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Lokaratna is the e-journal of the Folklore Foundation, Bhubaneswar. *Lokaratna* is a peer-reviewed International journal with ISSN: 2347-6427.The purpose of the journal is to explore the rich cultural tradition of India for a wider readership. Any scholar across the globe interested to contribute on any aspect of folklore is welcome. This volume represents the articles on culture, folklore, education, and language pedagogy.

Folklore Foundation

Lokaratna is the official journal of the Folklore Foundation, located in
Bhubaneswar, Orissa. Lokaratna is a peer-reviewed academic journal in English.

The objectives of the journal are:

- To invite scholars to contribute research papers on any aspect of folklore, literature, socio-political issues, linguistics and language teaching in English. They should be based on the theory and research methodologies widely adopted in the areas concerned, and on empirical studies with substantial field work.
- To publish seminal articles written by senior scholars on Folklores, making them available from the original sources. It would help present lives of folklorists, outlining their substantial contribution to existing resources.
- To publish book reviews, field work reports, descriptions of research projects and announcements for seminars and workshops.
- To present interviews with eminent folklorists and scholars from India and abroad.
- Book Review is made by Folklore Foundation. So new books may be sent to the following address:

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From the Desk of the Editor-in-Chief

The global crisis of Covid 2019 has taken many lives, inspire of the dedicated efforts of Doctors, Nurses, Police and public servants. These heroes have dared to fight the Covid 2019 and have lost their lives while on duty. They lost their lives, and their families lost them.

Folklore Foundation Family salutes those Corona Heroes who have considered duty as important and have never been afraid of death.

This volume is dedicated in the memory of these UNSUNG HEROES.

Mahendra Kumar Mishra

5 th August 2020

Editorial

Conflicts of Interests and Harmony of Adjustment

"The deepest source of all calamities in history is misunderstanding. For where we do not understand, we can never be just."

- Rabindranath Tagore

We are passing through a difficult time. We faced the ill- effects of COVID-19. We lost lakhs of our fellow beings. Experts opine that the calamity is the result of degradation of ecological equilibrium. We have been clearing forests mindlessly and making concrete jungles in an uncontrolled fashion, leveling lakes and taming rivers, polluting the air and water by running powerful machines. In addition to all these we fight for supremacy to establish superiority. Even in the difficult times, nations compete with one another to become what Aldous Haxley called "world controllers". Losing basic tenets of humanity, we are ready to sweep out our fellow beings in one go. Uncontrolled science and technology has been helping us in our pursuit to destroy more, gain more and suppress more people. With our reliance on technology and wealth, we forget the real wealth we have as human beings. We don't try to develop the wealth of love, understanding and kindness which teaches us to live in harmony with Nature which make us think - the world as a family. Now time has come to draw the strength from our inner self. Time has come to nourish and spread the knowledge that will bind us all as human race. The ancient knowledge and episodes of history remind us to live a life of harmony and understanding. Time

has come to recall what Rabindranath Tagore said decades ago: **"**And so, too, we must know that the great mind of man is one, working through the many differences which are needed to ensure the full result of fundamental unity**."** Tagore further said: "we must find some meeting ground, where there can be no question of conflicting interests."(73). I must say, *Lokaratna* is just a meagre meeting ground where we exchange ideas on issues of our "human reality**."** The coming together of many creative minds through this platform has resulted in a beautiful intellectual gift in the form of this volume of *Lokaratna*! In spite of several hurdles we have got many good quality articles for this volume. I would like to describe them below. Alice Samson's article titled "Folkore in the Digital Age: Insights and Possibilities for Indian Folklore" deals with the change of focus in folklore research in India. Anand Mahanand's article titled"Oral Traditions in Unwritten Languages in the Face of Digital Technology" discusses the kind of changes that take place in folk performances in the wake of digital technology. Aloka Patel in her article titled **"**'Vyasa's Leftovers': Shifting [Con]texts of Draupadi from Myth to Fiction" explores how the myth of Draupadi has been received and interpreted in different texts at different times. Pradip K. Panda in his article- "The Mimic Men: Ralph Singh, the marginalized Politician" studies aspects of colonial exploitation of the natives of Trinidadas represented by V.S. Naipaul. Prachi Mahima in her article titled "The Inexplicability of Events in the Trial" foregrounds the complex role of events in contributing to the crafting of the text.Deepshikha Das and Bidisha Som in their article titled "Language Learning, Cognitive theory and Multilingualism: A proposal for India" relate cognitive theory to multilingualism and propose how these can be helpful in language education. Padmini Shankar in her article titled "Impact of Teacher Training on Pre-service Teachers' Belief Formation" studies how pre-service teachers' beliefs are affected by teacher training. SudeepthiDandapathi's article "Developing Essay Writing Skills of ESL Learners Using Task Based Language Teaching Approach in AP**"**explores ways of enhancing Essay writing Skills of Students through Task Based Approach. MonalDewle's article "Teaching on How to Achieve Impersonal Tone in Report Writing by Reducing the Use of Personal Pronouns" studies how to give a report an impersonal tone by reducing personal pronouns. Akshay Kumar's article "Language Buddy Scheme' – Bringing equity in Higher Education to Marginalised students in Contemporary India" explores ways of bringing equity in higher education through multilingual approach to language teaching.

