patriarchal society. Gloria Naylor is an afro American writer depicts the women's peculiarity. In Naylor's novels it describes about the gender, race and sex about the overcome of black women to white. Its particularly tells about the colored people domination, discrimination, sexuality, exploitation and suffrage of balkanizations. "Woman is not born but made" in rightly go along with the condition of women is only born for the feelings of white they made as a woman. Naylor as a novelist gifted with the extraordinary ability to focus very sensitive aspects of human relationship in general and man-woman relation in particular. In Naylor's novels it explains the suffrage of gender racism and sexism, through their culture language how black shows their growth to the colored people for the society. The conference paper focused on Gloria Naylor's novels very sensitive aspects of humans, human relationship like gender, race and sexism in general and man-woman relation in particular. "Slow and steady wins the race" by this famous quotation let's distinguish the past, present and future of black people achievement in their life.

Women's writing which present the reality, not to interpreted, introduces a unique women world in literature. Through the protocaded in redefining the women's image, has slowly changed to represent the innermost chambers of women's sociological and psychological needs. Women writers' scenario focuses on the subterranean problem which women face through their society, family and attitude by their own men. A famous black women writer Gloria Naylor is a contemporary African American writer who focuses not only on the peculiar problems the women come across because of racism and gender issues but also the struggles they come across because of their own community, men and women and sometimes by their own self.

Gloria Naylor well knew her own identity as a female, with extreme state of prominence in Afro-American literature. She represent through her set of writings her vision of the world in which human being confront evil and a life of illusion and despair. She is rightly recognized for speaking out the rights of women and also other social issues. Brad Leithauser said, "Gloria Naylor's is a strong voice, and a compassionate one..." Emily Dickson who is a lecturer in humanities says about Naylor: "... she writes- and speaks- with the solid, decided vigor of someone who has given her subject its thoughtful due". Naylor is recognized that she would teach the language, culture for all the black women.

Naylor realistically portrays the varied lives of African Americans, particularly her minority and a woman in a Caucasian, male-oriented society. African American literature tends to focus on themes of interest to Black people, such as the role of African Americans within the larger American society and issues such as African American culture, racism, religion, slavery, freedom, and equality. This equality shows the variation in nature and human in her novels. Being an African woman by birth and tradition Naylor herself faced a lot many challenging with white and perplexing circumstances but she resisted all tough that came her way. She grew up in a time and region in which black women used to live traditionally. There was no career for them Naylor used to teach the language through songs, movies and differentiate through culture. But Naylor rejected to play a traditional feminine role and also rejected chauvinism.

Naylor explores the female mystique through a series of sturdy female characters that are actually the central character in her novels. She does not treat women in the acknowledged role allocated to her by the society like that of a mother or a wife but as an individual. Naylor wanted to be free from the strict standards of the traditional society. She depicts the female experience of oppression and exploitation in a male dominated Black society. She provides women with new directions to overcome the constraints of the personal and the political and evolve their own modes of resistance.

Women are not able to exercise autonomy either over their lives or their bodies since they are controlled and determined for them by men. The feminists support the idea of a universal womanhood cutting across all barriers of age, income, class, race and other divisive factors. The feminist commitment to combat all forms of patriarchy and sexism has given a semblance of unified ideology to feminist criticism. Naylor who focuses not only on a typical problems, the problems focus on the women come across for the reason of racism and gender issues and also the struggles from men and women come across of their own community. Particularly the difficulties are shown in a two cadre inner and outer suf-

frage of women. The Afro American women suffrage in both the ways comparing with the inner coverage the external was very much hurtful by the white. The white people used the black in many ways and they ill-treated as an external realism like gender issues. Even though the many woman's are facing the same problem nowadays. Through the comparison of olden days and earlier view, women problems are not solved through their gender issues.

In representing their positive and negative traits of women's innermost hidden problems, as well as known by the contemporary writers share a number of similarities. Alice Walker, Toni Cade Bambara and Gloria Naylor are alike in depicting Black Nationalism, black society and black women. Naylor shares common attributes with her contemporaries and other African American women writers but stands unique in her setting, characterization and narration.

Naylor's narrative style is different from other women writers in presenting multiple protagonists in all her novels. Many of the writers chose their role protagonist to either a female or two. In the case of Naylor, it is different and unique; in all her novels the role of protagonist is assigned to many and all of them to their best.

