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From the Editor's Desk

Have Faith in Learner Potentials: A Case for Peer Reviewing and Editing

*Give a man a fish,
And you feed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish,
And you feed him for a lifetime.*

Though the quote above has been traditionally ascribed to the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius, the origin of this thought is highly contested. It may be a proverb of Chinese, Native American, Italian, Indian, or Biblical origin. Sometimes it is linked to Lao-Tzu, Maimonides, or Mao Zedong. However, for us teachers, the question is whether we should go on feeding our learners forever, or should we teach them how to fetch food on their own.

Have faith in the learners. It's just a matter of faith—not exclusive to teaching English; but pertaining to education in general. The question is whether you have full faith in your learners—in their present observable abilities and in their latent potentials, as well. If you have, then you need not curse them for their failures nor curse yourselves for your helplessness.

Any sincere teacher would be spending a lion share of her time in correcting student writing. Each teacher has her own way of making/marking corrections. Still, even the most patient teacher may go wild on seeing the same mistakes getting repeated in spite of the focus given during the general remediation session in the classroom and through individualized tutoring.

Why should a teacher repeatedly write the same correct form in the exercise book of the same student? Doesn't that learner have half dozen friends in the class, among whom a few are better performers? Wouldn't they be happy to take care of their friend's writing, following the instructions of the teacher? Wouldn't they be able to explain what went wrong, why, and what the correct form is, to their friend?

The problem with many teachers at all levels—whether the one who teaches the names of objects and flowers in the lowest class, or the one

who lectures on the latest critical theory in the PG class — is that they are quite convinced that they are 'thewholesale dealers and distributors of knowledge'. Those who sit in front of them are humble customers.

This type of 'pay and use' education has already ruined millions of people. They wasted the prime period of their life at schools and colleges, and ended up just as illiterates would end up. Their schooling was a waste. Their potentials went untapped. Neither they nor their teachers tried find out what each of them had been in essence. Nobody at school or later taught them to ask "Who am I?"

How can a teacher find out the hidden talents of the students unless the students are assigned duties and responsibilities? In the case of studies, is there a better way to bring out the untapped skills and competencies latent in children, other than assigning them peer teaching, peer correction and peer editing?

Imagine the following classroom scene. On completing a ten-minute task, students (of any level) sit and work in pairs or small groups of three or four, showing one another what they produced. They raise and clear doubts, underline words and phrases using pencil in others' note books, they copy better answers from others, they reorganize their writing, they take the disputes among them to the teacher and get them settled, and so on.

Again, imagine the following outdoors situation—under the greenwood tree or on the veranda-- in which, a few small groups, on reaching school before the classes start, editing and correcting one another's homework, as instructed by their teacher.

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A Sense of Plausibility of Teachers in a Language Classroom

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Abstract

This paper attempts to explore concepts of a sense of plausibility of teachers in a language classroom. It highlights importance of teachers sustaining their interest in continuing professional development by various academic enquiry. The knowledge of factors that influence learning environment, interest of teachers and learners, language teaching and learning in a non-native context like India provides a platform for further quest. Engaging in proactive attitude and exploring possibilities of observing classroom transaction by fellow-teachers and engaging a “quality of pedagogic discussion”, (Ramani, 1987, pp.116-29). The true process of personal reflection with gained insight of teaching enables teachers develop their plausibility in making appropriate decisions as an important stakeholder in the hierarchy of the educational administration. The paper highlights specific areas of insight teachers require to play active academic roles. The paper concludes that the sense of plausibility enables classroom practitioners evolve an appropriate and a “principled”, approach, (Brown, 2002, p. 12) and proactive attitude equipping learners with necessary language learning strategies in classroom practice and enabling them gain mastery of English required in twenty-first century language education. (Word count:175).

Key words: plausibility, interest, roles, proactive, equipping, enabling, strategies.

Introduction

Success in profession as a language teacher requires a constant search in gaining control over the nuances of the profession. It includes linguistic awareness, mastery over the macro skills of English, competence in methodology, an insight of teaching and a strong intuitive ability in unpredictable learning and an efficiency in handling a language session with much less worry and stress. It requires an individual teacher engage some amount of time in gaining required body of knowledge initially and continue the process as a course of continuing professional development until a sense of plausibility is attained in the practice.

A sense of plausibility

A teacher needs to undergo a rigorous process to achieve a contented state of mind in profession. In other words, a teacher needs to acquire a required amount of a sense of plausibility. A sense of plausibility refers to teachers' subjective understanding of the teaching and learning. It is the resulting concept or theory or pedagogic intuition of how learning takes place and how teaching causes or supports it. The term ‘plausibility’ refers to a special capacity in gaining insight of the profession. Ericson, & Ellet claim that, “Our coin of knowledge is not

firm generalizations, but is more akin to the good measure of meanings: plausibility. In educational research, as in education as a whole, good judgement should be seen as the prized intellectual capacity,” (Ericson, & Ellet, 1983). This sense of plausibility is crucial in teaching profession.

A sense of plausibility is a process of active application in classroom related planning, contents and transaction. Prabhu (2019) argues that when the sense of plausibility is engaged, the activity of teaching is productive; there is then a basis for the teacher to be satisfied or dissatisfied about the activity and each instance of such satisfaction or dissatisfaction is itself a further influence on the sense of plausibility, confirming or disconfirming or revising it in some small measure, and generally contributing to its growth or change (p.139). Alternatively, the absence of this is an act of routinization. Mechanical teaching results from an over-routinization of teaching and the teaching is subject to great pressure of routinization. Brumfit (1984) contends that teachers' sense of plausibility requires a sound knowledge of teaching methods—that should be judged by the amounts of learning they can lead to, in a given period of time, (pp.18-

19). He further contends that “It is essentially concerned with human interaction, can usefully be subjected to the processes of objective testing and prediction...”. Teacher’s subjective understanding is crucial while operating with some personal conceptualization of how their teaching leads to desired learning—with a notion of causation that has measure of credibility for them.

Plausibility in Language Classroom

An understanding of functions of syllabus and usefulness of materials adds to teacher plausibility. Prabhu (2019) maintains, “A syllabus is an articulation of what is proposed to be done in the classroom—an analysis of the objectives or content of teaching which is product based, which is of interest to educational administrators. The syllabus is also a specification of the means envisaged for achieving those objectives, ... a process based and is a form of guidance to classroom teachers and writers of course materials (p.23). Teachers’ own perception is a process of judging an effectiveness of successive input-assimilation and that the sequence in which inputs are assimilated or to consider learning an organic development, furthered by effort by the learner to deploy his/her communicative resources. Correspondingly, materials as input represent a selection of certain cognitive and cultural content, which demand for linguistic effort at a certain level. Learners devote in learning by making an investment of cognitive-cultural insight and bring with them a certain state of cognitive and cultural knowledge and a certain level of language ability. Insight of such cumulative effect and own reflection helps teacher develop a sense of plausibility.

An insight of method plays a dominating role in enhancing a sense of plausibility. A method has two dimensions: It is a set of classroom procedures for the teacher to carry out; and it is a concept or theory of language learning which informs or justifies those teaching procedures. An inclusive understanding in both the dimensions requires a thorough theoretical knowledge and a hand-on-practice. Wisdom gained in the process enables a teacher to surge a sense of plausibility in course of time.

Discernment of learner mental participation and physical engagement in learning is crucial for teachers. Perceptions of learner effort in classroom procedures add to the sense of teacher plausibility. There are four types of learner effort—reproduction, simulation, construction and deployment. Reproduction is imitation of language form; simulation refers to imitation of language behavior; construction denotes learner’s effort to understand some part of language system to put together linguistic expressions on the strength of that understanding. Deployment involves learner handling information—inferring, reasoning and relating etc., with such linguistic resources. Understanding of learner effort is vital in pedagogic understanding and practice.

Learning depends on learner effort which demands teacher to set task—an activity consisting of setting learner a problem to solve—a problem which calls for an understanding of information relevant to it, involves some “working out”, (Prabhu, 1987). It is an activity in the mind to relate the information to the problem and to arrive at a possible solution by judging the effectiveness of such tasks and revising the tasks. When a sense of plausibility is engaged, the teaching becomes operational.

An understanding of the nuances of lesson planning with set goals and their specification is critical in gaining a sense of plausibility. The sense of plausibility gets strengthened with the knowledge of dynamics of the language lesson. The lesson is not just a pedagogic event, but a social event..., (Allwright, 1989). Prabhu (1992) derives four different types of event—as a curricular unit, as implementation of a method, as a social event and as an arena of human interaction. Insights underlying a planned lesson, steps of planning the lesson keeping all purposes of those events and precise execution in order to realize the expected goal develops a sense of plausibility.

The knowledge of presentation of tasks is equally central. The teacher need to be comfortable in regard to situational presentation, translation by learner and problem-solving activities with an insight of assessing classroom activity and to check if learner’s effort, purposeful

comprehension and language employed are structurally composite and if they are supported by sustained contexts. The insight of such processes and state of affairs promotes a sense of plausibility.

A teacher's sense of plausibility is a major condition for classroom rapport. Ramani (1987) suggests that a sense of teacher plausibility should be active or operational enough to create a sense of involvement for both the teacher and the learner. Teacher should engage himself/herself in observing advance level fellow teachers, view someone else's teaching, evoke immediate interest, raise the level and quality of pedagogic discussion (pp.116-29). It is necessary to keep on updating subjective perception of what learning is probably like and how teaching brings it about. The same process would enable teachers to reshape and modify overall understanding of learning and may give rise to a new insight to gain innovative possibilities to lead to what Brown (2002) calls "principled" approach—a dynamic composite of energies within a teacher that changes ... with continued experience in learning and teaching, (p.11) in post-method era of twenty-first century language pedagogy.

A thorough understanding of aspects of assessment and evaluation of language skills is important to develop a sense of plausibility. Evaluation begins with the beginning of teaching/learning. It has several levels in a given language programme. An evaluation is done to check the effectiveness of two methods when applied in a programme. Evaluation is conducted to promote learners from one level on to the next level based on learning experience. Teachers carry out class test to adjust pace of teaching to gain an idea of learner progression. It is to judge learner's engagement in a language programme. Through evaluation, teachers assess difficulty of planned tasks and adjust the planned tasks keeping learner abilities in mind. Evaluation is conducted in order to check suitability of teaching tasks and to discuss with fellow teachers for shared professional growth. Consequently, an insight of evaluation of various kinds is crucial in achieving a sense of plausibility in profession.

An awareness of teaching in general, language teaching in particular enhances a sense of plausibility. Teaching can be conceived in many different ways, like as a science, a technology, a craft, or an art. Different views of teaching lead to different ideas as to what the essential skills of the teaching are and to different approaches to the preparation of teacher. Zahorik (1986) classifies conceptions of teaching into three categories: Science-research conceptions, theory-philosophy conceptions, and art - craft conceptions. Science-research conceptions of language teaching are derived from research and are supported by experimentation and empirical investigation. It involves developing teaching principles from research on memory, transfer, motivation and other factors important in learning. Teaching conceptions which derived from what ought to work are essentially theory-based or rationalist in approach, whereas those which are derived from beliefs about what is viewed as morally right are value-based approaches. Theory-based approaches suggest that the theory underlying the method is ascertained through the use of reason or rational thought, rather than empirical investigation.

Art-craft conceptions is something which depends on the teacher's individual skill and personality. Zahorik (1986) characterizes this approach to teaching in these terms: "The essence of this view of good teaching is invention and personalization. A good teacher is a person who assesses the needs and possibilities of a situation and creates and uses practices that have promise for that situation," (, p.22). Art-craft approaches seek to develop teaching as a unique set of personal skills which teachers apply in different ways according to the demands of specific situations. An individual teacher gains a sense of plausibility as part of the process of a continuing professional development in the never-ending journey of teaching profession.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is found that a sense of plausibility is essential in equipping learner with required ability to activate own effort by thoughtful and rational instruction. It is crucial for a teacher to understand the concept of teaching and

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Lively Pattern Drills for Catering to Learner Needs and Expectations

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Pattern drill in the classroom contributes less in learning a particular item if it is unaccompanied by the series of pictures or the classroom activities illustrating the sentence pattern given. Any classroom communication must be meaningful and interesting to induce the students to learn more. Hence the teachers should devise some strategies to overcome the negative impact of pattern drilling. This paper is about the attempt made by the presenter to know how far pattern drilling can be utilized when combined with another method to make it meaningful and interesting for the students.

Pattern drill is for imparting structural grammar knowledge by repeating the given structural items orally and this concept of drill in language teaching is based on the behaviourist theory which strongly believes that language is habit formation. This concept that language learning is habit formation received attention from many linguists. (Paulston 199).

Swan confirms that the "structural syllabus" is the suitable one for students to learn the forms of the target language intentionally (qtd in Scheffler) before the task based learning. Pattern drill is based on the analysis of the structures (valdman 170) and consequently assimilation of the rules of language is effected.

Shiffrin and Schneider strongly believe that 'automaticity'- processing information very quickly and accurately-is the result of "massive repetition experiences and constant practices" (qtd. in Segalowitz 402). Further, researches on the rate of retention of learned material stress the higher rate of retention with intentional learning than incidental learning (Hulstijn 365). Intentional learning is committing information to memory deliberately whereas incidental learning is acquiring knowledge of something without being conscious of it. These findings reinforce the view that learning will be possible with practice and repetition.

This method enables the students to learn some of the language features such as number, person inflection, corresponding pronoun for noun, markers of passive and active verbs, question forms, comparative forms etc. Hence students will make correct response with repeated learning of the patterns. On the other hand its demand for repetition leaves the learner bored soon. Thus, this method has its advantages as well as limitations.

The purpose of practising drill dictates the nature of drills and the effect of practising them. So the teachers can kindle interest in the learners if they devise their plan to suit the students' level and their needs accordingly. Replacement of a word with another suitable one provided for establishing a pattern suits the students at the lower class level. As their aim is for learning new words, they will find it interesting. For the advanced level students, the need for learning a language is to express their views by themselves. So some form of communicative activities when built into the drill makes it meaningful for them. Paulston opines that such meaningful communicative activity "should be a, if not the central point of pattern drills."(201).

The context of drill items without any relevance to the actual life experiences may not engender any naturalistic speech and thus the drill will not be beneficial to the students outside the class room. The transfer of learning will be realized when it includes the situations which a student may encounter outside his class room and later in his life. Thus the success of any practice lies in its use after the class hours.

Moreover, any fragmented drill patterns or the absence of any relation between the set of items discourages the students to retain what is learnt in the class as well. But the provision of context leads to the retention of learning material.

The need for retention and 'engaging students'

knowledge of the world' (Illés, "what makes") necessitate the incorporation of real life context in the pattern drills. Cunningsworth ascertains the involvement of students in the topic if it is something to do with the real world he faces or will face (qtd. in Illés). Consequently the students are familiar with the terms and content of the drills they are exposed to. The context thus becomes meaningful and effective and ensures the reinforcement of correct response, as some form of communication is incorporated (Paulston 200).

Thus rectification of this disadvantageous aspect of the pattern drill is possible when the teachers are aware of the different methodologies and ready to adopt and manipulate if needed, any other teaching method and club with these drills.

One such method which the writer of this paper has chosen is 'activity accompanied' teaching in which teacher will guide the student to carry out the activities as well as provide the 'text' for drill. Understanding, promotion of social and academic skills, its engaging nature and above all, provision of real world situations for learning are some of the merits of adopting this method. Its emphasis on the use of language that the learner learns in the class merits the teachers' attention, since the pattern drills lack in exposing the students for the real situations in life.

Activities 'accompanied' pattern drilling, the method the writer follows, gives practice to students in the forms that they may encounter or have to use in different situations in life but students are not given much chance to express themselves in the target language to minimize error in learning. Students learn the rules of the target language inductively and have an idea about the situation in which they have to use such forms outside the classroom.

Combining the features of different methods the teachers can make gainful practice possible. As a result the attention of students will be secured. Functional and meaningful activities in context thus are effective in realizing the goal of learning. For instance, simulation as well as role playing is an effective practice for the hands-on -experience of students. Scarcella and Crookall point out that simulation makes

the students actively involve themselves in learning (qtd. in James).

This paper intends to show the extent to which this combined strategy can be utilized to supplant the way that the discrete grammar items are taught now. When the writer handled classes at a school for the students of primary section, the students were taught these patterns the way mentioned below.

For the pattern,

' Here comes John'

' Here come John & Leela'

It was taught with the simulation of real life activities. Two students were made to come into the classroom from outside

For the pattern, 'Let me sing'

The teacher sang a line of a song first and one of the boys /girls was pointed out to continue or repeat the same line of the song.

The rest of the class gave the instruction to the boy /girl to sing.

'Let him/her sing'

The division of the class into two groups enabled one group of students to instruct the other to sing.

'Let them sing'

Then the whole class sang together.

'Let us sing'

The different tense of the verbs and the subject verb agreement were taught in the same way.

'Sheela is reading a book' (Today in the class)

Next Day, the whole class was reminded of what Sheela did yesterday.

'Sheela was reading a book yesterday in the class'.

At the beginning of the class some students were asked to prepare a letter on the board. Just before the end of the class, the class was made to remember what those students had done at the start of the class.

'Raju has written a letter on the board.'

'Asha and Raju have written a letter on the board.'

A girl was asked to rub out the letter on the board.

Then the class repeated the pattern. 'After he has finished the letter she rubs it out on the board'.

'Before she rubs it out on the board he has finished the letter.'

One of the students drew on the board at the bottom to give them a chance for learning the pattern using conjunctions,

'While he is writing, Geetha is drawing on the right side of the board.'

'Geetha is waiting to rub it out till he finishes his letter.'

For advanced level students

I) ..Simulation of conduct of chemistry experiment was done in the class for teaching passive voice.

While demonstrating, the necessity of passive voice in this context was explained. To demonstrate one of the properties of liquid

A glass is kept ready with water upto its brim.

A strip of paper is placed on top of it.

An absolutely dry needle is placed on top of the paper.

A pin is taken to push gently the paper down into the water.

It is observed that the needle continues to float on water without paper.

II)..For the usage of simple present/past, present /past continuous, present/past perfect

1. Running commentary was given for the simulation of the game, cricket in the class.

For instance: Cricket Commentary

---a---- throws the ball to ---z----- --z ---- turns the ball to square leg. No run. Now a throws the second ball of this over to Z stretches his left leg and pads it away. Next ball, Z gets one run. He goes right back to clip it past at backward short leg. A to z. z leans forward to drive it to mid -on.

2. Weather forecast

South west monsoon has set in over coastal Tamil nadu. Rainfall occurred at most places over Tamil Nadu and a few places over coastal Andra Pradesh. The following stations recorded heavy rainfall in centimeters: Meenambakkam Airport-12, Adyar-9, and Besant Nagar-10. Rain or thunder showers may occur at most places over Tamil Nadu in next 48 hours

3. Description of a missing person

---- is 5' 10 tall. He is aged 15 and having a mole on his right cheek. He has tattoos in his hands. He was wearing blue trouser and white 'T' shirt when last seen in May 20, 2009. If you have any information about him, please call your local police department.

4. Advertisement for laptop

Vinola has introduced a range of light, ultra portable laptops. It promises all around performance, greater flexibility and connectivity. They are available at 21, Big Street, Mylapore. For details visit w.w.w.vinola.co.in

5. Demo of a recipe for the preparation of a dish- simulation of a radio programme

Whole Wheat Cake

Put the flour, jaggery, baking powder, butter and eggs in a bowl and beat well. Add a little water and almond essence. Beat till smooth. Mix in the walnuts. Place the mixture in the tin and bake in the preheated oven for 35-40 minutes.

III)..Short skit for role- playing to teach reporting speeches.

Skit to teach how to make reported speeches

The students were taught how to report speeches of others. The person who reports may be the 'speaker' or 'listener' (the one who is spoken to) or mere 'reporter'. He may be either the speaker and reporter or the listener and reporter.

The type of activity should create an impression on the minds of the students as to the basic concept of using a particular 'pattern' in a particular situation. To make clear the concept, context was made to be clear to the students before the class started the activities.

So the selected student of the group was to spell out the place where they were (in the class or outside the class and specifically their imaginary place of their presence), as location is very important. The reporting of the message conveyed may be in the same place or elsewhere.

Next to location is the time when the exchange of information takes place. It may be immediately or sometime later.

The relations between the students in the group may change. They may act out the script prepared deliberately for the class. The rest of the class should know whose role is what. The roles that the students assumed are very important for their comprehension.

To make the students know the dialogue

between them without any doubt the script was written on the blackboard before the start of the activities. The dialogue was kept to a minimum. These items of information made clear what the situation was about.

Two or more different situations may involve in the activity design. The stickers with captions like "the exchange between father and son" and "the son and his friend today" were stuck on the wall of the class to denote specifically where and when and whom involved in the dialogue.

Only those students who had the roles to play in the exchange designed stood against the wall where the respective caption was on display.

Some students had to shift their positions and they were told to announce clearly before they left their earlier designated place and assumed their role in another situation. The corners of the classroom will suffice for these simple activities.

The whole class was able to understand clearly the context of the exchange and the reason for the change in the tense of the verb and reporting verb, pronoun or retention of any of these language features.

- IV) An interview with the topper of an imaginary school student-a simulation of a radio programme to teach question patterns.
- V). Demo of a simple science experiment to teach cause and effect relationship and purpose and means.

To demonstrate one of the properties of liquid
Take a glass with water upto its brim.

Place a strip of paper on top of it.

Place an absolutely dry needle on top of the paper.

Take a pin to push gently the paper down into the water.

See what happens to needle!

Needle continues to float on water without paper.

Why do you know?

The needle floats because of the force which acts from below the needle.

A pin is used to push down the paper into water.

A strip of paper is used for holding the needle.

Though the degree to which any method is effective no one can be sure about, the attempt of the teacher should not stop with any one particular method. Teachers should know that these are some of the ways to make learning a language interesting.

The outcome of this study shows that response from the students was unusually high. The comprehension level of the students with regard to the particular grammar item was encouraging and this led to the involvement of students in learning that item. The indelible impression that the pattern drills with activities make on them boosts their confidence in speaking or writing English. Grammar thus taught with the involvement of the students not only keeps them engaged but also informed about the practical utility of learning grammar.

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Signposts for Researchers in ELT. 1

Key Concepts in ELT (from Oxford ELT Journal)

'Key Concepts in ELT' is a feature of the Journal that aims to assist readers to develop an appreciation of central ideas in ELT, and to approach the content of articles from a perspective informed by current debate on aspects of theory and practice.

The list given below is an up-to-date guide to all 'Key Concepts' that have been published in the Journal. The list contains links to the original articles, which are available to download free of charge.

- Grammar (ELTJ Journal 74:2)
- Precarity (ELTJ Journal 73:4)
- Inclusion (ELT Journal 73:2)
- Translanguaging (ELT Journal 72:4)
- Resilience (ELT Journal 72:2)
- Activity (ELT Journal 71:4)
- Proficiency (ELT Journal 71:2)
- Criticality (ELT Journal 70:4)
- Collaboration (ELT Journal 70:2)
- Creativity (ELT Journal 69:4)
- Intelligibility (ELT Journal 69:2)
- Authenticity (ELT Journal 68:4)
- Oral corrective feedback (ELT Journal 68:2)
- Learning Styles (ELT Journal 67:4)
- Generation (ELT Journal 67:2)
- Repetition in Tasks (ELT Journal 66:3)
- Foreign Language Aptitude (ELT Journal 66:2)
- Corpus-aided language learning (ELT Journal 65:4)
- The non-native speaker teacher (ELT Journal 65:2)
- Blended Learning (ELT Journal 64:4)
- Expertise in language learning and teaching (ELT Journal 64:2)
- Innovation in ELT (ELT Journal 63:4)
- Age and the critical period hypothesis (ELT Journal 63:2)
- Learner autonomy (ELT Journal 62:4)
- Learner self-beliefs (ELT Journal 62:2)
- Motivation in ELT (ELT Journal 61:4)
- Processing instruction (ELT Journal 61:2)
- Native-speakerism (ELT Journal 60:4)
- The Common European Framework (ELT Journal 60:2)
- English as a lingua franca (ELT Journal 59:4)
- Washback and impact (ELT Journal 59:2)
- The apprenticeship of observation (ELT Journal 58:3)
- Globalization and language teaching (ELT Journal 58:1)
- Discourse community (ELT Journal 57:4)
- Loop input (ELT Journal 57:3)
- Observation (ELT Journal 57:2)
- Language Awareness (ELT Journal 57:1)
- Computer Mediated Communication (ELT Journal 56:4)
- 'Focus on form' and 'Focus on forms' (ELT Journal 56:3)
- Language as skill (ELT Journal 56:2)
- Transfer/cross-linguistic influence (ELT Journal 56:1)
- Language-related episodes (ELT Journal 55:3)
- Teachers' beliefs (ELT Journal 55:2)
- Lexical Chunks (ELT Journal 54:4)
- Evaluation (ELT Journal 54:2)
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- Genre (ELT Journal 53:2)
- Task-based learning and pedagogy (ELT Journal 53:1)
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- Deductive vs. inductive language learning (ELT Journal 52:1)
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- Project work (ELT Journal 47:3)
- Fluency (ELT Journal 47:3)
- Learner strategies (ELT Journal 47:1)
- Learner training (ELT Journal 47:1)

Indigenous Ethics and the Philosophy of the Environment

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Abstract

Eco critics observe that indigenous ecologies are often tied to language, spirituality, ideologies, and politics of land recognition and land rights. According to indigenous cosmology, nonhuman entities are persons and kin to human beings. Therefore it is mandatory for man to conserve the organisms in nature for his own welfare. Literary studies of all ages identify the world's indigenous peoples and the ecological spaces they inhabit. Indigenous literature reflects the significance of land, agriculture, environmental changes and indigenous peoples' active management of their ecosystem. This paper focuses the struggles original New Zealanders underwent to restore their land, natural resources, and culture lost in the colonisers' ecological imperialism taking illustrations from the novels of Patricia Grace, a pioneer writer of New Zealand.

Earth is the only planet in the universe that supports life. The plant and animal kingdoms, and nonliving components including minerals and waters constitute the living system that makes earth gorgeous and different from other planets. Human beings cannot exist in isolation. They have to constantly depend on nature for their survival. Nature ministers lavishly to people on its own. Hence the activities of humans have to be in harmony with all other forms of life that exist on earth. People have spent thousands of years in serene environments. Each community recalls its collective past, especially a pastoral golden age which was peaceful. Their myths of the past may be Christian or Pagan or a subtle combination of the two. When we recall the past and appreciate the values, we will realise that modification of land is not progress but grave loss and a process of corruption. It is often a paradox of our civilised lives.

The land we occupy is often a site of politics and conflict and a thing being fought for. Land became landscape at first when farmers took wild land and cultivated it, a basic and specific part of our word 'cultivation', which has a much broader meaning, 'culture'. Polynesian pastoral is agrarian, based on land protecting farmers raising a prosperous democracy and dwelling in full identity with the earth. On the contrary, English pastoral is playful, artificial, and is essentially aesthetic. The effects of European domination over space turned natural land into landscape. They asserted that they had more control over the environment and it is an Englishman's heaven-born privilege

of doing as he likes. They exploited the land greedily without care for the soil, or thought for the future. They modified the wild land around with their creative sense and made pleasing picturesque landscape. Development does have certain advantages but eats away the productive agricultural land and pollutes the indigenous culture.

Fohannes Marginer spells out the view of the Neolithic farmer in *History of Religion - The Gods of Prehistoric Man*:

Rivers, streams and fountains make the earth fertile and offer luxury for people to enjoy. For the tiller of the soil, life was embraced in the twin activities of sowing and harvesting; the success of the crops was the yardstick by which all other things were measured. The factors that contributed to growth of the crops - sun, rain, wind, soil - were of prime importance to the Neolithic peasant; to influence these factors favourably was the foremost aim of his offerings and his magic. His religion, while still concerned with fertility of animals and men, centred in the first place around fertility of plant. (134)

The Maori tribes of New Zealand are simple peasants in a pastoral landscape. Their cosmogeny myth is different from Christian creation myth. According to Christianity God created the world and gave man dominion to rule nature. In contrast, the Maori believe that the sky and earth are their primal parents and Gods were born to them. All the Gods gave birth to the various species of flora and fauna, and all other nonliving things in nature. Land to them is a symbol of unity of all living and nonliving

entities in nature. Their relationship with land is not 'ownership of land' but a sacred sense of kinship. "Land does not belong to people, but people belong to the land" (Potiki 110). Elsdon Best and W. H. Goldie voice Maori philosophy and ethics in, *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* - 1904: "Land and people sustain one another. As land protects its child, the child in turn is committed to safeguard the land" (100 - 01). According to Maori pagan philosophy, a person is born with an individual soul. So a place has its spirit or deity. Metaphorically, humans emerge from the womb of Earth and return to her after their death. They strongly believe that their emotional, intellectual and spiritual selves are born every day from land, and therefore land is all the more significant to them.

Patricia Grace underpins the close affinity of the Maori tribes with land in all her novels. Maori children grow in an enclosure of land and its love, and an enclosure of people and their love. The heroin of Mutuwhenua articulates her psyche, "there was no escape for me from the closeness of my family or from the land" (48). "My father had always seen... our home and the family land as a spiritual sanctuary, a strong hold for all of us" (121). Patricia further pronounces the reciprocity between person and place in her master piece, Potiki, "earth was a strength... earth strengthened them all. Care for it and it cares for you. Give to it and it gives. Through it you shoulder your pain" (176). The Maori consider trees, mountains and rivers as persons and claim a relationship, and express the internal sense of foundation, "People were trees, with trunks and arms and leaves... Or trees were people, with bodies and arms and hair you could climb up and into, where you could find a place" (*Dogside Story* 87 - 8). The kauri, one of the world's largest trees were the sentinels of New Zealand forests. "It was with these lands of giant trees that Maori ancestors identified themselves" (*Ned and Katina* 27). Trees are models for the behaviour of the tribes. So felling of forests is an apocalypse to their foundation and their spirituality. During World War II, a fourteen year old Maori battalion happens to see Mount Casino in Italy. His nostalgia exposes his identity, "I think of

my own home mountain, Taranaki, who is a lovely mountain indeed. I am my mountain, because my mountain is my ancestor, and by my mountain I am identified" (Tu112).

It is amazing to know that the Moari tribes had been fighting to assert their rights over Te Awa Tupua, the third longest river in New Zealand as a person since the 1870s, the longest legal dispute in New Zealand history and a move believed to be first in the world. The parliament recognised it as a "legal person" and formally declared it a living entity under legislation passed on 15 March 2017. The Attorney-General, Chris Finlayson declares in the newsflash, "New Zealand River Gets Legal Status as a Person":

It will have its own legal identity with all the corresponding rights, duties and liabilities of a legal person... This legislation recognises the deep spiritual connection between the Whanganui iwi [tribe] and its ancestral river... In practical terms, it means the river can be represented at legal proceedings with two lawyers protecting its interests. (The Hindu. 17 March 2017:18)

Environment and culture are inseparable. The cultural significance of New Zealand environment was utterly unknown to the British colonisers. They took all the good land for development and demolished its original infrastructure. Transformation of the land is an affront to their ethnic identity, the loss of their spirituality and their self-determining existence. In his article, "Returning to Mother Earth: Voice of the Indigenous People", Wati Longchar expounds the insecurity of the indigenous:

Due to unmindful development and land alienation, our life sustaining earth and indigenous communities are at threat. It is... ecological crisis, human survival is at risk (13). When the mountain disappears what will be our identity? If we leave our ancestral village, what will be our culture and spiritual identity? ... If you do not allow us to practice shifting cultivation, what will be our religion, identity... centred on the soil! How can we worship God? When all the trees have been cut down where will the animals breathe, can we and birds find home? When the waters are polluted, what will we drink? (28)

The land spirit of the Polynesians, respect for their traditions and myths till this day are praiseworthy. The Polynesian Voyaging Society started a round-the-world journey in 2014, spreading a message, "caring for the earth". Nainoa Thompson, navigator and president of the society illuminates in his article, "Canoe Returning to Hawaii after Epic Voyage":

The epic voyage shows how far crew members hope the success of the latest journey will inspire other indigenous cultures to rediscover and revive traditions... indigenous cultures can help with solutions to modern-day problems such as climate change. Native Hawaiian ancestors... figured it out how to live well on these islands. And I think that is the challenge of the time for planet earth and all of humanity. (The Hindu. 18 June 2017: 14) Earth is a common home for all living and nonliving organisms, where there should be a lovely space for each and every being. To waste and destroy the natural resources is to waste and destroy human beings. Today's world is influenced by social media that urge people to keep changing their life style and the place where they live. Artificial civilization is different from the natural environment. The aesthetic principles of cultured connoisseurs all over the world evade this truth, claim superiority over nature and destroy it in the pretense of progress. They turn the environment into a commodity, demanding nature to fit in with human tastes. Patricia condemns the colonisers' development in her novel, *Baby No Eyes*: Progress is having clean water and enough food... Greater good, Greater Good, red people

are shouting... It means the good of the rich, the good of wealthy nations... the good of those who have the might of states and the power of law to back them... None of it gives food or water to dying communities, saves their land and protects their resources, the Hagahai [tribes] to survive. (281)

This in fact is the unheard cry of the oppressed all over the world in the present scenario. Conversion of agricultural land into artifacts is a threat to man's right to food everywhere.

Rearranging of nature idealizes a lost world and provides a setting for a myth. Karen Armstrong articulates in *A Short History of Myth*: "We need myths that help us to venerate the earth as sacred once again, instead of using it as a 'resource'... Unless there is some kind of spiritual revolution that is able to keep abreast of our technological genius, we will not save our planet" (128). Going back to Christian myth, because of man's disobedience God pronounced His judgement, "the ground will be under a curse. You will have to work hard all your life to make it produce enough food for you" (Genesis 3:17). It will be right to say, landscaping started with a curse. Thenceforth Man disobeys nature in various ways and the curse continues in various ways. A nation that destroys its environment, the only powerful life-preserving factor destroys itself. Albert Einstein's humble words, "The environment is everything that isn't me" plainly put forth the lacuna in man. Indigenous ethics and philosophy counsel the rulers of the world to sustain natural resources for man's survival.

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Nation in Narration: A Study on ShashiTharoor's *The Great Indian Novel*

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Abstract

The notion of 'nation' has been a vital node in the matrix of postcolonial literary, as well as socio-political-cultural studies. How a community conceives its concept of 'nationness' and how this concept is articulated in its cultural and literary expressions, as well as how that community's conception and perception of this concept is influenced and shaped by its literary and cultural artefacts form a significant core of the postcolonial debates on nation, nationness, nationalism and nationality. The aim of this paper is to trace the notion of nation as embodied in literature in India. For this analysis, I have selected the fictional work, *The Great Indian Novel* (1989) written by Shashi Tharoor.

Introduction

The very ideas of 'nation', 'nationalism' are undergoing transformations in the place of its birth, i.e. Europe; but they are still relevant and vibrant in different contexts, including Indian. There is renewed interest, contestation, reinforcement and questioning of the very idea of nation. Ironically, 'nation' as an idea has been difficult to define and pin down. The uncertainty of the term has permeated ideas of nationalism as well. Is the idea of nation static in nature? How does one understand nationalist aspirations that exist within a given political entity of a nation-state? As an entity, nation seems to be under the constant process of becoming/unbecoming. Its borders are redefined along with issues of geography, global politics, economy, culture, language, castes, people/races/ethnicities, religions, region, violence and war and so on. This is especially so in countries in Asia and the Global South where diversity and inequalities of people, religions races, cultures, languages overlap and are often in conflict.