Comparing with the other Afro American writer Naylor represents the problems of women through multiple protagonists in each of her novels. Though, many women rule and rights are equally shared among all women no one either dominates or overrules. In a conversation with Toni Morrison, Naylor says, "My emotional energy was spent creating a woman's world, telling her side of it because I knew it hadn't been done enough in literature" (579). Naylor represents the painful, pathetic lives of her women in a picturesque way and all her novels demonstrate it with the help of multiple protagonists.

Generally women writers are enforced to take up a unique strategy to represent the undisclosed world of women around them. Naylor's period is the late twentieth century, and racism and its devastation have already been widely discussed, but the other issues related to the familial, social

and psychological terrains need to be probed. Representing the inner struggles of women proved to be the need of the hour. Therefore, Naylor takes up the inner struggles that women experience when they vie to fix their life in a race-biased, gender-based society. "Far from being a replica of domestic novels by white women writers, Naylor's texts mirror the unique realities of black women" (Montgomery 56). Her women are from all grounds; lower class, upper class and upper middle class. Naylor's unique strategy, using multiple protagonists to represent the world of women, helps her to represent the mixed class.

Naylor's first novel *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982) is a novel of heartrending stories of seven women. The novel is set in Brewster Place, a rundown street, alienated from the other parts of the city by a wall; the main picture is stand by on wall as a symbol of separation. Brewster Place is a place of isolated and depressed women who are unable to find their space in the society. In Brewster place character named Mattie Michael is main in the novel she loves the butcher without the parents knowledge she became pregnant. After that she faces many problems in her life being a rich girl due to sex she faced more difficulties and life changes in a bad situation. It has seven stories each story has its own pains and sufferings. None of the characters narrate her story in first person but it does not spoil the purpose of sharing their hopes and losses and experiences.

She wants to find solutions for the day-to-day problems of her people and therefore, she stays with them in their place. She tries to unite the people of Brewster Place to bring in a Tenants' Association which can help them to solve their residential problems. All the women of Brewster Place have some agonizing past, yet they find a ray of hope in them and the same gives them energy to survive in a racist society. Their past experiences lead them to help other women who struggle. The bond Naylor creates among the women of Brewster Place is powerful. They all find real solace in their relationship with each other.

Bailey's Café, Naylor's fourth novel deals with female sexuality. The novel which takes place in the first half of the twentieth century, like *The Women of Brewster Place*, shares the story of seven women. The women of Bailey's Café face tribulations in the society, in their family and for some of them their psyche brings in problems. The victimized women of Bailey's Café come out of oppression and restore their life with the help of a matriarchal figure Eve. Naylor, who had already tried her hand at weaving many numbers of stories into one, not only weaves it wonderfully but also decorates it with her magical language and mysticism. Naylor's revision of biblical stories also deepens the study.

In the third novel *Mama Day* explains family bonding relationship. Coaca plays a vital role her grandmother implies the supernatural power of the women. Based on the inner and outer reality she shows suffrage of women. Coaco loves a professor and she used to get married with the knowledge of their family. After few days they used to separate because of unhealthy condition of her husband. Based on this her grandmother used to create a superstitious believe on them finally it won't work out and they loses a heartfelt person.

In these three novels of Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place*, *Mama Day* and *Baileys Café* it explains a multiple protagonist space required to probe deep into lives of women. No life is partially presented or represented; each of Naylor's women is the central theme which appears in character of her story represents day to day life history. Thus, in the three books Gloria Naylor's concern in presenting the uniqueness of each woman's character and presenting the bond between the women, and how the women overcome to the world and faces their stain happens in their life. With the remarkable stain the black women face a different role in all her Naylor novels. The main impact which represents the women's development and overcome of their gender issues and implementation of the women make each other to shine with a unique superiority.

*(Continued on page:51)*

## Report from the field

### **Two-day National Conference**

in English Language, Literature & Cultural Studies, 6 & 7 January 2017 at  
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore

**Dr. S.Jayalaxsmi**

For empowering rural India through English language education and to bring researchers together, who can enhance English language teaching in the years to come were the two major objectives of the Two-day National Conference organised by the Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, in association with English Language Teachers' Interaction Forum (ELTIF).