The understanding of the idea of the nation has transformed over the years depending on its assemblages, space, time and power. Every individual community, place and pace defines 'nation' in its own understanding and this is how emergent literatures, literature of dissent and resistance, and other expressions and articulations of culture need to be understood and framed. For instance, in India, given that

anti-caste movements and minority discourses have been questioning notions of nation as belonging to that of dominant castes, how does one examine 'nation' from these two overlapping positions and to what purpose, would be some of the questions that we have to mull over.

As already mentioned, the idea of nation has become one of the most significant points of discussions in the postcolonial world. According to Benedict Anderson, the concept of nation is the idea of an imagined community, or a shared community. The postcolonial societies can invent a self image through which they can seek to escape the tyranny of the imperialist society. From the point of view of literary theory, nationalism is of special interest. It is because, as Timothy Brennan explains, the ties between literature and nation evoke a sense of the fictive quality of the political concept itself. In the essay "The National Longing for Form", Brennan suggests that the burden of one strain of writing from the so-called third world has been to critique the all-inclusive gestures of the nation-state, chasing a national identity after the fact has been created at home (63). Homi K. Bhabha in his work *Nation and Narration* (1990) speaks out against the tendency to group the third world countries into a homogeneous identity. He instead claims that all sense of nationhood is narrativised.

According to G.P. Sarma, the concept

of nationalism was alien to India before the 19th century just as it was alien to all other Asian countries. This idea dawned upon the Indian horizon in the 19th century as an impact of and as a reaction to the British colonial rule in India. In India and in other Asian and African countries nationalism was adopted as a weapon for winning freedom from European imperialism and colonial regimes. The concept of nationalism itself was, of course, comparatively new in the west too, having had its birth only in the later 18th century France at the time of the French Revolution. Before India came under British rule and even during the early part of this rule, Indian people had never thought in terms of one nation. 'India' was then only a mere geographical term for this huge subcontinent. It was a conglomeration of diverse states and principalities where there lived various peoples of different races and religions, castes and sub-castes speaking a number of languages and dialects. Prior to the revolt of 1857, the British treated India as one nation and one state because it suited them. "They were attempting to conquer India and, therefore, they pleaded that the conquest of the subcontinent would alone provide administrative and political unity to this country, state and nation. Thus, the conquest of India was justified on the ground of benefitting the people of this country" (Sharma 348). But later they found that unity among the people would not be beneficial to their administrative power. So after the revolt of 1857, they reversed their stand. They resorted to measure to divide India again into different units rather than attempting to homogenize the various units into one 'nation'. For this division they employed various parameters like religion, race etc.

Because of the diversities of culture and social divisions, the national question in India is highly complex in nature. The long period of colonization and its aftermath created a great change in the Indian society. Indian national movement was considered to be one of the major mass movements that occurred in the world. The notable thing to remember is that to unite and assemble different classes of people with different ideologies under a single nation

for a political action is a great effort. Gandhi played a major role in this regard.

Indian civilization had seen the rise and fall of hundreds of kingdom, tribes, and dynasties. Unification of people under one nation-state was a major problem of the administration. Gorkhaland movement and other linguistic uprising for individual nationalities have been the problems posed by regional and sub-regional groups. This complex relation between various sub-nationalities created problems right from the period of the British rule. They also had taken various measures to unite people under one rule. Even now the problem anticipates an apt democratic elucidation.

There are various dubious discussions going on about the origin of nationalism in India. The Indian independence movement which aroused the patriotic fervor among people was often regarded as the real ground of nationhood in India. Some scholars uphold the theoretical premise which states that Indian nationalism is the by-product of British colonialism in India. These notions can be rooted in the discourse of colonial nationalism advocated by imperial historians like Hans Kohn and John Plamentaz. People who strongly argued in this line pointed to the condition of India before the arrival of the colonizers. It has been a fragmented subcontinent with no unification between the various princely states. Coming of the British Empire resulted in the confederation of states. The contenders of this argument have also made their position clear by equally strong propositions. The cultural heritage of ancient India had been built up through centuries. The geography of India too adds sense to the unity among people. Then there existed the notion of *Bharathavarsha*, or *Hindustan*, which insinuate the existence of a nation. Besides Sanskrit language played a wide role in the linguistic integration of people. Since Sanskrit is the hegemonic monopoly of then Brahmins, this resulted in the emergence of Brahminical culture centered system. During the Mughals rule, in the pre-colonial India, they embarked on various measures for the alliance of the country on economic, political, administrative and territorial levels. Even if their arguments

are strong it doesn't suggest the whole united national consciousness. Whatever be the factors, it took a long time span to form into the modern nation. Modern ideas and social ethos had also contributed to its formation. Eventhough Indian civilization is an ancient one; it has been only 150 years that India became a modern nation. Now it has assumed the western nation state conception that, a nation-state is to create politically and culturally a homogenous entity—a strong, interventionist, democratic, secular and centralized state with a harmonized rule of citizenship. Westerns uphold this nationhood as its homogeneity suits them. But as far as India is concerned the pluralist identity of the nationhood is more acceptable.

The word 'nation' is originated from the Latin verb *nassimeaning* to be born and originally used to designate a group of people born in the same place i.e. territory but nation or *rastrais* derived from the Sanskrit verb *rajri*, which means 'that which shines' because its 'hum harmonizes with the music of life'. India's unity is rooted in its multiplicity, the harmonious existence of multi-lingualism, multi-religious and multi-racial existence. Even a person who was born in India but currently working or residing outside India does have a consciousness of their national identity.

Freedom struggle brought into focus the notion of nationalism. We could observe patriotic writings as an expression of nationalist fervour of the people against the foreign domination. The image of the golden past and the identification of the foreign rulers with the villain in mythology were the intermittent features of the patriotic literature. The other facet of this writing is the contention of Indian identity in terms of religion, language, myth and history. It grew almost spontaneously in different languages as part of the resistance against the foreign rule. A new phase of writing emerged with the English-educated elites who became engaged in creating a new Indian nationality at the lead, which marked a new political signification. Songs were produced as part of the movement against the partition of Bengal in 1905. Patriotic literature had characteristics of using mythological figures

as the national heroes. Lord Krishna, Shivaji, MaharanaPratap, Tippu Sultan and many major figures served the purpose of projecting the models of heroism. On the other hand, people like Vallathol wrote poems which indicated the call for arrival of a new leader. Vallathol wrote:

The wide, wide world, is all his home
The grasses; plant and worms, kinsmen
His gains arise from sacrifice
And glories from his lowliness
In him the yogis live their life
And thus my Master reigns supreme. (Cited in Choudhuri 12)

In Tamil, poet like NamakkalRamalingam wrote poems about Gandhi, some of which became marching songs during the freedom movement. By this time, both Gandhi and Nehru understood that the overthrow of the domination of Indian princes was an essential part of the Indian struggle. Writers of different languages also took up this issue and directed people to rise against the tyranny of the rulers of the native states. BalgangadharTilak, Subhas Chandra Bose, Swami Dayananda, and others also emerged as heroes in literature. IndranathChoudhuri opined that Gandhian heroes, and later on revolutionary heroes, and thereafter heroes professing the path of progressivism came into the Indian literary scene (14). One voice was the age-old Indian approach to progressivism intermingled with idealism and the latter voice was the Marxist approach to progressivism. Hindi Urdu writer MunshiPremchand was the foremost Indian writer to respond to Marxism and Socialism as an alternative to Gandhian politics. But he had also elucidated the Gandhian notions in his novels like '*HridyaParivartan*' (Change of Heart) and '*AdarshonmukhYatharthavad*' (Idealistic Realism) and just not extremist Marxism. With the formation of All India Progressive Writer's Association (AIPWA), modern Indian literature entered into a new phase. Similarly in Malayalam we have the movement called life-oriented literature (JivalSahityaSamiti) and by the beginning of the forties political literature appeared with full power. K Damodaran, P. KeshavaDev in

Malayalam, Sri Sri in Telugu and others spoke against exploitation of the poor and spread the spirit of revolt against the perpetrators of crime against humanity. And later we have the Indian English writers like Sarojini Naidu, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand writing about the different issues of nationalism and colonial impact through their writings.

While interrogating the question of Nationalism we must also look into consideration the issues which are absent in our main stream discourse too. Apart from the subaltern writings the other major canonical works are entirely silent on the question of caste in India. Far from problematizing one of the most contentious concerns in contemporary India, books do not even hint at any social division based on it. This alienation is expounded in Kanchallaiah's *Why I Am Not a Hindu* (1996) to suggest that postcolonial India's upper caste hegemonic forms of knowledge are as oppressive and alienating for Dalits as imperial education was. The world of the Dalits, which finds no mention at all in the main stream, reproduced the image of a nation which is homogenous and egalitarian.

While analysing Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* I try to understand how he uses the mythological structure of *The Mahabharata* in a post-colonial scenario to address the present condition of India. It also examines whether the novelist is successful in addressing the different issues of nationality existing even after many decades of independence of India.

THEORISING THE NATIONS

Nation, nation-state, are nationalism are neither pre-determined nor fixed. Nation is a new entity, a socio-political community envisaged by modernity. Anderson, in his introduction to *Imagined Communities*, observes:

Nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy. (48)

Theorizing on nation, nationality and nationalism in general has proceeded rather

exclusively along either the subjective or the objective factors that constitute such phenomena. The term generally implies a group of people bound together by common loyalty. It is presumed to have certain objective characteristics such as language, race, religion, territory or history which either singly or in combination distinguish them from other nations. Protection and promotion of these in competition and conflict with other nations, then, becomes nationalism. Even though we are in a globalised world the significance of nation and nationalism has not been diminished.

Nationalism has been the subject of scholarly discussion since at least the late 18th century, i.e., when the French proclaimed themselves *la grande nation*; however, it is only since the early 1990s that it has received enough attention as a distinct field of discursive analysis. Writers like Carlton J. H. Hayes (*Essays on Nationalism*, 1926; *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism*, 1931), Hans Kohn (*The Idea of Nationalism*, 1994; *Romanticism and Rise of German Nationalism*, 1950), Elie Kedourie (*Nationalism*, 1960), John Hutchinson (*Modern Nationalism*, 1994), Ernest Gellner (*Nations and Nationalism*, 1983), Karl Deutsch (*Nationalism and Social Communication*, 1953), Walker Connor (*The Timelessness of Nations*, 2004), Anthony D. Smith (*Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, 1995; *Nationalism and Modernism*, 1998; *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 1999; *The Nation in History*, 2000; *Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant and Republic*, 2008; *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach*, 2009) and Anderson (*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 1983) laid the foundation for nationalism studies in the post-war period. During the early 1990s their ideas were enthusiastically taken up by the academic circles to explain the apparent resurgence of nationalism marked by events such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Rwanda Genocide, and the Yugoslav wars. As a result of decolonization and emerging of new nations in Asia and Africa, a paradigm shift occurred in the study of nationalism. Thus we have writers

like ParthaChatterjee, RanajitGuha and Frantz Fannon etc. who through their respective works *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* (1986), *Subaltern Studies*, and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) contributed a lot to the development of nationalism in the post-colonial period.

The development of nationalism can be divided into mainly four stages: (i) the philosophical interest in the study of nationalism in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, (ii) nationalism became a subject of formal academic inquiry, during the period from the First World War until the end of the Second World War, (iii) sociologists and political scientists developed general theories of nationalism in the context of worldwide decolonization and the 'ethnic revival' in the west, during the post-war period from 1945 to the late 1980s, (iv) the period following the fall of communism in 1989, which led to a surge of interest in nationalism and the crystallization of nationalism studies as a field.

The political scientist, UmutOzkirimli, in his work in nationalism studies (*Theories of Nationalism. A Critical Introduction*, 2000) opined that "up to the First World War, interest in nationalism was largely ethical and philosophical" (16-17). The academicians and scholars of this period were mainly concerned with the 'merits and defects' of the doctrine than with the origins and spread of national phenomena.

The nation state was seen as a progressive stage in the historical development of human societies, and both liberals and Marxists expected that nationalism would eventually give way to a cosmopolitan world order. The nationalistic ideals and thoughts of this pre-world war period were greatly influenced by the ideals of Immanuel Kant and his disciples. The republican ideals of German Romantic thought emphasize the inherent potentialities of the autonomous will of the individual which placed individual at the centre of the universe as a sovereign being. According to Smith, this made republicanism the sole possible form of government; for only in a republican the laws could express the autonomous will of

the citizens (32). But later the post-Kantians deduced a theory of the state, where the state is higher than the individuals and the individuals realize their freedom only when they identify themselves with the state.

There were no attempts to fashion a general theory of nationalism that was applicable to all cases by any of the important writers of the period including Jean Jacques Rousseau, Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Emanuel Joseph Sieyes, Giuseppe Mazzini, Ernest Renan and John Stuart Mill. The second stage of nationalism, during the World War period was entirely different in ideology and theme from that of the first stage. During this period scholars and critics accepted nationalism as a compelling norm. There occurred mainly two forms of study of nationalism. One was the ahistorical study which sought to portray the linear history of nations; it could be termed as histories of particular nationalisms. Second was the typology of nationalism, i.e., the recurring types of nationalism. The key figures associated with typologies of nationalism are Carlton Hayes, Hans Kohn, Louis Snyder and E. H. Carr.

In his work *Nations and Nationalism*, Eric Hobsbawm discusses the lack of a satisfactory definition of nationalism either objectively or subjectively. So he suggests a state of agnosticism as a best initial posture for a student in this field. We could find similarity in the observation of both Hobsbawm and Gellner. Hobsbawm agrees with Gellner in his view that nationalism is primarily a "principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent" (Gellner 1).

The postcolonial theories have emphasized the links between literary texts and concepts such as "nation" and "nationalism" and there is general agreement among writers as varied as Gellner, Miroslav Hroch, Anderson, Adrian Hastings, Clifford Greetz and Bhabha that the role played by imaginative literature in the construction of a 'nation' cannot be ignored. So long as the nation is believed to be a 'discursive formation', cultural expressions are recognized as participating in the formation and growth of nation. But in the context of the global

dispensation where the status of culture and its consumption is radically different from what it was in the modernist period, it is not irrelevant to look at the role played by literature in the construction of a form of resistance against the hegemonic forces that dominate the cultural sphere of the contemporary world.

We now know that what we generally understood as nation is not something that can be determined by territorial integrity, race, ethnicity, tradition, religion, language and other related factors or force fields. Writers who have attempted to conceptually explain the intricacies involved in the formation of nations have agreed that a nation is a form of abstraction, an allegory, a myth that does not necessarily correspond to a reality that can be scientifically defined.

Ernest Renan, in his essay "What is a nation?", endeavors to define a legitimate nation by reflecting on the uprisings led by nationalist leaders during the revolutions of 1848. He urges people to come together, and look for common bonding experiences that do not stifle progress and unity because of the differences in race, language, religion, and geography. His central argument is that a nation is a conglomeration of people who share a common past and have derived a strong bond, with an agreement to stay together and be governed by mutual consent in future. He also explicitly states that all people are equal and free. He views the nation as 'a soul, a spiritual principle' (19). According to Renan, it is not race, language, material interests, religious affinities, geography and military necessity that constitute a nation but a common heroic past, great leaders and true glory. Another very important requisite according to him is collective forgetting. He writes,

... forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation... No French citizen knows whether he is a Burgundian, an Alan, a Taifale, or a Visigoth, yet every French citizen has to have forgotten the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew. (11)

The other writers like Gellner and Bhabha focus more on the creative side of nation-building.

They emphasize the cultural importance of what has often been treated as a political entity. According to Bhabha, a nation "comes into being as a system of 'cultural signification' and the locality of incorporating new people in relation to the body politic, generating new sites of meaning and, inevitably, in the political antagonism and unpredictable forces of political representation." (4). It is because of this cultural signification in 'nation' that Bhabha refers to the "cultural construction of nationness" as "a form of social and textual affiliation" (292).

For Gellner, nationalism is the imposition of a high culture on society replacing local, low cultures and multiculturalism. Gellner believes that nationalism strives for one culture or ethnicity under one roof or 'state'. He believes that this is the most important principle of successful states. He argues that the worst case is when the ruler of a state is not a member of the ethnic majority within the boundaries of the state. In this case, he states that nationalism will inevitably occur because members of the 'nation' will want to strive for advancement by attempting to gain control of the state. His theory has come in for a fair bit of criticism. The ethnic breakdown in Syria explains the main problem of the theory of Gellner.

These arguments go hand in hand with Edward Said's point view that the "nation" as a form of "cultural" elaboration is an agency of "ambivalent narration that position as a force for subordination as much as producing, creating, forcing, guiding (Said 1983 171).

The heterogeneous quality and nature of culture and its role in the formation of 'nation' imply that it is not a free play of diversities and differences but a cultural plentitude generated by the multiplicity of meanings and values representing the complexity and "perplexity of living in the disjunctive liminal space of national society" where the articulation of cultural differences is a discourse intervention in the nation (Bhabha 312).

Another significant observation on nationalism was made by the renowned English political theorist John Stuart Mill. His observation on the concept of nationhood goes like this:

A portion of mankind may be said to constitute a

Nationality if they are united among themselves by common sympathies which do not exist between them and any others- which make them cooperate with each other more willingly than with other people, desire to be under the same government, and desire that it should be government by themselves or a portion of themselves exclusively. (40)

It is an excellent thesis on the ideals of republican citizenship and representative government.

Anderson's *Imagined Communities*: reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism altered the manner in which we study the novel as a narrative, and nation and nationalism as political phenomenon. In defining nationality, nationness and nationalism as 'cultural artifacts of a particular kind', Anderson pioneered a perspective that focused its attention on the role of social imagination in political process. Anderson writes, "Communities are to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (3). It is worthwhile to recall that Anderson wrote his book in the context of the rise of nationalist forces in Indo-China and the gradual disintegration of transnational socialist solidarity. The subsequent events in Europe have confirmed that these peculiar cultural artefacts can redefine the course of history.

Commenting on Anderson's thesis, E. V. Ramakrishnan observes,

A close reading of Anderson's discourse would reveal that nations need to be ancient and modern, and secular and sacred at the same time. Nation, as a semiotic system, invents metaphors, invests symbolic power in objects and regulates the relationship between time and the world. As an invented identity, nationalism acquires a forward movement as well as a backward gaze. Before print capitalism fractured the institutional cohesion characteristic of pre-modern societies—presided over by the great world religions—the collective life of the community, organized around religious rituals and customs, offered 'imagined' solutions to the existential problems of suffering, sickness and death. The backward gaze of the foundational narratives of nationalism invokes the memories of the collective and ritualistic aspects of

community life lived by the people in the past. Thus, the nation is constructed by a rupture which it has no means to heal. (96)

This contradiction is forcefully bought out by GopalBalakrishnan in his essay, 'The National Imagination' where he notes:

The sacred is held to be an anthropological constant of organized social life: the modern world is in this respect no exception, its novelty consisting only in the fact that the national form it assumes is essentially secular. While the sacred and the secular might seem to be antithetical orders, for Anderson they strikingly intersect in the peak symbolic artifact of the nation state, the tomb of the reminiscent of an ancestor cult, but here intimacy is crossed with the anonymity of modern society—it does not seem to matter that there is no one in the vault. (205)

Anderson's idea of imagined community doesn't mean that a national community is fake, but rather refers to his belief that any community so large that its members do not know each other on a face-to-face basis must be imagined to some degree. According to him, previous Marxist and liberal thinkers did not fully appreciate nationalism's power, writing in his book that "unlike most other isms, nationalism has never produced its own grand thinkers: no Hobbesses, Tocquevilles, Marxes, or Webers" (7). His main point of discussion is that Nationalism is a recent and modern creation despite nations being thought of by most people as old and timeless; nationalism is universal in that every individual belongs to a nation, yet each nation is supposedly completely distinct from every other nation; nationalism is an idea so influential that people will die for their nations, yet at the same time an idea difficult to define.

Anderson's claims of 'non-Eurocentrism' are bitterly attacked by Chatterjee. He remarks, If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain 'modular' forms already made available to them by Europe and Americas, what do they have left to imagine? History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the post colonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity.

Europe and the Americas, the only true subjects of history, have thought out on our behalf not only the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of our anti-colonial resistance and postcolonial misery. Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized. (216)

Chatterjee argues that Anderson perceives nationalism only as a contest for political power.

The most powerful criticism against nationalism came from the Marxist critics and writers. Marx and Engels in their *Manifesto of the Communist Party* envisaged and called for an international working class revolution for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie which had already become an international class. Smitha observes,

Basically Marxists viewed nationalism as a necessary but temporary stage in the evolution of history. They generally held that nations originated in a particular stage in developmental history where the capitalist mode of production superseded feudalism. As a result of this transition the social formations in Western Europe became more homogeneous and politically centralized. This evolutionary process ended up in the production of two kinds of nations: historic and non-historic nations. But their writings reserved the term 'nation' only for the permanent population of a nation-state. (23)

It is a common notion that the communists were against countries and nationality. It is clearly evident in *The Communist Manifesto*, giving the famous clarion call to the working class of all countries to unite, in order to win the whole world:

The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got ... National differences and antagonisms between people are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world-market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto. The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster. United action, of all the leading civilized countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the

proletariat. (51)

Their remark on nationalism was marked by an acute commitment to internationalism. The prime yen of nationalism, they argue, is to separate people from one another. As opposed to nationalism, internationalism desires to unite and diminish all national antagonisms.

As moved by the rapidly growing cultural studies, the new generation scholars attempted to explore the so-far neglected areas like feminism, postcolonialism, postmodernism, etc. in the context of the discourses of nation. The gendered nature of nations and nationalism began to be studied by the feminist scholars. They argue that nationalist ideologies are drawn on social constructions of gender, race, sexuality and nation, and bid representations of members on the basis of these categories. These depictions, in course of time, became the inseparable part of the nationalist discourse.

While interrogating the issues of Indian nationalism, the observation made by Bipan Chandra is significant: "The national movement was the process through which the Indian people were formed into a nation and a people" (210).

Aloysius in his preface to *Nationalism without a Nation* observed that the study of nationalism, ideology, organization, movement etc. in India, has long been the exclusive preserve of the historians. In its external dimension, the discussion ranged between sheer xenophobia, on the hand and sacred patriotism, on the other. Internally, it hinged around the axis of Hindu-Muslim harmony or disharmony. Sociologists, however, have been pre-occupied with movements of all other kinds, considered mainly as instances of status or social mobility, sanskritization, westernization or protests/transformations. Though these movements, 'the national' as well as the 'social', were contemporaneous, contributed to, and together constituted the formation of modern India, the 'totality' itself was not problematized in either, leading to the 'reification' and eventually 'reification' of the 'grand national' within history.

The mass enthusiasm generated in the wake of independence and the subsequent engagement

in nation building activities in the early 50s seemed to have overcome the fissiparous tendencies visible earlier and gave us the illusion that nationalism had indeed invented the nation. There are discussions going on. Some other scholars are of the opinion that nation precedes nationalism.

Another important contribution to the nationalist debate in India is done by Kanchaiah. To quote his words, "... the Indian nation is on course for a civil war, a civil war that has been simmering as an undercurrent of the caste-based cultural system that Hinduism has constructed and nurtured for centuries" (10).

As a nation's history is narrativised through history books and literary discourses, what we must focus on is those identities which are absent in our books and literary works. What is not taught and therefore not recognized is studied now by the subaltern writers. Shalini Advani pointed out that "the representation of the national movement and its great leaders silences not only local history but also the contribution of a vast majority of subaltern groups" (120). Ranajit Guha's attack on elitist ideology is also relevant in this context.

THE GREAT INDIAN NOVEL: RUMINATIONS ON A FORMED NATION

The Great Indian Novel was written as an answer to the hypothetical statement made by foreigners that 'India is an underdeveloped country'. Tharoor wanted to prove that their perception is wrong and he had tried to show that "they have no knowledge of history and even less of their own heritage", as the novel reveals (13). Tharoor re-imagined India by interweaving myths, legends, and contemporary socio-political events. The central motif of the novelist is to cast a new national history that can encompass the complex identity of the nation.

Tharoor says in his *Littcrit* article that, "*The Great Indian Novel* is an attempt to retell the political history of 20th century India through a fictional recasting of events, episodes and characters from *The Mahabharata*." (1). As his frame of reference, he has chosen a canonical grand narrative which, to a great extent, sidelines the general populace and revolves

around court and familial intrigues and fight for monarchic power. Its all-encompassing nature shows its monolithic power over the other regional legends.

The author's note at the very beginning of the book says that its title is not a reflection of his estimate of its contents, but a reference to his source of inspiration. According to Tharoor, '*The Mahabharata* has come to stand for so much in the popular consciousness of Indians: the personages in it have become household words, standing for public virtues and vices, and the issues it raises, as well as the values it seeks, to promote, are central to an understanding of what makes India' (1). Here we could critique the all-inclusive nature of *The Mahabharata*.

Nationalization process, according to Gellner, is a sort of imposition of a homogeneous culture, which is assumed to be powerful, upon the heterogeneous multitude of the society. In other words, nationalism is a process by which the so-called elite culture is given the status of a national culture and there by a political roofing. It is a state policy for ensuring group cohesion and social integrity. Hence cultural standardization is an integral part of nationalization processes (18).

By taking into consideration all criticism regarding the elite national myth, it is also true that myth and epic both contribute to and reflects the national consciousness. India has inevitably changed in the 2000 years since the Mahabharata was composed.

The epic also tells the story of a Hastinapur family; the rulers, elite class people and their power struggle and problems. As E. V. Ramakrishnan pointed out, nation is a social consciousness which transforms the individual to the esoterical identities like family, person etc. (19-27). Family is considered to be the basic unit of nation. Political philosophy view family as a model for the organization of the state. Many writers from ancient times to the present have seen parallels between the family and the forms of the state. The first writer to use it was Aristotle, who argued that the natural progression of human beings was from the family via small communities to the polis. While we consider the case of India the joint

family is the basis of Indian institution. But it has undergone some change in the late twentieth century. Many Indians live in joint families that deviate in various ways from the ideal, and many live in nuclear families too. Tharoor anticipated a joint family (elite upper caste) structure for India, not a nuclear family or any subaltern family. And it is also a mainstream patriarchal family that he is postulating. Fictional family could be seen in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* also. The family in *The Great Indian Novel* is the well known Hastinapur family of *The Mahabharata*, every prominent member of which is allegorized to represent some important political leaders. Viney Kirpal observed that 'Rushdie while writing *Midnight's Children* had rightly observed that in India, there can be no novel without a family, because it is central to its local fabric' (46). Kirpal also quotes the comment made by one of our ex-prime ministers of India Mr. V. P. Singh when interviewed about the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report, made a statement that has a bearing on the novel under consideration. He said: "[A] family runs only if everyone has a share and a say. So if the country is a family, every section should have a share and a say..." (46). Thus, in equating the country with a family, these Indian novelists have not merely resorted to a literary technique but have responded to a way of thinking that is quite alive in India. Francis Bacon, in his essay "Of Marriage and Single Life" which was written during England becoming a nation, does share a similar ideology. As part of the nation building process he projected a family structure for the emerging nation. Similarly both K. P. and Tharoor projected a family pedigree of Pandava and Kaurava for the nation.

Here we could see the relevance of Partha Chatterjee. He, through his essay "Whose Imagined Community?" questions the attitude of the west that colonized even the imagination of the east. He argued that the historical experience of nationalism in Europe shaped the notions of nationalism in other part of the world. Nationalism was imagined by Europe for its 'other'.

The Great Indian Novel is a telling paradigm

for the continual struggle for centrality and functioning of this central authority. Continual tussle for centrality of male can be seen through the narrator V.V. His attitude towards women is exemplified in the following words that he demanded to Brahma: "Don't talk to me of some weepy woman whose shorthand trips over her fingernails; give me a man, one of your best, somebody with the constitution and the brains to cope with what I have to offer" (14). Finally he got the amanuensis, Ganapathi. He is described as "with a big nose and shrewd, intelligent eyes" (14). V.V. felt that 'Brahm was right about his being demanding' (15). He was satisfied when he got a chap of his 'own kind'. Here we could note that women and other marginalized 'others' are exempted from being an amanuensis.

As far as a dictator is concerned any threat to his/her authority cannot be tolerated. This could be seen when Ganapathi put forward a condition: "I shall reside with you, and as long as I am ready, you must not pause in your dictation" (15). Then V.V. is seen to dictate further terms: "I made my own condition: that he had to understand every word of what I said before he took it down" (15).

V.V. is a person with dictatorial powers. That could be further seen as he addresses Ganapathi: "I demanded. Dammit, what I am about to dictate is the definitive memoir of my life and times" (14). Other instance could be cited as follows:

I see, Ganapathi, that you have no advice to offer me. You wish, as usual, to sit back, with your ponderous brow glowering in concentration, that long nose of yours coiling itself around my ideas, and let me choose my own thoughts, my own words. Well, I suppose you are right. It is, after all, my story, the story of Ved Vyas, doddering and decrepit though you may think I am, and yet it is also the story of India, your country and mine. Go ahead Ganapathi, sit back. I shall tell you all. (51)

V.V. addresses himself as a bastard but is proud to say that "a bastard in a fine tradition, the offspring of a fisherwoman seduced by a travelling sage" (15). Here we could see he mentions about the carefree life of Brahmins in

an ironic way. He is critiquing them by saying that “Brahmins got about a lot in those days, and they didn’t need any hotel bookings then. Any householder was honored by a visit from a holy man with a sacred thread and no luggage but his learning” (15-16).

Brahmins enjoyed a lot of privilege and they made use of their learning to satisfy their desires, they seduced women of lower class for their needs. “He would be offered his host’s hospitality, his food, his bed and often; because they were a lot more understanding then, his daughter as well. And the Brahmin would partake of the offerings, the shelter, the rice, the couch, the girl, and move on, sometimes leaving more than his slippers behind”(16). V.V.says, “I am proud to be one of them” (16) which means that he justifies their actions. It is the attitude of the high class; they find pleasure even in seducing women. He defends the deed done by Parashar. We could see that it is not first time that Parashar is seducing a woman. He is well experienced: “the Brahmin was no novice in the art of seduction” (16). The sages like Parashar will make use of the lower caste women but they won’t be ready to get into an official marriage and lead a family with them because on that account they are very conscious about their class, caste, and status. Parashar decides to take Satyavati with him; her father could not raise any objection though he was the head of fisherman, as obedience to Brahmins was obligatory in those days. In the case of Ekalavya and Satyavati’s father we could see that even though they tried to raise their voice, eventually they were subjugated. “It was not often that a fisherman, even a head fisherman, which is what is Satyavati’s father was, challenged the word of a Brahmin” but in the due course of time what happened is that “he bowed his head and bade his daughter farewell” (18).

Though VedVyas is the narrational centre; he is not the actional centre barring the very few instances where he comes to limelight. We have always one dominant figure at the centre of events, though the personality varies with change in time—Gangaji, Dhritarashtra, PriyaDuryodhani and JayaprakashDrona

occupy this position at different points of time. Ganga Datta or Gangaji is shown as a person with great knowledge, as depicted in the novel:

He had been immersing himself increasingly in the great works of the past and the present, reading the Vedas and Tolstoy with equal involvement, studying the immutable laws of Manu and the eccentric philosophy of Ruskin and yet contriving to attend, as he had to, to the affairs of state. (25)

Foucault says that knowledge is power:

Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of ‘the truth’ but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in that sense at least, ‘becomes true’. Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice. Thus, ‘there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations. (Foucault 1997, 27)

Here for Ganga Datta, his knowledge gave him a privileged position of power to take decision and made people to obey it without questioning. He is an uncrowned emperor. “He is vested with the right to do anything with anybody without waiting for others’ consent. The central position he enjoys in the country, in the minds of his people, legitimizes all his words and deeds” (140). He asserted his power and force in abducting three women without their consent. Even while describing about the rituals of marriage he favors the one which suit his patriarchal authoritarian interest. i.e. “... the marriage of a girl seized by force from a royal assembly” (26). There are many ways in which a girl can be ‘given away’. Ancient texts also suggest that a girl is allowed to choose her own mate in a swayamvara ceremony. Here a girl could take decision. But here Ganga Datta chooses the way of abduction. He also challenges the royal court members. “I am taking these girls with me whether you like it or not. Just try and stop me”. (26). Gangaji’s whole strength and power is built upon on the image of his celibacy. “He was the only one who feared it to be constantly under threat” (28). To

the nation his service is greater. His will power is testified as he champion the people's cause in Motihari and Budge Budge; "...rural indigo-growing peasants, he was helping subaltern jute-factory workers Budge Budge, outside Calcutta" (107), where the foreign power is crushed down through his non-violent struggle. He took sides justly and sometimes unjustly while shaping the destiny of Nation.

Gangaji sometimes behaves despotically and thereby holds the fate of the nation at risk. When in Chaurasta the Mango Agitation turned violent and the policemen, all Indians, were attacked Gangaji announced dully: "I shall suspend the agitation" (150).

Pandu then registered his protest as follows: 'He personally, unilaterally, calls the whole thing off. Without even consulting any of us.' He didn't need to consult any of us to start the agitation.' I pointed out.

That's what's wrong with our entire way of running this party.' Pandu declaimed bitterly. 'Is this Kaurava movement or a one man show?' (151)

Here the democratic Pandu didn't get any answer because by this time Gangaji has become a semi-god-like figure. Pandu suggests sending a group of delegates to represent the country in the Round Table Conference, "but the Working Committee, at Dhritarashtra's glib urging, agreed not only to attend but to send Gangaji as the party's sole representative to the conference" (136). By the middle of the novel Gangaji lost his god like control over his disciples. "He saw the violence across the land as a total repudiation of what he had taught." (268). So he left the central space and went for a life of renunciation. The vacant space was then occupied by another domineering figure, Dhritarashtra.

Tharoor critiques Nehru's vision by equating him with the mythical character Dhritarashtra, who is blind by birth itself. He points out that the modern Dhritarashtra J.Nehru has the blind man's gift of seeing. The world 'not as it is, but as he wanted it to be' (99). Nehru who was English educated tried to see nation as per the western conception. He wrote *The Discovery of India*. Having imbibed the colonial ideology he

is also trying to 'discover' India. Other principal character of The Mahabharata are conceived as the major institutions of India. Bhima as the army; Arjuna as the press; and Draupadi as democracy.

Here Tharoor also criticizes the failed nationalism and democracy. When a 'nation', an emotional entity became a political entity, a 'state', all the ideals of once glorious nation were replaced by the corruption made by the elites who handled power. He effectively projected the failed democracy, through the use of mythic setting. The disrobing of Draupadi as a parallel for Mrs. Gandhi's misrule of the country, her over throwing of democracy and the abrogation of constitutional rights during the Emergency is an excellent case in point.

Disrobing of Draupadi here is symbolic of denuding Indian people of their dignity and freedom. The marriage of Draupadi and Arjuna is given a modern meaning by presenting it as a union of democracy and the voice of the people, whose medium is the press. The modern Arjuna is a journalist, a representative of the powers and weakness of the Indian press.

"I thought of Arjuna", says V.V., "with his paradoxical mixture of attributes, as the spirit of the Indian people, to whom he so ably gave voice as a journalist" (379). Arjuna has to play the role of saviour and rescue the nation from political tyranny and oppression. The Pashupat Astra that he receives from Shiva symbolizes the power of the press, in a democracy. It is the 'ultimate weapon' which has to be used with the discretion and not only for devastation but also for construction.

Tharoor gave power to the hands of people who belong to elite class, caste, male, not to the hands of 'others' who are marginalized from the main stream. Even when history is narrativised through novels, micro identities are not seen addressed.