The mission of ELTIF was conveyed in concrete terms, at the inaugural session, by its Founder President Dr. P. Bhaskaran Nair by congratulating two PG students-cum-paper presenters--Ms. Sri Bhagyalakshmi, of the American College, Madurai, on her enthusiasm to learn, and take part in academic gatherings; and Ms. Meenakshi Srihari of Avinashilingam University, on her exemplary presentation of research papers at the ELTIF conferences of previous years.

The dais was gallant with the honoured presence of Dr. Kowsalya, the Registrar, Dr. Ambiga Devi, Dean (Humanities), Mrs. Prema Rengachari, Educationist and Director of Vidyavanam Anakatti, Coimbatore; Dr. Srividya Sivakumar, a renowned Coimbatore-based poet and columnist, Dr. Jayanthasri Balakrishnan, formerly Professor of PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore and Dr. Richa Tripathi, Hindustan University. "With courage, you can achieve anything in life," echoed Mrs. Vasantha Kalbagal, a Bangalore-based corporate consultant, when she delivered the inaugural address. The Compilation of Ab-

stracts was released by Pon. Chandran, Psychologist, Life Skills Trainer and Theatre Activist, President, Konangal Film Society, Coimbatore, and it was received by Dr. K. Elango, Formerly Professor and Head of the Department of English, Anna University, Chennai.

Dr. Kowsalya, the Registrar of Avinashilingam University for Women, in her felicitations mentioned that this conference would mark a milestone in the academic history of the Department of English. She also expressed her wish that this collaboration between ELTIF and Avinashilingam University should continue. The Dean of Humanities, Dr. Ambiga Devi expressed her pride in being a part of this great event of a remarkable magnitude. Earlier, Dr. S. Chritina Rebecca, the Head, Department of English welcomed the gathering and introduced the guests. The inaugural session was followed by various paper presentation and workshop sessions simultaneously.

The sessions were chaired by some of the faculty members including Mrs. A. Jayasree, Dr. Raichel M. Sylus, Dr. Chitra Sivasubramaniam, Dr. Sreeja Balakrishnan, and Dr. Kala Chandrasekaran.

Dr. Jayanthasri Balakrishnan in her plenary talk, spoke on using translation in the second language classroom. A multilingual by herself, a renowned scholar of Tamil and English, a creative writer and critic, she revealed the heights and glory of one's being bilingual or multilingual, for to be a bilingual means to be a mediator between two or more cultures. She enthralled the audience

by her erudite lecture on how effectively one's mother tongue can be used in learning the other tongue.

A workshop session on "Research and Writing" was held by Dr. Elango. He elaborated on the term 'research' and its various functions. He quoted Albert Einstein's words, "If we knew what we were doing, it wouldn't be called research". Then he spoke about action research and academic research along with the explanations about sifting and shifting. He concluded his lecture by stressing on the value of a true research.

Thiru. Pon Chandran, in a plenary session, discussed on "Trends in Tamil Theatre". He reflected that "Responsibilities are essential in Communication." He elaborated on the topic by denoting that a person becomes responsible when he / she has no prejudice. He related the aspect of responsibility to that of communication by saying that "A language is a process of freedom" which should be handled with responsibility. Further, language, literature and culture are always interlinked and inhibition is a barrier to acquire a language, especially, the one that is alien to the native speaker. He stressed that one can acquire language only if the person is humble.

Mrs. A. Vijayarani, Associate Professor, Department of English, shared her views during a plenary session on 6th of January. She spoke on "Multiculturalism and Pluralism in the 21st Century". She began the session by defining pluralism, "Pluralism is a society in which minorities enjoy their independent culture and don't impose their religion on others". She brought in the core tendency of multiculturalism, i. e., tolerance. She also stated the themes of post-modernism. She motivated the students and scholars to read more books on the history and development of English literature.

Another workshop on Teachers Education was conducted by Ms. Dhanya Bhaskaran, a trainer-researcher. She oriented the central idea of her talk by introducing Randy Pausch's famous speech "The Last Lecture" to her audience. She exemplified the qualities of a good teacher. "If your students willingly come to listen to your last

lecture, you are a good teacher," she said. She believes democracy in classrooms, the quality that made her to enlighten her audience on the fact that, "receiving knowledge is to create and make others experiencing it". Like democracy, knowledge is for everyone. She concluded the workshop with the proposal that teachers should make students self-reflective.