Stephen Greenblatt has observed that "Shakespeare's plays are centrally and repeatedly concerned with the production and containment of subversion and disorder" (29). Similarly, at first we may feel that Tharoor is giving voice to the marginalized by presenting a modern Ekalavya. Drona orders Ekalavya

to cut off his thumb and give it to him as fees for having eaves dropped on his lessons to the Pandavas. Tharoor subverts the scene with the modern day Ekalavya defying Drona and pragmatically refusing to gift him a chopped off thumb. "I am sorry sir, but I cannot destroy my life and my mothers to pay your fee" (232). The parody ends with Drona exiling Ekalavya from the 'vicinity' of his class. Similar is the case of present day Dalits too. The suicide of RohitVemula typifies the attitude of elite class/ caste even in the present century where, they were made to vanish from the vicinity of upper class. The narrator ironically concludes "Next time, Arjuna stands first in the examinations... alone" (233).

Tharoor also points out that even though legally untouchability was abolished the mind set of people remains the same; they are not ready to accept marginalized people as human beings. The conversation between Heaslop and Sir Richard indicate that "untouchability is no longer legal in Hastinapur, but he knows it's still impossible for a cobbler to get into the main temple" (41).

Many religious and social reformers tried to end this evil practice without much effect. But during the national movement, Gandhi made the eradication of untouchability one of his goals. Expressing his anxieties over the way untouchability was spreading in the Hindu Society, he said that it was against both man and God. Living up to this, Mahatma Gandhi declared that the untouchables were 'Harijans' meaning 'the people of God'. He tried to even integrate them into the Indian National Congress and the freedom movement. He went and stayed with them in their colonies, shared meals and performed all the tasks of cleaning along with them. In his ashram, all his followers tried to follow his thinking. Public dinners were organized in which people expressed their feelings against the practice of untouchability by eating with people of different communities. Even though he does these things the main criticism against him was he didn't allow Harijans to leave Hindu religion and join the caste-less Buddhism. Here I quote the words of Thomas C. Mountain, publisher

of the Ambedkar Journal, where he answers the question 'Why do Dalits hate M.K. Gandhi?': Gandhi was a so called "high caste". High castes represent a small minority in India, some 10-15% of the population, yet dominate Indian society in much the same way whites ruled South Africa during the official period of Apartheid. Dalits often use the phrase Apartheid in India when speaking about their problems. Most readers are familiar with Gandhi's great hunger strike against the so called Poona Pact in 1933. The matter which Gandhi was protesting, nearly unto death at that, was the inclusion in the draft Indian Constitution, proposed by the British that reserved the right of Dalits to elect their own leaders. Dr.Ambedkar, with his degree in Law from Cambridge, had been chosen by the British to write the new constitution for India. Having spent his life overcoming caste based discrimination, Dr.Ambedkar had come to the conclusion that the only way Dalits could improve their lives is if they had the exclusive right to vote for their leaders, that a portion or reserved section of all elected positions were only for Dalits and only Dalits could vote for these reserved positions. Gandhi was determined to prevent this and went on hunger strike to change this article in the draft constitution. After many communal riots, where tens of thousands of Dalits were slaughtered, and with a leap in such violence predicted if Gandhi died, Dr.Ambedkar agreed, with Gandhi on his death bed, to give up the Dalits right to exclusively elect their own leaders and Gandhi ended his hunger strike.(1) Gandhi's critics opined that he doesn't have solidarity with the untouchables, he merely have patronizing empathy.

Tharoor's interpretation is a successful comment on the present-day Indian elite rising on the backs of their more unfortunate brethren. Thus, through a multilayered treatment, the novelist questions the persisting orthodoxy in the present India.

Kamala Das in her poem 'An Introduction' also critiques the elitist play in the power circle. "I don't know politics but I know the names Of those in power, and can repeat them like Days of week, or names of months,

Beginning with Nehru”

Here she says that she is not interested in politics but claims that she can name all the people who have been in power right from the time of Nehru. By saying that she can repeat them as fluently as days of week or names of the month, she ironically hints at the chosen elites who rule a democracy in repetitive cycles. As Kamala Das mentioned, we could see that after the decline of the central authority of Gandhi, the other power center Nehru reside in the power circle. Dhritarashtra (Nehru) makes use of the situations favourably for him. V.V. says: “He knew perfectly well that with Gangaji gone and Pandu dead, Karna across the new frontiers and Rafi sidelined by the fact that much of his community had suddenly become foreigners, there was no obvious alternative leader the party could find” (310).

After the death of Dhritarashtra none other than his daughter PriyaDuryodhanigot the power in her hand. He has already ensured through his letters addressed to her from prison “well before she was old enough to understand any of them” that the centre should not be occupied by anybody other than his daughter (183).

Another sidelined figure is Vidur. He was marginalized from different aspects. Even if his father was V.V. like that of the other central figures: Dhritarashtra and Pandu, as his mother was a maid servant, he faced a lot of discrimination. In intellectual gifts and administrative ability he outshone his two brothers, but knowing from the very beginning that unlike them he had no claim on a kingly throne, he developed a sense of modesty and self effacement that would enhance his effectiveness in his chosen profession. Eventually, he became “that most valuable and underrated of creatures, the bureaucrat” (46). Queen Victoria had thrown the doors of the ICS open to natives immediately after the 1857 revolt. First two Indian, both Bengalis, did achieve the miraculous distinction of entry—SatyendraNath Tagore and SurendraNath Tagore. As Vidur did brilliantly in his examination, stood first class, first throughout and along with many of the country’s finest minds, he applied for entry into the Indian Civil Service. But he was exempted

from getting into that position.

Vidur topped the written examinations to the ICS, in which one’s name did not figure on the test paper; in the interview, regrettably, the same degree of anonymity did not prevail and he found himself rapidly downgraded, but not so far as to miss selection altogether. So he joined the ICS’s emerging administrative alloy. (46-47)

Another instance could be seen when Gangaji told others (Dhritarashtra, Pandu, and Vidur): “I have been making discreet inquires, and I have identified three suitable ladies of impeccable descent and highly praised beauty, with whom I intend to arrange your marriages. What do you have to say to this?” (47) Then it was Vidur who spoke first. Then the attitude of other could be seen clearly, “Pandu gave his low-born brother an expressive look, as indeed Dhritarashtra might have, had he been able” (47). But both remained silent, particularly since Gangaji had seized upon Vidur’s answer with barely concealed satisfaction and was already detailing his plans.

Gangaji’s discrimination towards a low-born is clearly evident in his selection of a bride for Vidur. For the other two he chose girls belonging to high class family background. But for Vidur he has chosen,

... a young lady whose circumstances perfectly match yours. The Raja Devaka, no mean prince, had a low-caste wife, who gave him a most elegant and lissom daughter, Devaki. She may not be of highest rank, but she was educated at the Loreto Convent and is fluent in English, which can be an asset in your work. (50)

But Gangaji has different criteria for selecting the girl for Dhritarashtra:

For you Dhritarashtra, the eldest, I have found a girl from a very good family of Allahabad. She is called Gandhari, and I am told she has lustrous black eyes ... the main attraction of this lovely lady, from our point of view, is that she hails from a most productive line. Her mother had nine children, and her grandmother seventeen. There is a story in the family that Gandhari has obtained the boon of Lord Shiva to have no less than a hundred sons. (48)

Gangaji was even very conscious while handling

power also. He did not want the low-born Vidur to handle the kingdom. He said, "well, there it is then, at last, once these marriages are all arranged, I shall turn over the kingdom to Dhritrashtra and Pandu, knowing too that Vidur is at the States Department, keeping an eye on Hastinapur"(51). And it is also worth to note that we couldn't find any reference of the family pedigree of Vidur, a low-born. Throughout The Mahabharata and also novels based on it like Tharoor's, only the main stream, privileged high class society is getting suitably mentioned.

O. V. Vijayan's novel The Saga of Dharmapuri and his other stories collected in After the Hanging and Other Stories, particularly the first section titled "Allegories of Power" track down questions of ideology involved in the present condition of nation. But Tharoor being belonged to a 'genteel' tradition is not equipped to deal with pornography of power relations.

In this novel Tharoor is simply making a mechanical exercise of postmodernism and his history doesn't provide an informing vision on the nation and its identity. Tharoor who aims to depict the multiplicity of India in multiple ways fails in realizing this dream. By selecting *The Mahabharata* and only the mainstream events in the official national history to speak about India, Tharoor fails to acknowledge the numerous local myths and legends and the multiple streams of histories within the nation. Further, even though the novel was at a time when the postcolonial debates have taken sufficient rooting, it fails to give ample space for the marginalized people, only the power holding elites get properly represented. The people at large are still destined to occupy the periphery and thus Tharoor fails to make inroads into the postcolonial terrains of narration by exploring the possibilities of suggesting alternatives to the existing paradigms of nation and nationality. I conclude the chapter with a reminder from ParthaChatterjee: "democracy today is not government of, by and for the people. Rather, it should be seen as the politics of the governed" (4).

Conclusion

Tharoor attempts to re-create a new national

identity but what happens is that he doesn't succeed in subverting the basic paradigm of The Mahabharata. The Malayalam novels like *IniNjanUrangatte* (Now, Let me Sleep) by P. K. Balakrishnan and *Randamoozham* (The Second Turn) by M. T. Vasudevan Nair are wonderful examples where the subversive potential of postcolonial ideology is employed to re-read the canonical epic of *The Mahabharata*. These novelists do not simply brood over the symbolic capital of the great epic; rather they enter into a dialogue with it. Tharoor uses the shade of the Mahabharata framework to gain the privileged view of an entire subcontinent. He uses that framework to consolidate the value system propagated by the epic and makes no serious efforts to exploit the blind spots in the epic. Even the parodying employed in the novel is not subversive of the traditional value system. No attempt is made to give voice to the 'voiceless' people. Tharoor who aims to depict the multiplicity of India in multiple ways fails in realizing this dream. Like the history books which do not provide any space for those who fought equally hard but never got any share of the limelight by virtue of their backwardness for no fault of their own, the history-based literature also partake in the same offence.

The poverty of the historiography is that only the 'great' leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Naidu, Gokhale or Indira are visible in the chapters of history books and literature like the ones discussed here. The common mass is not adequately represented anywhere. Their individuality is not getting epitomized. The voices of the marginalized sections are silenced by the mainstream and this gives nationalism an elite hegemonic structure. However, a shift in focus can be seen now especially through the subaltern writers. The question 'Whose is the nation?' has become very prominent now. Though the works selected for study embody the elitist notions of nation, there have been very promising trends in literature of the present day in general by articulating the once-muffled voices of various segments of the nation, including Dalits, subalterns, religious minorities, transgenders, LGBT and all those marginalized sections.

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Innovative Classroom Techniques

"A 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

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. 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

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Signposts for Researchers in ELT.2

Current Trends in Teaching and Learning EFL/ESL **The TESOL President's Blog** Posted on 16 December 2013 by Deena Boraie <http://blog.tesol.org/8-current-trends-in-teaching-and-learning-efles/>

Last month, I had the good fortune of having been invited as a plenary speaker in MexTESOL's 40th anniversary convention, held in lovely Querétaro. I had a wonderful time, and I really felt at home—I discovered that Mexicans have a lot in common with my people (Egyptians). During the convention, I was also asked to give a talk about the current trends in English language teaching and learning in an EFL or ESL context. I was very pleased to do so, and here are the key eight trends that I talked about. These are not necessarily an exhaustive list and most likely there are other trends that I have not mentioned.

Trend 1: Change in the Goal of Teaching English

In my opinion, there are two key changes in the purpose of teaching English. Firstly, as Penny Ur (2009) noted the goal is “to produce fully competent English-knowing bilinguals rather than imitation native speakers.” As I mentioned in a previous blog, the purpose is not to aspire to become native speakers of English, because we are already native speakers of our own L1, but to focus on English as a means of communication. Secondly, English is not viewed as an end in itself but as a means to learn content such as science and mathematics. Content and language integrate learning (CLIL) is an approach where the English teacher uses cross-curricular content and so the students learn both the content and English.

Trend 2: Early Start in Teaching English

Many countries have started teaching English in earlier grades at school. For example, since 2011, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam have been introducing English from Grade 4. Also in 2011, Japan introduced English in the primary stage, and, in 2012, Dubai introduced English in the KG stage instead of Grade 1.

Trend 3: Change in the Approach to Teaching Culture

Both the local or native and international culture dominate in English language classes. There is less focus on teaching the culture of native

speakers of English unless there is a specific purpose for doing so.

Trend 4: Changing View of an English Teacher

It is increasingly being recognized that the quality or effectiveness of teachers is determined by their linguistic, teaching, and intercultural competence rather than their being a native speaker of English.

Trend 5: Change in Teaching Content and Test Design

Teachers use a range of local texts or English translations of literature in the classroom. The use of L1 as appropriate as well as the use of a variety of accents in listening activities or tests are encouraged in English language classrooms.

Trend 6: E-Learning

Because of the proliferation of tablets and smart phones, I believe that textbooks will disappear in a few years. Furthermore, the access to knowledge in terms of flexibility and mobility has changed drastically.

Trend 7: Strategic Teaching and Learning

Teaching in English language classes focuses on fostering student thinking as well as language content, outcomes, and learning activities. There are significant and complex student-teacher interactions inside and outside the classroom. The gamification of learning is emerging as a way to make language learning more engaging and relevant to the younger generation.

Trend 8: Teachers as Life-Long Learners

In a knowledge-based society and to remain competitive and employable, teachers are expected to engage in continuous professional development or professional learning activities from the beginning to the end of their careers. As with any other profession, teachers are also expected to assume greater responsibility for their own professional learning, continually developing their knowledge and skills.

How have these trends affected your teaching? I look forward to hearing from you about additional trends that I neglected to mention

ICT-Enabled Teaching of English and Teacher Talk: Some Reflections

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Abstract

ICT-enabled teaching has now become a common practice in most of our educational institutions. The appropriate use of this technology has brought about significant changes, particularly, in the teaching and learning of English; both practices have become more experiential although the experiences gained by teachers and learners have their source in virtual realities. There is no question about the usefulness of ICT-enabled teaching. It definitely makes the understanding of concepts/ideas in English language and literature easier. However, one question that needs to be raised is: can this technology-based teaching minimize teacher talk in our classes? The present paper, while underscoring the effectiveness of ICT-enabled teaching, seeks to point out the absolute need of a good amount of teacher talk in our undergraduate and postgraduate classes. The need of the English language/literature teacher to be more than a mere facilitator in her class, the paper argues, arises from the peculiar language competencies that exist in our classrooms. The paper also emphasizes the relevance of traditional modes of explication/explanation in our classrooms.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a term that has gained currency and practical applications in India in the last one decade or so. If the use of the term and its application during the period was restricted to the metropolitan areas, the technology has now become familiar to non-urban locales, too. In the field of education the technology and its vast potentialities are being used effectively for the benefit of thousands of students. Before the advent of this new technology institutions used conventional types of Audio-Visual (A-V) aids. In a sense, ICT-enabled teaching may be considered as an extremely advanced version of teaching with A-V aids. Senior teachers with a B. Ed degree, who have studied about and used the older forms of aids in their classes, would vouch for their usefulness in the classroom, especially in the ESL classroom. However, the possibilities that ICT offers to the learner and teacher are much more immense than those of the traditional teaching aids. While we admit this, we also need to be aware of the problems and prospects of using ICT in our classrooms. One of the problems that is often pointed out is that the learners' knowledge of ICT is more advanced than that of the teachers. This leads the latter to avoid using ICT in their classroom. Teachers who are anxious about their lack of

knowledge of technology actually forget the fact that for conducting an ICT-enabled class they need not be expert technicians. One of the ways of overcoming the anxiety is to seek the help of colleagues who effectively use ICT in their classrooms on a regular basis. A few hours' 'tuition' from the regular ICT users would enable the less-skilled to learn the basics and make their classes motivating, and learning enjoyable for their students. Let me also add that it is our students who mould us into good teachers over years. So, learning 'lessons' from one's own students should also be considered a joyful experience. We should not consider it beneath our dignity to seek the assistance of our learners in operating the equipment available to us. Further, there are websites/agencies that can help us online to gain a knowledge of particular operations.

Another problem that needs mention here is the excessive use of ICT in the classroom. This suggests the teacher's inability to use the technology as a supplementary tool for enhancing learners' understanding of concepts and issues. The overuse of technology is most evident in power point techniques/presentations (PPTs). Indeed they are very useful for teachers and students alike; the former do not have to commit to memory too many teaching points and

the latter receive, via the slides, essential study points that can guide them to more advanced sources. Also, power point presentations, when they are judiciously devised and used, can be means of stimulus variation. That is, they can cause to shift students' attention from the teacher to what they see on the screen. However, what happens in most cases is that the teacher/presenter transfers all the details about a topic to the power point and read them out, as though their audience do not know how to read or write. Technology should only be used to make your ideas clearer and more impressive. The roles of the teacher in the classroom (for e.g., the role of an expositor of ideas) should not be subordinated to any form of technology. ICT is necessary for making teaching appealing to the learners. It should draw the learners' sincere attention to the text or the topic under discussion. But projecting power point frames continuously for no reason generates monotony and this can considerably reduce students' interest in the topic. Further, such activity can also give learners the impression that the teacher is totally dependent on the PPTs. What is expected is an integrated approach where there is a fair balancing of teacher talk and the use of ICT.

One of the criteria for choosing a specific kind of technological aid is its appropriateness in fulfilling the learning objective(s). This implies that using technology just for the sake of using it is an aimless and meaningless exercise. If a teacher is very clear about the aims and objectives of teaching a lesson/unit, then she can plan the specific stage at which a certain kind of technology must be used. (Here one is reminded of the old wisdom about the timely use of charts, pictures, etc. in the language classroom). Thus a teacher teaching a novel that has a film version can use, during the course of her teaching, clippings from the film to teach those aspects which need to be highlighted. ICT has enabled us to use many online resources for a variety of texts and topics. The purpose of using any such resource should be to enhance the learners' progress in the language in accordance with the specific objective the teacher has in mind.

ICT can be used effectively for enhancing the learners' knowledge of reading and writing in the ESL classroom. The computer is a device that can connect us to a variety of virtual worlds. Even in the absence of Internet connection, the teacher can use the computer to help learners comprehend/create/compose texts. 'Cut and Paste', for e.g., is a simple exercise that students can easily do; they may be given a jumbled text and asked to make it a coherent passage by cutting and pasting the sentences to give them a sequence within the text. Similarly, a collection of phrases may be given to the students and ask them to sequence the phrases to compose a poem out of it. A non-fictional text may also be given for separating the key sentences from it by cutting the others out.

'Insert text' is another exercise that can enable the learners, for example, to use connectives appropriately in texts. A text without connectives between sentences may be given to the students. A list of connectives may/may not be provided. By placing appropriate connectives they can see the difference in the impact of the text with and without the connectives. The same exercise may be used for inserting punctuations in a text and show how appropriate punctuations (for e.g., quotation marks) can lead to clarity or remove ambiguity.

Note making is an important unit in the Compulsory English textbooks prescribed for students in India. The computer (nowadays even a mobile phone) is a handy instrument for the teacher to teach this sub-skill. Through a process of deletion students can be asked to eliminate irrelevant details from a text while focusing on the key points in it and thus be taught to prepare their own notes. The process of deletion may also be employed in deleting certain word classes like adjectives and adverbs to help the learner understand how their presence or absence can affect the meaning potential of the given text.

Yet, as mentioned earlier, too much of dependence on ICT has its weaknesses. One does not have to prepare a PPT for every topic that one teaches in the class. Here, too, the criterion should be that you prepare ICT materials for the achievement of some specific objectives.

The chief advantage of the technology is that it can be simply visual or audio-visual. They offer stimulus variation in the liveliest manner and they can make the imparting of skills and knowledge faster. PPTs may be used for various purposes like presenting key information about a topic, presenting series of images to provoke discussion and/or writing, summarizing key points from a previous presentation, etc.

While PPTs are most helpful in teaching factual texts, their usefulness in teaching language and literature cannot be belittled. They are very handy, for e.g., when we engage in form-focused teaching. In the teaching of literary pieces, too, ICT can be of great use. While analyzing some specific aspects of a drama or novel the teacher can mix her lectures with video clippings to drive home the point she may otherwise have to struggle to explain. I remember an occasion when I had to teach Santiago's symbolic significance as a Christ figure in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. The symbol attains maximum impact in the last scenes where a totally exhausted Santiago walks uphill towards his shack with the heavy mast on his shoulders and stumbling several times. I had read the American critic Carlos Baker's insightful comparison of Santiago's physical and mental suffering with that of Christ. A videoclip of the old man's journey of agony (copied from the film in which Anthony Quinn acted as Santiago) and another clipping showing Christ's staggering walk of suffering to Calvary were used side-by-side and thus the symbolic significance of the former's suffering was made graphically vivid. The learning outcome, as I could read it from my students' faces, was a clearer understanding of the Christian symbolism in Hemingway's novella. I may not have to use many such clippings in any class and allow ICT to dominate my teaching. I only need to select those items/concepts/situations from a text which have to be highlighted for developing a critical understanding of the text under scrutiny.

Another instance that comes to my mind is the teaching of Sylvia Plath's poem "Daddy". Somehow students have a special liking for the

poem, for they want to know why this speaker-girl (Plath herself, to many of them) calls her dad "you bastard". While teaching this poem, I resorted to some PPTs to list the features of Confessional poetry. I did explain many of the stanzas like a traditional teacher (I shall explain in a moment why I did/do that), but the poem also gave me some opportunities to insert certain video clippings from YouTube to vividly underscore some historical horrors like war and the inhuman tortures that helpless Jews suffered in Nazi concentration camps.

As it is well-known, YouTube is one source that can provide us with a wide range of visual and audio-visual materials. They can be used in the classroom for the benefit of our students. Of course, the film versions of many of the novels and dramas we are teaching are available on YouTube. Recently, I have found it all the more useful in teaching poetry. There are the readings of many poems by the poets themselves. There are also the visual representations of the poems we are teaching in class. I have been using them in my PG class, especially when I am teaching poets like Robert Frost. I would like to draw your attention to the reading and visual representations of two poems by Frost—"Mending Wall" and "Birches"—both of which are prescribed for the MA students of Savitribai Pune University. You would easily feel the positive impact of the readings on your class when you show the poet's reading of the poem. Learners would feel the rhythm of poems or the emphasis that needs to be given to certain words. Wherever concepts are likely to create problems of understanding, we may use PPTs punctuated by visual and audio-visual materials. Nowadays, all this can be done easily in class because there is hardly any student who does not have a mobile phone with internet access on it.

Indeed such virtual experiences are academically enriching to our students. However, that should not in any way reduce drastically the role of the teacher as an explicator or a speaker of English. In fact I believe that even in this age of advanced educational technology a considerable amount of teacher talk has its relevance. This is especially true in UG and PG

classes. Teachers teaching in non-urban areas know that, linguistically, they always have to deal with mixed ability classes. In such classes the proficiency of the students in English is not at all uniform; some are fairly fluent in the language while many do not have the minimum level of language competence. The reasons for this lack of competence are many and well known. Considering the limited time available in each term (thanks to the newly-introduced credit system), it is impossible to teach the basics of English at the First or Second year BA/B Sc/B Com. level. So what is feasible is to provide our students maximum opportunity to listen to English (this statement is based purely on personal experience. It may be questioned.). And here teacher talk has a significant role

to play. Listening to a fair amount of English from the teacher every day can enhance learners' receptive and productive skills. As it is established through research, exposure to language is a basic prerequisite for learning it. It is this exposure that most learners miss during their school days in villages.

To sum up, ICT-based teaching has a significant role to play in developing the major skills of language in our students. However, depending entirely on the technology would prove to be de-motivating and sometimes monotonous. Interspersing effective teacher talk with technology would be useful to our students in achieving the language skills they need for communicative purposes, both academic and social..

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A sense of plausibility of teachers in a language classroom (Continued from Page 5)

learning and subtle nuances in performing own assigned functions. A clear perception of purpose and functions of syllabus, various methods, approaches, tasks, procedures and learner effort remains crucial. Various levels of evaluation and teacher beliefs with the theoretical

aspects of language teaching and learning is equally important. The understanding of concept of teaching and various processes can help gaining a sense of plausibility of teachers in language classroom. (word count: 2150).

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Effective Visual Scaffolding for Linguistic and Cognitive Development: A Case for Illustrated Study Materials for Adult Learners

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Abstract

The cognitive principle of the added effect of visuals like pictures for enhanced learning has been at work ever since we had textbooks. But, that is the case of children. This paper tries to explore the possibilities of such scaffolding for low proficiency adult learners at the tertiary level. Of course, at this stage, the usual realistic representations such as photo graphs, portraits or paintings may not be equally productive as in the case of school children. What this paper argues for is scaffolding to the print material in a higher order- cognitively challenging, as well as linguistically supplementing the learning process. This paper argues for supplementing the print text with diagrams, tables, charts, flow charts, jigsaw puzzles which incorporate the content of the text, match making part-whole representations and so on.

The cognitive principle at work behind this pedagogic proposal is that of problem solving. The primordial instinct of human beings (or, rather any living being) for saving oneself from a difficult situation or danger is at work in this case as well. Once these problem solving activities are given as pair and group work, language proficiency in its oral form too can be nurtured in the low-proficiency groups.

Keywords: Low proficiency learners, cognition, scaffolding, adult learners, supplementing

Introduction:

At the present scenario, Technology supports the communicative language teaching in a great pace. Integration of ICT especially YouTube videos, charts, graphs and pictorial representations through projectors gives additional exposure to the learners to understand the content more precisely and classroom activities become more productive. It enables the students learning process faster and gives ample opportunity to access variety of learning sources to improve their knowledge. It is believed that integrating technology in the classroom would definitely bring positive changes not only in the learner's point of view but also in the professional growth of the teachers. Many previous research has proved that Visual Scaffolding Strategy as an effective tool in improving and supplementing the learning process in adult learners. Vygotsky (1978) postulates that support (scaffolding) from a knowledgeable person to a novice is important to acquire knowledge successfully. Thus, scaffold lectures as a strategy to improve the learning of new knowledge, derived from the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky (1978). He believes that Scaffolding can be presented in

many ways for teaching however its success or failure depends highly upon its implementation by practitioners. He also argues that Scaffolding is considered as an important instructional tool because it supports students' learning, helps them understand that they teach to and learn from others, helps them reorganize information in a way that makes sense to them, reduces learning ambiguity, and thus increases growth opportunities (Poorahmadi, 2009).

It is a general notion that students in the class were distracted easily as they have difficulties in focussing the lectures continuously. As M.J Benson opines that learner's interest and aptitude is important. He further says "interest, aptitude and motivations for learning English and the chances of success in foreign language (...) depend to a large extent on the favourable attitude towards English language" (202). Considering the words of Paul Nation, "Language focused instruction occurs when learners direct their attention to language items not for producing or comprehending a particular message, but for gaining knowledge about the item as a part of the language system... it can raise the learner's consciousness or awareness

of particular items so that they are then more readily noticed when they occur in meaning-focused input" (270 - 71). The present culture of the learners are exposed to technologies as it has become a natural part of their life and we need to remember that we can really underplay our role as a teacher, giving only a talk in the class about the text considering their low proficiency in English even in the tertiary level.

Background of the study: Scaffolding can be defined as the effective process by which an adult, a competent person or a peer assists students to perform an assignment beyond their current capability (Hammond, 2002 & Daniels, 2001). Visual Scaffolding followed by classroom discussion on observations can be considered as on the best teaching strategies. It provides the students with better understanding and to have a strong grip of the information that they are about to learn/ learning. Based on the formulation of the problem, the main concern of the researcher is to improve student's learning process.

Objectives of the study:

1. The main objective is to motivate them in the self-learning process and rule out their inhibitions about the second language learning (English) by adapting creative pedagogical practices.
2. The second objective is to motivate them to make an attempt towards their fluency building in the target language(English).
3. The third objective is to improve their competence level in the target language.

Participants: I year batch of B.Com General and BSC Visual Communication and II year BSC Mathematics students. The present paper reports the activities carried out in a week in the above mentioned class room to promote their inquisitiveness in learning the prescribed text in English.

Research Design: The present study has been designed to facilitate the low proficiency learners to improve their fluency by making them to participate in the process of learning. During this activity, students were sent video clippings pertaining to their prescribed text and the respective hand outs related to the video clipping.

Methodology and Data Collection: This is a quasi-experimental study. The researcher used pre-test-post-test designed for collecting the data and observation of the class. Both tests were formed in multiple choices questions and an online survey of their feedback. The observation consisted of the activities which occur during teaching learning process, students' motivation, students' response and participation, their ability to work in group, their enthusiasm and interest, their comprehension on the target language, the problems which were found during teaching and learning process and students' progress in learning after the researcher applied visual scaffolding strategy as a strategy.

Procedure: The class was divided into groups according to the strength. Handouts were distributed to each group and video clippings were shared in the whatsapp group. They were given time to discuss in the class and attempt the questions, puzzles etc. A student from the group represented the group and shared the idea of the clipping, shared her experience pertaining to the text. All the teams were given chance to represent their feedback regarding the clipping / the flashcards / the PPT shown to them.

Time management: Grouping of the students was done prior and necessary instructions were given to the students in the previous class. 30 minutes was given to watch the video and 10 minutes was given for discussion with the group. 10 minutes was allotted for filling the hand outs or representing the group in the class.

Material Used: Mobiles/Whats App with video clippings, handouts, projectors with speakers.

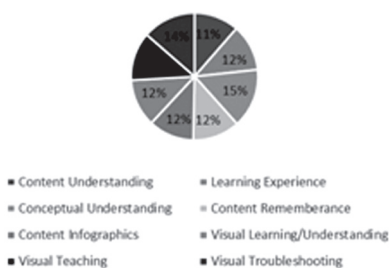
1. Arms and the Man – Act I – by G B Shaw (B.Com Gen A)
2. The Adventures of the Dying Detective – Canon Doyle
3. The Merchant of Venice – The Trial Scene - by William Shakespeare (Video, Handouts and PPT)

Role of teacher: As a facilitator, the researcher observed that during the activity, majority of the students became autonomous learners especially the low proficient learners and started participating actively and took responsibility of their learning and understanding the concept of the prescribed text independently. This activity

resulted in increased classroom interaction and major contribution of inputs came from low proficiency learners in filling the hand outs and sharing the ideas. The students' presentations were observed and a descriptive record of progress was maintained for each student.

Evaluation: The mean score of the pre-test result of the experimental group was 54.8 and the control group was 42.2. The result of post-test of the experimental group was 68 while the control group showed improvisation by scoring 56. Based on the score, it can be seen that the experimental group scored higher than the control group. The researcher also conducted an online survey to review their opinion regarding the strategy. The dimensional analysis proves that the students were able to understand the concepts very clearly than the traditional teaching method.

Dimensional Analysis



Results: It was observed that all the students involved themselves in the activities. In the beginning, few students had fear of ridicule but were reduced at the later stage of the sessions. Many students volunteered to share their experience in the process and were able to use the language without any inhibitions. The process helped the students to refer the materials in order to write the answers and speak. It also motivated the learner to collaborate among

themselves and allowed flexible learning which may help the student to access anytime, anywhere and enabled them to learn at their own pace leading to ownership of their learning.

It was observed that learning takes place when the class room environment is favourable. Lot of meaningful interaction takes place which lead to the student's involvement in the process of comprehension and learning.

The process inspired the curiosity among the students to learn the other lessons in the same process. It also promoted active learning, increased interaction between the teacher and the learners.

The main objective was to make the learners to realize their autonomy for learning which was fulfilled at the end of the process.

Describing the experiences and the learning outcomes achieved students wrote:

'Contents are easily understandable and I am interested to watch and to follow the instructions' – Ms.GomathiShankari, I BSC Viscom.

'Video Clippings helped me to understand the topic in a better way and it helped me to retain information' – Ms.Ridhi Mehta, I BSC Viscom.

'I feel it is the best methodology to make us understand the concept and I never felt bore till the end of the class' - Ms.S.Keerthana, I BCom General

'I could remember the story line from the videos and the PPT. It had left an impact in me that I will remember for a longer period' – Ms. Lakshmi Krishna, II BSC Maths

It was clear from the feedback that the visualscaffolding strategy helped not only the low proficiency learners to improve their vocabulary and interpersonal skills but also the other learner for better understanding of the text. It is evident from the feedback given by the students that these activities gave them an opportunity to improve their critical, creative, logical, analytical skills.

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Motivating Learners for Better Participation in the Classroom

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Abstract

Motivation is essentially the force that drives one to act. This force can come from within or from an outside force. McDonough (2007) describes motivation as a “property of the learner” which can also come from a coach or a teacher. Regarding the learners, it is crucial to understand the importance of motivation for kids in the classroom. Motivation plays a key role in a student’s life. It has several effects on student’s learning and behavior. Motivation will increase student’s time on task and is also an important factor affecting their learning and achievement. Also, motivation enhances cognitive processing. The grading system used in most schools further discourage the learners from self-directed learning that is born out of enjoyment of the process and passion for the subject matter. This paper emphasizes on the significance of activity-oriented language classrooms for specifying readiness of learners to communicate.

A normal human child begins to use language to fulfill his or her physical needs. It may not be any language at all, but a long cry. The motivation here is to get others to do what the child wants. This is the basic level of communication. This comes from the natural desire to communicate. As the child grows and listens to communication through language, he/she acquires the ability to use it automatically. When we start to learn our first language, the necessity to understand what others are saying and make others understand our meaning is the motivating factor. There happens the learning of first language. Here motivation plays a significant factor. But when we concentrate upon second language learning, we can’t assume this natural motivation. There we have to look into other aspects of human behaviour to understand what will drive a learner towards learning another language.

Student Motivation

Student motivation naturally has to do with student’s desire for participation in the learning process. But it also concerns the reasons or goals that underline their involvement or non-involvement in academic activities. Although students may be equally motivated to perform a task, the sources of their motivation may differ.

A student who is intrinsically motivated undertakes an activity “for its own sake, for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permits,

or the feelings of accomplishment it evokes”. An extrinsically motivated student performs “in order to obtain some reward or avoid some punishment external to the activity itself”, such as grades, stickers or teachers’ approval (MarkLepper 1988)

The term ‘Motivation to Learn’ has a slightly different meaning. Motivation is the psychological feature that arouses an organism to action towards a desired goal, the reason for the action, that which gives purpose and direction to behaviour. Children’s home environment shapes the initial constellation of attitudes they develop towards learning. When parents nurture their children’s natural curiosity about the world by welcoming their questions, encouraging exploration and familiarizing them with resources that can enlarge their world, they are giving their children the message that learning is worthwhile and frequently fun and satisfying.

Once children start school, they begin forming beliefs about their school-related successes and failures. The sources to which attribute their successes (commonly effort, ability, luck, level of task difficulty) and failures (often lack of ability or lack of effort) have important implications for how they approach and cope up with learning situations. The beliefs teachers themselves have about teaching and learning and the nature of the expectations they hold for students also exert a powerful

influence. School wide goals, policies and procedures, interaction with classroom climate and practices to affirm or alter students' increasingly complex learning are related to attitudes and beliefs.

Significance of Motivation

As a teacher I think the present education system should concentrate more on the individual talents of the learners than scoring high scores in written exams. But the fact is that most of the teachers are concentrating upon exams and helping to get grades, aiming at a particular level of students. At the same time, the so-called slow learners are totally neglected. Most of the teachers have a predetermined notion that these students are not capable of doing anything. But I am sure that we, teachers have to play a great role in empowering all the learners in the classroom. Gaining the confidence of others is one of the key ways in which a self-confident person finds success. Self-confidence is also very important in language learning. Researches in language teaching have revealed that foreign language learners often seem passive and silent in language classrooms.