In another workshop session, Dr. Richa Tripathi, a specialist in library science, highlighted the various aspects of plagiarism in her workshop session. She explained about copyright infringement and fair use of sources. In addition to this, she acquainted the audience with the available tools for detecting plagiarism. She also mentioned the sources which are to be quoted and which are to be cited. She concluded the workshop with valuable suggestions to avoid plagiarism.

In one of the plenary sessions, Mrs. Vasantha Kalbagal began the session in a unique manner by saying "Unlearn things that you have learned." This was an example to make the audience understand on how Indian usage of English in everyday life is wrong. She gave an example of how the question 'What's your good name?' is not accepted by the Australians or Americans and how a simple construction of 'What is your name?' is perfect to bridge the differences between people.

She pointed out English to be a semi-permeable language, where it always moulds itself to the surrounding where it is used. English, like a chameleon adapts itself to the user and to the language with which it is mixed with. The speaker spoke on how English is the link language within a country and among countries. She added as to how English helps in International Banking, Economic Affairs, Technology Transfer, International Law, Trade, Politics and Administration. Mrs. Vasantha Kalbagal ended the session by saying how Indian people are prejudiced by holding English speaking people and fair skinned people on high standards. She said that she wishes such false assumptions by people change in order to have effective communication be-

tween cultures and countries.

Dr. John Sekar, Head, Department of the English American College Madurai, spoke on plagiarism in one of the workshop sessions. He started his session with the meaning of plagiarism. He spoke about the key elements of a research paper such as: abstract, key words, method, finding, and objectives. He concluded with some suggestions that would assist the research scholars to write on their own. Dr. John Sekar also chaired a paper presentation session by interacting effectively with exemplary input of his knowledge with the presenters and the audience

Another workshop session was conducted by Dr. Bhaskaran Nair on "How (Not) to Write an Abstract." Writing as a cognitive and thinking process was the first concept, Dr. Nair introduced. He said "You can think with your pen or pencil". Secondly, he asserted that mistakes are part of life and therefore they are also a part of learning. He also said that "There is absolutely nothing to learn in this world. What is there in this world is to experience". One experiences through the five senses. The experience is consolidated and processed by the sixth sense, the

brain. This processing is called "conceptualisation". The session came to an end with Dr. Bhaskaran Nair promising the audience to meet them again and give more tips on writing an abstract.

The papers presented included varied concepts from the importance of cooperative classrooms to the value of human relationships; importance of picture books, feminism and women empowerment; corruption, sufferings of Subalterns and refugees, linguistic diaspora and psychological aspects like illumination, identity crisis.

During the valedictory session on the second day of the conference, Dr. K. Ramasamy, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore was the chief guest. He spoke about the research aspects in the current scenario. Dr. Bhaskaran Nair stressed on the role of a teacher and Dr. John Sekar gave his evaluative comments on the conference. Dr. Jayalakshmi, the Joint Convenor of the Organizing Committee proposed vote of thanks.

A total of 168 participants attended the conference and the various sessions of the two-day conference-cum-workshops.

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■ (Cultural studies and...Continued from page:48)

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**Report from the field**

**Department of English, SRNM College Sattur (TN)  
Two-day National Conference on  
Teaching of English Language and Literature &  
Workshop on Soft Skills and Communication Development**

Dr.S. Jayanthi

Dept. of English, SRNM College Sattur

The Department of English, Sri S. Ramasamy Naidu Memorial College, Sattur, convened a two-day National Conference in the Teaching of English Language and Literature on the theme Search for Alternatives in the Teaching of English Language and Literature in association with English Language Teachers' Interaction Forum (ELTIF) under the auspices of the UGC Autonomous Grant on the 22nd and the 23rd of September, 2017. Ms. S. Jayanthi, Convener of the Conference, welcomed the august gathering. The Principal Dr. S. Ganeshram presided over the function and delivered the Presidential Address and felicitated the two day event. The focal theme of the conference was presented by the Chief Advisor of the event, Prof. P. Bhaskaran Nair, Hindustan University, Chennai. Dr. R. Sumathi, Head, Department of English, honored the conference with her graceful presence. The Keynote Address was presented by the doyen of English Language and Education Professor Krishnasamy, formerly Professor of English, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, (EFL) Hyderabad. He addressed on the subject "Finding Alternative ways of Teaching English in India". Prof. Lalitha Krishnasamy, formerly Principal and Professor of Education, focused on Teaching of English through Gender issues. Prof. K. Vijaykumar, formerly of Periyar Maniammai University, Thanjavur, centered his session on "The Need for Incorporating Interpersonal Communication in the Present Day UG Curriculum". Prof. J.