It has been generally known that most students faced some problem in learning English as a second or foreign language in non- English-speaking countries. Students mostly prefer translation method in the classrooms, as they can't grasp the ideas in English. It is the duty of teacher to make the learners active in the classroom. Many students face the common problem that although they spent ten- or twelve-years studying English at school, they can't pronounce an English word correctly and they are not confident enough to communicate in English. Many young students learn English only to pass examinations, when in reality, they need to be able to communicate in English. Wealthy families can afford to send their children to expensive centers with foreign teachers, but most students are still afraid to learn English. It is the duty of the teachers to make them friendly with English as the second language. Some students understand English grammar very well, and even score high marks in examinations, but their communication skills are very poor and they are often too shy to even

attempt to strike up a conversation. They are afraid that if they make a mistake other will laugh at them. So, they try to avoid speaking English in front of others.

Learning Theories

The different learning theories, behaviouristic, cognitive and humanistic theories stress different aspects in learning. Behaviouristic stresses the meaning of positive and negative reinforcement and repetition, cognitive theories stress the mental organization of knowledge such as memory, information processing and problem solving (Schunk, 2000) and humanistic approaches focus on human worth and individuality (Lefrancois, 1997). When learning languages, a student utilizes something of all these theories, rehearsing grammatical matters and the structure of the language or communication in another language. A language is used in communication with other people, also the cultural matters and human nature in general have to be taken into consideration. The student gathers information on all aspects of human language use and creates the language skills meaningful for his/her purposes.

Motivation in Language Learning

Motivation is defined as the act or an instance of motivating, or providing with a reason to act in a certain way (Dictionary.com). Motivation is one of the important aspects of second language acquisition. It is a kind of desire of learning. It is very difficult to teach a second language in a learning environment if the learner does not have a desire to learn language. Motivation has several effects on students learning and behaviour. First, motivation directs behaviour towards particular goals. It will increase student's time on task and is also an achievement factor affecting their learning and achievement. Motivation enhances cognitive processing. The motivation holds the following characteristics.

- Motivation is personal and psychological concept.
- Motivation is a continuous process.
- Motivation is goal oriented.
- Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation.
- Positive and negative motivation.
- Motivation is behaviour oriented

Motivation, ability and environment are the major influences over students' performance.



Learners who have higher level of ability and motivation will do better than the learners with lower level. Those learners are goal oriented and more attentive towards language learning. They are eager to know about different materials and highly motivated to participate in language learning. Both are related with formal and informal language learning context. Formal language learning happens through realization of language in classroom and informal language learning is learning through experience from everyday life, like learning from radio or television. Ability and motivation both are involved in formal learning context. In the informal context motivation would be more involved than ability. Educational setting and cultural context both are related to motivation but are not applicable for ability.

The Learner Performance in Usual Situation

English Language is the instrument of communication in most of the institutions as well as the official language of the country. Therefore primary, secondary and higher secondary school students need effective English language to perform better. However, it is disheartening to note that most of the students are simply becoming passive listeners in the classroom. They are not having enough confidence to be active in the classroom. This cannot be the case of all students. There are some students who excel. But it is the duty of a teacher to concentrate on each and every student with enough care and support. In the present context, where children undergo a lot of mental and emotional conflicts, teacher can be a mentor which has got a great significance. Most of the students are shy and not brave enough to present their views in front of the class. Here comes the role of a teacher as facilitator who co-ordinates various opportunities of students to gain knowledge.

In reality, school is a second home for the child and teachers are the members of his/her family. Every child does not receive love, consideration, security, appreciation and recognition at home. The responsibility of a teacher becomes complete

only when he/she realizes this and is able to express their feelings accordingly to each child. The students normally are eager to get actualized their potential and talent. When a teacher becomes a co-guardian, children get guidance, advice, support and opportunity to improve.

Expected Performance from the Learners

Every child is born with the natural ability to learn from the surroundings through sense organs. Acquired knowledge, ability and interest may vary from learner to learner. Hence it is essential to design learning experiences which take into account individual differences.

A learner-friendly environment conducive to the development of the learner should be provided. The classroom should be arranged keeping in mind the interest of the learner. This will ensure his/her participation in the learning activities. Through the learner-centered activities the learners will get enough support and encouragement to be a part of the classroom activities. The students are expected to involve all the learning processes not only inside but outside the four walls of the classroom. Learning becomes more effective through co-operative learning. This will motivate the learners for active participation by communicating in target language. They will be least bothered about their mistakes and without any inhibition they would try to expose themselves to the optimum.

Activities that can be Implemented in Classrooms

Let the teacher handle thirty classes for the students. In every week the teacher can deal 5 classes targeting each and every learner in the classroom. Various activities implemented in the classroom will help the learners to excel themselves. At the end of every week the teacher should find time to assess the learners on the basis of their performance in the class room. Like this, after six weeks the teacher will be able to make clear that the learners improved much, by their active participation in the classroom learning process, through enough motivating activities.

Let the schedule of the class be as follows.

Sl.No	Week	No. of Classes
1	Ist	5
2	IInd	5
3	IIIrd	5
4	IVth	5
5	Vth	5
6	VIth	5
	Total	30

Skills and Sub Skills Addressed

Skill: - Through this strategy, the teacher intends to motivate learners to communicate actively in the classroom.

Subskills:

1. Pronunciation and intonation in speaking
2. Recognition of connected speech and understanding the gist by listening.

Related Studies

The topic 'Motivation' has been studied by many psychologists. The most important thing to consider is that there are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic motivation refers to motivation that derives from an inherent interest in the learning tasks, while extrinsic motivation refers to the external influence that affect the strength of learner's motivation such as that which comes from teachers and parents.

Mark.D. Granito conducted an experimental study on the impact of technology on a student's motivation to learn new information and retain the said information. The procedure involved the completion of two projects over the course of a nine-week study. One group was to create traditional story book projects. A second group was to complete computers-based projects. A third group was given the choice of which project to complete. A pre-post retention test, Likert scale surveys, and post project interviews were used to collect the data. The results of this study support the idea that when given the choice of project, students retain knowledge no matter which project is chosen traditional or

computer-based.

Wynne Harlen and Ruth Deakin Crick conducted a study presenting the procedures and findings of a systematic review of research on the impact of testing on student's motivation for learning. The review was undertaken to provide evidence in relation to claims that on the one hand, testing raises standards and on the other hand that testing particularly in high stakes, contexts has a negative impact on motivation for learning that militates against preparation for lifelong learning. Motivation is considered as a complex concept, closely aligned with 'the will to learn' and encompassing self-esteem, self-efficiency, effort, self-regulation, lows of control and goal orientation. The paper describes the systematic methodology of the review and sets out evidence base for the findings; which serve to substantiate the concern about the impact of summative assessment on motivation for learning. Implications for policy and practice are drawn from the findings.

Anne Ritta Vanhala (2008) conducted a project work to create a hand book of good practices for teaching which could be used in language teaching. The investigator was able to gather a set-of exercises but also realized that what kind of consequences those tasks have and how much can be affected on motivation and the good atmosphere in the class by selecting right kind of exercises.

Summary of the article by Center on Education Policy (2012) says that motivation is the central part of a student's educational experience from pre-school onwards but it has received scant attention amid an education reform agenda focused mainly on accountability, standards and tests, teacher quality and school management. The summary report by the Center on Education policy (CEP) pulls together findings from a wide array of studies on student motivation by scholars in a range of disciplines as well as lessons from programs around the country intended to increase motivation.

Details of the Class to be Handled week 1

During the first week of the class, concentrate upon arousing general interest of learners towards classroom atmosphere. Some of the

learners may be found passive in the class. The liberty to plan and implement activities to supplement his/her own activities so as to enable the learners achieve the best learning outcomes, is up to the teacher. Building rapport with students will help them to get motivated towards learning process. In the first week of the class concentrate more on listening activities. Feeling free to express themselves, will encourage the students to be engaged in the classroom. Even the passive listeners of the class will become active in student teacher interaction. They will be convinced that they can feel safe to participate and share their opinions and comments without ridicule. Different interesting topics can be given groupwise and pairwise and it will ensure that everyone is an active participant in the discussion. Topics given can be films they have seen, place of women in the present society, significance of uniforms in schools etc.

Week 2

During the second week of the class, the students will become more friendly and confident, compared to the first week. But we can't say that they were completely free from their inhibitions. Based on the group/pair discussion done in the previous classes, the learners can be asked to present their consolidated versions in front of the class. The teacher can ask the group leaders to prepare a chart showing the names of the students who presented their consolidation mentioning the date of their presentation. It will be greatly encouraging for the learners. This will motivate them much for further participation. The teacher can make them convince that the perfection of presentation is least bothered. At the same time, the willingness for participation is greatly appreciated.

Week 3

During the third week of the class, the group can be changed, so that the students get enough chance to mingle with all the students in the class. The teacher can ask the boys to prepare a seminar papers on "sport and Games, as a part of school education". Girls can be given with the topic "Women Empowerment". Enough time must be given for discussion and for

preparing points on their topic. Group leaders must be assigned to collect points from each member of the group. After collecting points from all the group members, time should be allotted for them for preparing a seminar paper. The students, during their discussions must be allowed to clarify their doubts, in order to make their presentation the best.

Week 4

During the fourth week of the week, club activities can be highlighted. In most of the school there will be English literary club, implementing various activities, like drama, skit, club magazines, charity programs etc. English club members can be assigned with the duty of encouraging and supporting other students to participate in all the activities in the classroom. Let them be given with a set of students under their leadership for giving necessary help and guidance in delivering a presentation or participating in a drama/skit etc. In a way this can be called as peer-teaching. The students can ensure a positive relationship with themselves and also with the teacher. They must not feel get bored during the activities implemented in the classroom. While teaching poetry, showing the video of the recitation and discussing the poetic devices within the lyrics instead of just reading poems will arouse the students' interest much.

Week 5

During the Vth week of the class the students can be given options in the classroom. Let the students be asked to select their pair so that they can feel comfortable for further activities in the classroom. Any area from the textbook can be selected. (one-act play, speech, interview). For example, 'The Hour of Truth' by Percival Wilde. As the learning outcome, the students can be asked to find out the crucial role of dialogues in the play. The teacher involves each student for answering the comprehension questions and grasps the thematic sense of the one-act play. After going through the whole one-act play, the students can be instructed to render the dialogues in the drama effectively doing justice to the emotion involved. The students should be given enough support to participate

in reader's theatre and to render dialogues with emotion.

Week 6

During the 6th week there will be a great difference in the attitude of the learners towards classroom activities. The teacher doesn't have to strain much to make the learners participate in the activities. They will be much relaxed and confident. Timely feedback must be done at each stage of the class. Previous classes would have helped them a lot to empower themselves for self-directed learning. By connecting the material to real-world experience, their in-class activities will deepen their understanding of the material and will allow the students to see the value of what they are learning. The classroom conditions will support the learners to develop positivity towards English language learning. Group discussions, pair discussion, peer-teaching, peer-assessment, presentation, role-play etc. can be implemented with wholehearted participation from the learners.

Conclusion

Enough motivation will help to make the learners a major part of classroom teaching-learning process. Language use is for communication

and learning language required a lot of student's activation to get successful results. Students ought to be active in classrooms. But the teachers have to play a significant role. A right kind of attitude enhances the facilitation of one's own learning. The students should utilize the favourable conditions in the classroom and must get inspired towards learning atmosphere. A teacher also has challenges. In addition to the active students there are always students who are not at all motivated. I can't say that motivating adult students is not even possible within a short span of time but I am sure that situational motivation can be affected, which is one step forward in learning. Motivation works when there happens student-teacher interaction, learning environment, peer practices and positive attitude towards learning. The teacher plays a central role in enhancing learning by making it attractive. Creating a positive learning environment enhances learning and each session should include activities which give the students enough responsibility and freedom. The suggested methods are peer assisted learning, problem-based learning and dialogue pedagogy as they are the most effective methods in language learning

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Women in India Suffer Marginalization due to Patriarchy

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Introduction: Patriarchal Marginalization

Women in India suffer double marginalization. Not only in the past, even today women are pushed to the edges of the margins and their cries are never heard. Especially, women belonging to the subaltern category are marginalized and are ill-treated just because they belong to the lower caste in society. India Today web desk, dating May 29, 2019, published a news article of a 14-year-old Dalit girl who was raped and burnt while her parents were away and the police are yet to arrest the accused.

A 14-year-old Dalit girl was raped and burnt to death in Uttar Pradesh. The police are yet to make any arrests although seven accused have been booked in the case. She was gang-raped by a group of men. According to the report, the father has alleged that the girl was raped and murdered but the police are trying to make it look like an accidental death. He also argued that the room had no electronic items or anything inflammable, how could there be an accidental fire. The family, on the other hand, says they do not know if their daughter was targeted because of her caste, but all that they pray for is justice. (India Today Web Desk, 2019).

This very incident prompted me to write this chapter. Women suffered owing to patriarchy and discrimination for ages. They have still been suffering and there is no end to this. Adding on to this, they are also being doubly marginalized because of their caste and gender. Marginalization 'is a slippery and a multilayered concept. Whole society can be marginalized at the global level while classes and communities can be marginalized from dominant social order. Similarly, ethnic groups, families or individuals can be marginalized within localities' (Vidal, Constanzo, & Lois, 2004, p. 401). According to the Oxford Dictionary, Marginalization is the 'Treatment of a person, group, or concept as insignificant or peripheral' (Marginalization | Definition of marginalization in English by Oxford Dictionaries). We can cite for example, marginalization of black people in the 19th

century. The different marginalized groups are, people belonging to scheduled caste (Dalit), scheduled tribe, women, children, sexual minorities, elderly people and people with disabilities. Among these marginalized groups, women are pushed to the periphery within their locality or community because of their caste and gender, thus doubly marginalized. Caste discrimination is very common among the subaltern groups and gender based marginalization is due to patriarchy which holds the upper-hand.

Caste and Gender:

Patriarchy is 'historical development of power defined by sexual difference.' (Boehmer, 2004, p.22) Mahasweta Devi's famous work '*Breast Stories*' was published in the year 1997 was originally written in Bengali and translated to English by the renowned critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Through her short stories, she describes how Indian Dalit women are marginalized due to patriarchy. Adding on to this she also describes how they suffer caste discrimination. The book *Sociology of Gender: The challenge of feminist social knowledge*, edited by Sharmila Rege, gives the dictionary definition of patriarchy as, '...patriarchy commonly cite the principle of the domination of senior males over juniors, male as well as a female in the family, tribe or nation, allied with the reckoning of descent in the male-line' (Rege, 2003, p. 89). Caste discrimination plays its role when the 'higher caste considers themselves to be superior than lower caste to meet the conditions of superiority' (Borooah, Sabharwal, Diwakar, Mishra, & Naik, 2015, p. xxxii).

Subaltern

Women who suffer double marginalization due to patriarchy and discrimination belong to the subaltern group. Spivak's significant essay on the subaltern's voices gives a clear idea about the actual condition of the subaltern group in India. The agenda of postcolonial studies has been to foreground the voice of the oppressed and to create conditions, at least within the academic institutions, so that the people subjugated by

the colonialism can be heard. Spivak's ethical intervention is most associated with her work with the subaltern. Her name is today most widely associated with the highly influential essay titled, "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" which was first published in the year 1985 in a journal called *Wedge*. The concept of subaltern does not originate in her writings. The original meaning of the term subaltern was a junior ranking military officer. This word subaltern is very much prevalent within the military even today. In the field of critical theory, the term can be traced back to the writings of the early 20th century Italian intellectual Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). A very prominent Marxist intellectual and theoretician used the word 'Subaltern' to signify a division of people who were considered inferior to the hegemonic group or class. Hegemony is a mode of existing authority. The ways in which authority can be established and is asserted is through brutal physical violence. Postcolonial India had been characterized by the hegemony of the middle-class, where the middle-class has been able to convince the entire national population that whatever serves their interests is also the interest of the nation.

Subaltern studies group: Can the subaltern speak?

Subaltern studies group is a group of influential South Asian historians who formed the collective in the 1980s. They were primarily studying the postcolonial societies, postcolonial India and postcolonial South Asia. One of the leading figures of this group was historian Ranajit Guha. His essay '*On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India*' gives us an account of how the group was using the word 'subaltern.' In his essay, Guha presents the term 'Subaltern' in an oppositional relation to the term 'Elite'. Subaltern according to Guha is all those people within a society, who do not fall under the category of elite, i.e., 'the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as the 'elite' (Guha, 1988, p. 44). The term subaltern represents a negative position of disempowerment and resistance without recognition. Spivak recognizes the attributes of the subaltern as a group that is unable to voice against the patriarchy. The answer to the

question 'can the subaltern speak?' is 'no', 'The subaltern cannot speak' (Nelson & Grossberg, p. 104). This is not to say that actual speaking is impossible from within the subaltern position, but it is to say that their voice never gets accepted in society. If the subaltern is a poor, black and illiterate female, her position is even more pathetic. As Spivak says, 'The subaltern as a female cannot be heard or read' (Nelson & Grossberg, p. 104.). Rather than saying that the subaltern cannot speak, it is more apt to say that society does not hear the voice of the subaltern. Both the statements 'subaltern cannot speak' and 'subaltern cannot be heard' conveys the fact that they can't be heard or speak because they belong to the subaltern group. Mahasweta Devi's famous short story *Draupadi* explores the hardships of a 'tribal woman' (De, 2018, p. xiv) who is exposed to various physical tortures. These tribal women happen to fall under the category of Scheduled Tribe and they are 'victimized, invisible and mute' (De, 2018, p. xiv). They are considered to be the reservoirs of culture. The culture differs from each tribe in terms of language, religion, festivals and so on. It appears to be that they are enjoying their culture and tradition. But they experience the darker side, where they are marginalized based on their caste and gender.

Breast stories: *Draupadi*

Mahasweta Devi, a well-known Bengali writer, and a social activist represent the shocking realities that Indian women go through. "*Breast Stories*" is one of her remarkable works that highlights the plight of women in India. On one hand, she is treated and worshipped as a God and on the other, she's suppressed, silenced and is denied of her voice. This book has three different stories but has one common theme, which is the unheard voice of the subaltern women. The three stories are, *Draupadi*, *Breast-giver* and *Behind the Bodice*. *Draupadi* describes the life of a poor, illiterate, tribal Dalit woman who is doubly marginalized in terms of caste, and gender. She is oppressed in different forms by the male-dominated society. This refers to the upper-hand of the patriarchy over the innocents. These poor, tribal, Dalit women do not have a decent identity in society. The socio-political

and sexual oppression of Dalit women in tribal areas is documented in this play. Devi's short story 'Draupadi' explores how a tribal woman is put through third-degree sexual violence and how she acquired the strength to fight against them. The way she voices back puts them all in shame. She voices against the men who raped her. Though the story parallels with the original Indian myth Mahabharata, the ending differs here. Dopdi is repeatedly raped by a group of men throughout the night. She didn't know how many raped her. She was mutilated, her breasts were bitten, nipples tore and her vagina is bleeding. In the morning, she was clothed but she tore them off and stood naked and wounded before the man who ordered to rape her and voiced against him. She pushed him with her wounded breast and the man was afraid to stand before her.

'Draupadi wipes the blood on her palm and says in a voice that is as terrifying, sky-splitting and sharp as her ululation, what's the use of clothes? You can strip me, but how can you clothe me again? Are you a man?' (Spivak p.196)

Discussion and conclusion

The way Dopdi questioned makes the readers think that the subaltern does have a voice. But actually, they don't. It doesn't mean the physical act of speaking, but her unheard, muted

voice. The reasons are; firstly she is a woman, secondly, she belongs to an untouchable, tribal category. Even though she gains the courage to speak, there is no point, because her voice is muted by the society. Such is the condition of women belonging to the tribal category. The 'discrimination, humiliation, tortures, harassment' (De, 2018, p. xv) she undergoes is endless. She has to put up with the drunkard husband and unsatisfied masters under whom they work. If she is a rape victim, she is looked upon as a 'whore' by society. This shatters her whole life as she is in the compulsion of raising her children in dignity. Concerning patriarchy, it 'makes and remakes the female body for its own consumption' (De, 2018, p. xvii). The body of women is used by the dominant as a 'lust-quenching commodity' (De, 2018, p. xviii). Women are being raped and murdered every day, but justice remains a question mark. This is because a woman's body is viewed as an object which a man uses for his own needs. We live in a country where a woman is worshipped as a Goddess and used as a commodity at the same time. People go to the temple to worship the Goddess and end of the day a woman gets raped inside the same temple. This can come to an end only when patriarchy subsides and when caste discrimination terminates.

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Signposts for Researchers in ELT.3

<https://www.myenglishpages.com/blog/best-elt-books/>

Best ELT Books – What teachers need for their professional development

By Mohammed Rhalmi • Published June 8, 2017 • Updated June 19, 2018

1. An A-Z of ELT by Scott Thornbury This is a fully cross-referenced, alphabetical ELT resource that defines and explains essential language concepts and terminology from fields including grammar, linguistics, discourse analysis, phonology, and much more...
2. Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching by Richards, J C; Rodgers, T S. A popular book! Richards and Rodgers survey both major and alternative approaches and methods. A must read book!
3. Principles of Language Learning and Teaching by Douglas Brown The book provides a comprehensive overview of the theoretical framework that has shaped language teaching.
4. Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy by H. D Brown and Heekyeong Lee This book offers a comprehensive survey of practical language teaching options firmly anchored in current research on second language acquisition and pedagogy.
5. Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices by H. Douglas Brown and Priyanvada Abeywickrama Thus book provides teachers with a clear presentation of the essentials for assessing second language learning fairly and effectively
6. Learning teaching by Jim Scrivener This is one of the best ELT resources. It is a fantastic teaching textbook for initial training courses, and also an essential handbook for practising ELT teachers.
7. Practice of English Language Teaching (with DVD) by Jeremy Harmer is a must read ELT book. It covers practically all the topics related to English language teaching.
8. Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language by M. Celce-Murcia, D M. Brinton, MA Snow & D Bohlke This is a comprehensive ELT resource, that provide both new and experienced ESL/ELT teachers the theoretical background and practical applications they need to decide which approaches, materials, and resources can and should be used in their classrooms.
9. A Course in English Language Teaching by Penny Ur A comprehensive resource for ELT teachers that introduces various English language teaching topics.
10. Planning Lessons and Courses: by Tessa Woodward As a practical guide, this book deals with the kinds of everyday questions working teachers face as they plan lessons and courses. The book not only highlights some relevant issues about teaching English but also includes an analysis of the issue under discussion, as well as practical principles and sample activities.
11. How to teach English (with DVD) by Jeremy Harmer It focuses on practical issues. It is an appropriate resource for self-study, the book looks at specific practical teaching methods, particularly in relation to the four skills, as well as offering ideas on textbook use, lesson planning and coping with the unpredictable events in the classroom.
12. How to teach grammar by Scott Thornbury This book describes methods for presenting and practicing a variety of grammar points. It also covers a wide range of other related topics, such as dealing with errors, and integrating grammar instruction into general methodologies such as task-based learning.
13. How to teach vocabulary by Scot Thornbury A very inspiring book about teaching vocabulary that is both accessible and content-rich.
14. How to teach writing by Jeremy Harmer This book contains an uncomplicated analysis of the nature of writing, particularly in terms of process, product, and genre.
15. Five-Minute Activities: by Penny Ur and Andrew Wright Five-Minute Activities is a collection of over 100 ideas for the foreign language classroom. It is an invaluable source of ideas for language teachers that provides short activities for the language classroom.

Parenting

Questioning the Answers: Educating Children the Natural Way.

Dhanya Bhaskaran

Education Product Manager, Macmillan Education India, Kochi

Since schools remain closed indefinitely, parents get overburdened with the additional duties of teachers—keeping children constantly in touch with their studies. At school there is a highly complex but effective mechanism which consists of bells, timetable, attendance and so on. On the other side a big or small army of teachers is there; naturally discipline has already been taken care of.

At home the situation is quite different. If there are two or more children, the 'law and order situation' goes beyond the established power of parents or grandparents. When it comes to getting them to studying, most of the parents do not possess the art, science, craft and mechanisms of teaching. From last March onwards, almost all parents might have been dreaming of a fully fear-free, post-Covid reopening of schools. But when I write this piece in the last week of June, there is no light seen at the other end of the tunnel. What can be done with children, for children and by children at home, even if e-learning and teaching take care of the academic part of our children?

One small activity which any literate parent can do for getting engaged in indirect learning is a role reversal. All these days, their teachers have been asking them questions, and they have been forced to answer them. During the remaining part of the 'enforced vacation', let children ask questions and let parents (on behalf of teachers) answer them. But, this time you must pretend to know almost nothing of the topic,

and most of your answers must be wrong. Let them correct your answers. Occasionally you may answer correctly (for the relief of the temporary 'teacher'). If the children are below ten, there is no harm in being a little idiotic too while answering their questions.

Let children begin with a test in General Knowledge.

Your child's question: "How many planets are there in the solar system?"

Your answer: "Nine".

"Oh, No. Only eight"

"Why? We were taught at school that there are nine."

"Gone are those days. Now only eight."

"Why? Why?"

"Pluto is out. The fellow is no more in the list of planets."

"Poor guy! Why was Pluto sent out?"

"Pluto doesn't qualify all the requirements to be a planet. Earlier scientists made a mistake. A few years ago it was corrected."

"By the way, may we know what the qualifications are for becoming a planet?"

Here, if your child (whatever age or class) is not able to answer the question satisfactorily, it doesn't matter at all. What is more important is that now your child is aware of the fact that it is his or her duty to find out the reason for this 'punishment' (sending out of the class)! Go to the Google along with your child(ren), and then you too get educated.

Why is Pluto no longer a planet?

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) downgraded the status of Pluto to that of a dwarf planet because it did not meet the three criteria the IAU uses to define a full-sized planet. Essentially Pluto meets all the criteria except one—it "has not cleared its neighbouring region of other objects."

In August 2006 the International Astronomical Union (IAU) downgraded the status of Pluto to that of "dwarf planet." This means that from now on only the rocky worlds of the inner Solar System and the gas giants of the outer system will be designated as planets. The "inner Solar System" is the region of space that is smaller than the radius of Jupiter's orbit around the sun. It contains the asteroid belt as well as the terrestrial planets, Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars. The "gas giants" of course are Jupiter, Saturn, Neptune, and Uranus. So now we have eight planets instead of the nine we used to have.

.....Continued on page 51

It works in my classroom

“Vow! Tomorrow is the Quiz Day!”

P.Bhaskaran Nair

The success of any educational programme –of the lowest or highest level—heavily depends on the mutual trust and faith between the teacher and learner. With this emotional back up and bondage, an average teacher in terms of content knowledge can produce extraordinary learners through identifying the learner potentials and channelling them in the right direction at the right time.

Children come to school to work, to take up responsibilities individually and collectively of doing something or other, to show themselves off, to show the world what they are capable of doing and so on. The kernel part of all the above, you may notice, is projecting one's self. Yes, that is what children are.

How to make the best use of this personality trait so that both learning and personality get enhanced simultaneously? Here is a suggestion:

Let there be a quiz session once a week or ten minutes every period, whatever the subject may be. One word/phrase answer- questions will be framed by students themselves by working individually or in small groups. This can be based on the lesson already taught (post-teaching quiz) as well as the lesson to be taught next (pre-teaching quiz). Learners, while working at home, can seek the help of anyone; but the questions will be based exclusively on the contents prescribed.

The next day, the quiz programme is conducted, strictly following the norms of quiz—turn taking and distribution, score allotment etc. Every week, let there be a three member panel of adjudicators for the smooth conduct and decision making. Final settlement of disputes, if any, goes to the teacher. No other role for the teacher for the time being.

Quiz can be made as group work. For example, ten groups of three students each. One student from group A asks the question to group B. If group B fails to answer, the chance goes to Group C. The next turn belongs to group B whether they answered the question or not. Group C has to answer. Scores will be written on the board by the members of the panel of the week.

One meaningful unit of the lesson (one long paragraph or two or three short paragraphs) may be assigned to each group for preparing the questions. Groups may be shuffled frequently so that mixed ability groups will be formed.

The teacher steps in by the end of the session with his or her final remarks. A few best questions and best answers also can be pointed out for encouraging the teams.

Now, read the following passage and the questions that follow. They belong to various difficulty level.

Santosh Trophy is an Indian football tournament in which the states of the country along with some government institutions participate. This is held annually since 1941, under the control of All India Football Federation (AIFF), the sports governing body in India. The trophy is named after the late Maharaja Sir Manmatha Nath Roy Chowdhary of Santosh, now in Bangladesh.

The Santosh Trophy was considered the top domestic championship in India before the first national club league that is the National Football League. Around 31 teams participate which are further divided into groups and are required to qualify the preliminary round to participate in the tournament. Bengal was the first winner of the competition held in 1941. The most successful team is West Bengal with 32 titles.

The advantages of pre-teaching quiz

Learners feel confidence in entering new territories of knowledge on their own, without fear or hesitation. Even those students who composed the most basic questions (which belong to the area of factual and local comprehension) feel self confidence. They come to realize: “Hmm... There is no need of a teacher for anything and everything. I too can manage certain things on my own. Look, here are my questions which I am going to ask tomorrow.”

1. When did Santosh Trophy tournament begin?
2. Who won the trophy in the first tournament?
3. How many teams take part in the tournament every year?

The above-average learners may think like this: “I am going to make a few difficult questions. Nobody is going to answer them tomorrow. My team is going to score the highest.”

1. Which word in the passage tells us that no team outside India participates in the Santosh trophy?
2. Is Santosh trophy still the most important football tournament in India? Which sentence/part of the sentence supports your answer?

The answers of these questions cannot be easily lifted from the passage. They need interpretation and verification skills.

The advantages of post-teaching quiz

All the single word/phrase answer questions which are going to appear in the forthcoming tests and final exam can be elicited from the students and they can be compiled as a question bank for the whole class to use. Answer key can be provided separately. A rough format of administering the quiz follows;

Imagine the unit already taught can be divided

into four chunks; accordingly students are grouped into four. Each group prepares all types of exam questions from the part assigned to them—multiple choice, fill in the blanks, one word answer, matching, Yes/No type, True/False type and so on.

Another way of preparing quiz questions is that each group will be assigned one question type (One word/phrase or Yes/No etc.). Each group has to comb the whole unit for finding questions of the type they have been assigned.

There will be a lot of overlapping; but at the same time nothing important in the unit will be left out.

The role of the quiz master is distributed equally to all in the class. This notion of decentralization goes well with the concept of learner-centredness. Most importantly, learner involvement and engagement are at the best when a unit is preceded and followed by learner-made quiz programmes. Learner autonomy, which is the best desirable aspect of teaching, is at work here.

From the Editor's Desk (Continued from Page 2)

Lev Vygotsky said: “By giving our students practice in talking with others, we give them frames for thinking on their own.” Please notice the two verbs Vygotsky used—talking and thinking. Just by allowing children to ‘talk’ freely or in a problem solving situation, you are promoting the ‘thinking skills’ in them.

Let me conclude by quoting one more great philosopher. “When you want to teach children to think, you begin by treating them seriously when they are little, giving them responsibilities...” Bertrand Russell.

[For a detailed discussion of how these points can be put into practice, please see ‘It works in my classroom’ on the last pages of this issue.]

P. Bhaskaran Nair
Editor

Questioning the Answers: Educating Children the Natural Way. (Continued from Page 49)

What is a Dwarf Planet?

A “dwarf planet,” as defined by the IAU, is a celestial body in direct orbit of the Sun that is massive enough that its shape is controlled by gravitational forces rather than mechanical forces (and is thus ellipsoid in shape), but has not cleared its neighbouring region of other objects.

So, the three criteria of the IAU for a full-sized planet are:

1. It is in orbit around the Sun. 2. It has sufficient mass to assume hydrostatic equilibrium (a nearly round shape).

3. It has “cleared the neighbourhood” around its orbit.

Pluto meets only two of these criteria, losing out on the third. In all the billions of years it has lived there, it has not managed to clear its neighbourhood. You may wonder what that means, “not clearing its neighbouring region of other objects.”

Real education begins here—by questioning the answers.

Signpost for Researchers in ELT.4

1. An Annotated Bibliography of Second Language Acquisition in Adult English Language Learners January 2001 Dora Johnson Abstract

The annotated bibliography is designed to be of help to teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) to an often overlooked population--adult language learners in non-academic settings and adult education programs. And for this group there is typically little research available on second language acquisition (as distinguished from second language learning). This annotated bibliography highlights the journal articles and other documents in the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database and represents what there is and addresses important issues for second language acquisition for adult populations. The documents and journals represent approaches being used by researchers and educators to study adult language learners, including those for whom English is the target language. Twelve references are fully annotated and highlighted. Twenty-two standard references are also included. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (KFT)

2. An Annotated Bibliography on Second Language Acquisition June 1994 Cathie Alderks Abstract

This report summarizes representative literature in second language acquisition and learning. Writings by the major theorists and researchers were abstracted. These writings were categorized by topic: Testing/Evaluation, Feedback, Inter language, General Language Research Issues, Instruction vs. Natural Learning, Acquisition/Order and Acquisition, Personal Factors, Attrition, Strategies and Styles of Learning, Theory, and Computerized Learning. Summaries of the articles are provided. Second language acquisition, Retention, Foreign language, Language. Interlanguage,

3. Annotated Bibliography of Research in the Teaching of English Richard

Beach, Peggy DeLapp, Deborah Dillon, Lee Galda, Timothy Lensmire, Lauren Liang, David O'Brien The Literary Education Program, University of Minnesota Constance Walker Second Languages and Cultures Program, University of Minnesota Once a year, in the November issue, RTE publishes a selected bibliography of recent research in the teaching of English and related fields. The listing is selective; we make no attempt to include all research that appeared in the period under review. In addition to abstracted studies, beginning with this issue, titles of other related research are also included

Bilingual/Second Language Learning

1. OLIVO, W. (2003). "Quit talking and learn English!": Conflicting language ideologies in an ESL classroom. Anthropology & Education

Quarterly, 34(1), 50-71. Examines the extent to which unequal social relations between minority and majority languages (and their speakers) are reproduced and represented through everyday practices, and the ways in which middle school ESL students are limited in their ability to practice and learn English. "Legitimate" and "illegitimate" forms of talk are identified through a year-long ethnographic study of a classroom, with both teachers and students communicating an implicit classroom ideological separation between talk and work.

2. KAHNI-STEIN, L. D. (2003). Reading in two languages: How attitudes toward home language and beliefs about reading affect the behaviors of "under-prepared" L2 college readers. TESOL Quarterly, 37(1), 35-71. Explores the relationship between first- and second-language reading strategies and affective factors through case studies of four adult immigrant Spanish-speaking women considered academically underprepared for college. Participants' beliefs about reading and mental processes occurring during reading are examined through think-aloud protocols and interviews; comprehension is assessed through retelling and discrete-point measures, and both beliefs and comprehension are examined in relation to reading strategies. Finds that affective factors are critical in reading, and that those bilingual individuals who view their home language as a resource see reading as a process of meaning construction and employ particular strategies when confronted with texts in either language.

3. RUBINSTEIN-AVILA, E. (2003). Facing reality: English language learners in middle school classes. English Education, 35(2), 122-136. e213-228_Nov03RTE 213 10/21/03, 8:57 AM 214 Research in the Teaching of English Volume 38 November 2003 Addresses the often-ignored heterogeneity of immigrant learners, particularly those at the middle school level who may bring various language, literacy, and schooling experiences with them into the school setting. Explores the particular characteristics of middle school structure and the lack of preparation by teachers to meet the needs of English language learners of this age. Discusses best instructional practices.

4. FRANCIS, N. (2002). Literacy, second language learning, and the development of metalinguistic awareness: A study of bilingual children's perceptions of focus on form. Linguistics and Education, 13(3), 373-404. Analyzes 45 elementary Mexican bilingual (Spanish and Náhuat) children's editing and correction strategies and metalinguistic awareness to determine developmental tendencies across the elementary grades