John Sekar, Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, The American College, Madurai, concentrated his lecture on the Alternative Viable Pedagogical Practices. The conference became a convention for the sharing of ideas and views among the educators and academics from the different parts of India.

The uniqueness of the conference was the inclusion of the workshop sessions on Soft Skills and Communication Development on both the days. The participants, the student participants from various colleges and of the various departments of the convening college benefited from these workshop sessions. Prof. Krishnasamy, Prof. Lalitha Krishnasamy, Prof. K. Vijayakumar, Prof. J. John Sekar, Mr. Gururaj, Faculty, Regional Institute of English, Bangalore conducted workshop sessions for the participants. Prof. Ganesh and Prof. Thanesh from RKM Vivekananda College, Chennai, Prof. Y. Vidhya, Prof. Meena and Prof. Meena Devi from VHNSN College, Virudhunagar, Prof. Sobhana Devi from SFR College, Sivakasi, Prof. Esther Blesslyn Roopavathy from The American College, Madurai, Prof. Muruganantham from Rajapalayam Raju's College, Rajapalayam were part of the Workshop team. The two day conference cum workshop program culminated with the feedback from the participants. The Vote of Thanks was delivered by Ms. Fathima Farzana, Assistant Professor of English.

## Parenting

### **Stranger, but Not Danger**

**DhanyaBhaskaran**

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"Mama told me don't be talking to the stranger, don't be talking to the stranger, stranger is danger...lalala...lala...lala..lala..lala..."

The 9 year old is singing aloud a popular Bollywood number. His friend suddenly interrupted and said... "yeah! That's true, my mom always tells me not to talk to strangers... you know they may harm us... or even shhh.... Kill us"

What are these kids talking about! It's not true. I talk to strangers... always I do! For the past 36 years most the people with whom I interacted were strangers; some of them later on became acquaintances and some others close friends. It was much before the regular television broadcasts on child abduction and brutal rapes, that I grew up in a village with my granny, uncle and mom. My dad used to be away at work. I walked through the village paths sometimes with my friends, granny or uncle and sometimes all alone. There were many strangers around me. They used to smile at me, exchange a hello or a nod or ask one or two random questions such as 'Hei, kid who are you?' or 'where are you going?' I used to respond in nods or one or two words. Most of those people whom I met in the village were strangers to me; yet they were never a danger! They used to ensure that I am not walking back home alone from the playground, late in the evening, they used to wait till I started climbing the steps to my house; they used to ask if I need some water when I sit exhausted after hours of long play in the paddy fields... they were never dangerous. Most of them were kind, caring and the rest just simple passers-by.

My granny and uncle taught me to smile to strangers, nod to them back and even exchange pleasantries with trust and confidence. They subtly conveyed that the world is a nice place to live. And I was never taught to be afraid of the world.

I had been cautioned about possible threats! But those were more like guidance than alarms. I am an avid traveller. I travel for work and I travel for pleasure. And in each of those travels, I meet and greet many strangers, talk to them, listen to them and many a times, establish good friendship with them.

Imagine a situation where we are only allowed to talk to people whom we know!

Why is that recently we are becoming more and more cautious about 'the stranger is a danger' equation? My opinion is that it is the media that creates this mass phobia. If we take a closer look at the news on children or adults attacked or harassed by strangers, we could see that those incidents are not happening in the multitude as it is being projected. Hundreds and thousands of incidents where strangers help each other and support each other happen every day, every minute, every second; but what attracts the attention is the worst incident or a mishap. As a woman living in this highly populated country, I have had bad experiences during my travel. However, when one stranger tried to harm me or harass me, there were tens and hundreds of strangers, who were ready to support me and console me there. When I highlight my bad experience, I have to highlight how I was being helped as well. Otherwise, I am trying to project a twisted view.

The impact of media on the modern nuclear family is so high that most of the parents regularly warn children to keep themselves away from strangers, stop trusting the fellow beings and stop smiling at unknown people. And the adverse effect is that many of the young children grow up lacking social skills, trust in society and developing phobias and traumas. If we look around, we can see such children around. Children who won't look into our eyes, who won't smile at us even if we

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**It works in my classroom**

## **Saying the Same Thing in Different Ways**

**P.Bhaskaran Nair**

Just think of the four or five or more routes to reach the bus stop, bus stand, post office, market, your nearby farm and so on through which you reach your destination every time. Also just imagine there is only one route to reach each of the destinations mentioned above. How boring will travel be in the latter case! Even if you have been walking or driving or riding to the same destination for years, how many times have you tried different routes! How many times have you thought of exploring new routes-either a short cut to save time, or a longer route to avoid traffic block or pollution, or still a longer route just for fun. Life is like that.

Language too is like those long and short routes. We have many ways to convey the same idea in our language-in all languages, and therefore in English, too. Teach children these various ways in clusters. Traditional grammar called them sentence patterns or structures. But, here we are beginning with functions and moving towards forms, as opposed to the 'form to function' approach in the traditional mode of teaching grammar.

Activities for lower classes(Linking words:  
Addition: and, also, too, as well, else...)

Ask children to go out and collect two or three flowers, twigs, leaves, pebbles etc. Let four or five of them stand facing class and holding their possessions.

Teacher: Rashmi has got three leaves. Look, Roshantoo has three leave. Rashmi has three leaves and Roshantoo has three leaves.

What has Nisham with him?

Class: Two flowers.

Tr: Fine. Who else has two flowers?

Class: Jyothi.

Tr: Good. Jyothi has two flowers. Nisham also has two flowers. Has anybody else got pebbles?

Fine.Arun has got five. Who else? Manoj, do you have pebbles? Yes. Manoj and Arun have pebbles-five plus six, how much?

Class: Eleven.

Look, Rony has many twigs. Who else? Mini and Joe, too. Mini, Joe and Rony have twigs.

Please remember, in the early stages of formal second language learning, exposure to the target language is the most crucial factor to successful learning. At some point.in the progression of learning, speaking automatically gets triggered while children are in the company of adults-says Lev Vygotsky, the psychologist, whose learning theories suit best to the Indian English classrooms.

Activities for middle school classes(Linking words and phrases: Contradiction/Opposition: but, though, even though, even if, on the other hand, however, still, yet...)

Make use of day to day situations in the class/ school/outside.

Tomorrow is a holiday-Gandhi Jayanthi. But we all are going to work. What are we going to do tomorrow?

Class: (Lists the activities)

Teacher: We are working tomorrow. But will the government offices be open? Usually, no. Even if tomorrow is a holiday, some people will be attending the office.

Tr: What about police? Do they have holidays like us? No. Though Sundays are holidays for all government employees, policemen work on those days. What about doctors and nurses?

Even if it is their birthday, they work. We work at school only during day time. On the other hand, drivers, doctors, nurses, electricity workers-they all work day and night. In spite of rain or lightning, electricity workers, milkmen, postmen -all do their duty. Even then, most of us, sitting at home,

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## Obituary

### P.Avaneendra Nath

Secretary, Payyanur Unit of ELTIF

(Former Principal, Chattamchal Higher Secondary School Kasaragod Dt. Kerala)

*"A philosopher is an ordinary person who thinks more deeply and obstinately than other people", says Gibran. The American philosopher William James defines philosophy as "an unusually stubborn attempt to think clearly".*

Mr. P. Avaneendranath, to me, was deceptively stubborn in his demeanour, but ardently caring and loving. His sudden death on 3rd November last was painfully unbelievable to all who loved him. Clad in an unassuming mundu (dothi) and shirt, looking at us through the sparkling and smiling small eyes behind the glasses, with a reserved mild smile on his lips, moving with soft quick steps bare foot, acting with strong and determined fervour, ... the epithets can extend to a few more lines.

Born and brought up in a highly educated family of an enlightened Kerala village called Kankol near Payyannur in Kannur district, Avaneendranath was something much more than an excellent teacher of maths in High school and later, English in Higher secondary classes. As a social worker, an organizer, a union activist, an actor-script writer-director of both street plays and stage shows, an environmentalist, an activist of organic farming, an athlete (long distance running and walking), and above all, the backbone of all the ELTIF activities in and around Kannur, he was a friend of thousands.

I first met Avani (that is what we affectionately call him) at an ELTIF workshop for the village teachers in Kankol, which is the home village of both Dr. Bhaskaran Nair and Avani, the younger brother of Dr. Nair. Way back in 2003, ELTIF organized a series of workshops in that place and it was like a monthly festival for the villagers, at least Avani made it so. When the teachers (mostly women) attended the workshop, their husbands and the local public cooked and served food and other refreshing drinks and snacks. Their

children played in the playground, sometimes joining us for a demonstration class, or when we sang English songs and said rhymes in chorus. In and out, Avani's involvement was so visible.

His house harboured me whenever there was a programme of ELTIF or any other program of public library, women empowerment, English for mothers and housewives, and the like. Smt. Pramila teacher, Avani's wife, and their two children Ambily and Anupriya deserve more appreciation because I was not the only guest who stayed with them.

It was in 2015, his contribution to ELTIF made a landmark in its 15 year old history. A three-day national conference-cum-one week workshop was arranged in the small town of Payyanur which was attended by participants from all over India and a few from Sri Lanka and the Middle East. All the participants were provided with comfortable and cordial home stay with educated families in his village, Kankol. Those who stayed as guests for a few days became a part of the families who hosted them. An 'army' of young men and women was helping him in providing food and accommodation to their guests in that humble village.

Avani's designation as a principal of Chattamchal Higher Secondary school in Kasaragod Dt. was only a label amongst many such ones. Because of the innumerable activities he organized and positions he held at Chattamchal made his designation look too small. A philosopher in general to all the stakeholders of the school and the

locality, a mentor to every student and colleague, a collaborator with all activities-scholastic and co-scholastic-and above all, a humanist in his unassuming appearance.

Being an excellent teacher, teaching for unimaginably long hours, doing the work of a peon and clerk, meeting local and other officials to raise funds for the infrastructure, interacting with parents at school and also at home, being a counsellor for students and teachers, he spent on an average 15 hours or more at school till he retired from service three years ago.

After formal retirement as a principal, he found more time in teaching English in nearby schools, voluntarily (without accepting any remuneration). His main mode of teaching was theatre.

ELTIF platforms or official positions never attracted him. Silently but dynamically, he devoted himself to his duties as an organizer of ELTIF

events in villages, to all causes he undertook, to the positions he held, as a backbone to the society he lived in. One sometimes wonders how a single individual can take care of, daringly implement and successfully complete so many activities in a life time. It might be his stubborn attempt to "think clearly and more clearly and act accordingly" that made Avani known so widely.

Yes, he was a philosopher and that might be the reason for people like me (who are the slaves of life, dragging our heavy shackles), could never say "no" when he politely requested a hand in a few of the many activities he was involved. Throughout his life, he refused to be a mere spectator in the gallery; instead, he jumped into the stadium, dashed through the track, with nothing but the finishing point in his mind, till his last breath - without waiting for anyone of us to give him a hand, may be a last hand.

**Dr.Beena Philip**

Former Principal, GHSS for Girls, Nadakkavu (Kozhikode) Kerala  
(Jt.Secretary, ELTIF)

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■ *(Saying the Same...Continued from page:54)*

complain about them. Though the newspaper boy is late by half an hour on a rainy day, your father may be getting angry with him. Even if the milkman is late only by a few minutes, your mother may be grumbling in the kitchen.

Life-daily life-is the best textbook to teach a second language. That book has all the grammar,

vocabulary, exercises and everything in it. First, teachers have to study life properly, and then present it. Learners, at some point, will be joining us. This natural joining, this subconscious assimilation of the learner's self into the learning material, into the teaching process is the best kind of learning.

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■ *(Stranger, but Not... Continued from page:53)*

greet them, who won't go out and mingle with the rest of the humanity with confidence and self-esteem. We have many young children who cannot openly share a laugh, crack a joke in public, walk with a confident gait in the common places, speak in a confident tone to others. We have children who would not talk to us when we go to their homes to meet their parents, children who would look at our face without any emotions when we try to begin a conversation and children who play alone indoor or in the corners of the parks and play ground.

What is it that we need to inculcate in the young

minds? - fear or trust?

Of course, as adults we need to train them to recognise the potential danger and teach them how to avoid them or survive them. At the same time, we also need to train them to live in this world with more confidence and trust. After all, the world is not as bad as it is being projected. The people around us are not as bad as we are being told. The next-door neighbours are not as dangerous as we convince our children. Along with teaching children to stay safe, let us also teach them to stay positive, open and above all optimistic and happy!