Mahananda Pathak's article "Self-assessment at the University Level: An Experiment" proposes self-assessment as a tool to be used for assessing students' learning. Tannistha Dasgupta's article "Emerging Trend in Defining and Assessing Fluency in Second Language Speaking" describes the emerging perspectives that help in defining and assessing fluency in L2 speaking. For the Book-Review section, Anand Mahanand reviews a book titled *Fantasy Fictions from the Bengal Renaissance* by Sanjay Sircar and the second book - *Parijata Harana* written by Prof. Bsavraj Naikar has been reviewed by Dr. Mahendra Kumar Mishra. For the Interview section we have an interview of Professor Mohan Ramanan who was interviewed by Sindhu Menon. Unfortunately, Sindhu left for heavenly abode recently due to a massive heart attack. She would have been happy to see the volume.

We thank the contributors and all the reviewers of the papers. All the articles are well researched and of high standard. It was a wonderful experience interacting with all our contributors and reviewers. We hope that we shall continue to enrich one another through such meaningful interaction and mutual understanding. With this hope and belief we present before you the 13th volume of *Lokaratna!*

Anand Mahanand,

Executive Editor,Lokaratna

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Folklore in the Digital Age: Insights and Possibilities for Indian Folklore

Alice Samson

In the *Journal of Folklore Research* an excerpt from the *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*, byTheodore H.Gaster defines folklore as

... that part of a people's culture which is preserved, consciously or unconsciously, in beliefs and practices, customs and observances of general currency; in myths, legends, and tales of common acceptance; and in arts and crafts which express the temper and genius of a group rather than of an individual. Because it is a repository of popular traditions and an integral element of the popular "climate", folklore serves as a constant source and frame of reference for more formal literature and art; but it is distinct there from in that it is essentially of the people, by the people and, for the people.(258)

With this definition in reference, would the following image then be classified as "folklore?"

The meme references the govt. initiated program "Swacch Bharat Abhiyan" and reactions from the public to media reports of it being a mere photo-op or reports about subversion of the aims of the program by sitting legislators who indulge in cleanliness drives at already clean places like the parliament compound etc. By equating the government initiative to this inconsequential task of cleaning up ones desktop, the meme highlights the banality and inconsequentiality of the initiative for the lives of ordinary folks.

In the contemporary climate of political jokes and commentary on social media apps like Whatsapp, memes have emerged as a prime contender for the status of contemporary folklore. Describing this cultural phenomenon, an article titled "Meme in India" [i] the Hindu Business Line said.

The meme, once defined as a small unit of culture, is an underrated invention of the digital era. Thousands of meme makers in India are turning it into a potent — and, at times, inflammatory — social media language. With a few deft strokes, they get the average Indian clued to social, political and cultural issues, while guffawing at the absurdity of public life

Citing academic research work on the meme, the article adds that "memes use images from popular culture to respond to current affairs as well as contemporary social and political questions". We might add that they also respond to history as a received oral tradition and creatively respond-though not always in a positive trend- to the received story of India's identity. A case in point are the numerous-sometime irreverent- memes about the Mahatma including his role in the moment of Indian Independence.

1.

2.

Gandhi on 14th of August 1947

Uss raat apun do bajay tak piya

3.

"Fuck off or i'll punch you in the throat"
- Mahatma Gandhi
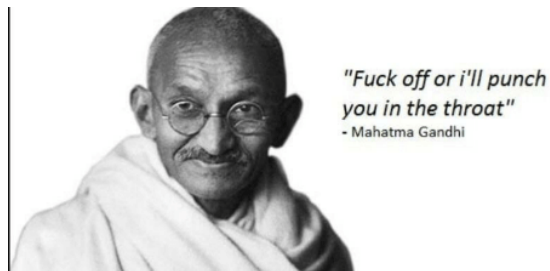
How to: Freedom - 15 August 1947

4.

5.

These are just a few of the numerous tweets, gifs and Face book posts, digital games and virtual reality products created by Internet users and referencing history, politics and various social events. The visual, the vernacular, the collaborative and other key aspects of the folk are preserved in these emergent folk forms and challenge the scholarship and critical paradigms of traditional folklore studies.

Looking at the Internet as a site for the production, circulation and appropriation of folklore today we are immediately faced with some large questions: What do these cultural products portend for the Indian folklorists? How to they provoke a reimaging of definitions of folklore? And what implications do such a rethinking have for the folklore material available to scholars in India?

In short, we can argue that today we need a new critical and multimedial paradigm to accommodate both the omission in folklore scholarship in the past and the emergent digital folklore.

Let me begin with some reflections on definitions, I will then review some of the types of scholarship on folklore and conclude by presenting some possibilities of new critical paradigms for folklore studies in India. In order to understand these general trends in the study of folklore, I will examine them through a history of the study of the popular *Panchatantra* tales. The questions I raise in order to think through these issues are

1. What is Folklore commonly understood to be? How has it been studied?

2. What opportunities are lost in this critical tradition and academic conventions?

3. What possibilities does this open up for emerging born-digital folk content?

1.What is Folklore commonly understood to be? How has it been studied?

Contemporary folklorists engaged in the study of Indian folklore are lucky enough to inherit a vast body of scholarship from both oriental and nationalist schools of folklore as well as other writings concerning these from scholars worldwide. India has always been associated with the folk and fantastic in the world imaginary and folklore studies have the unique advantage of engaging with these delightful fictions intimately.

Types of Scholarship on Folklore in India: A Review of Scholarship on the *Panchatantra*

In Patrick Olivelle's translation of *The Panchatantra* (1997)he says, quoting Franklin Edgerton, "No other collection of stories has become so popular throughout the length and breadth of India. It has been worked over again and again, expanded, abstracted, turned into verse, retold in prose, translated into medieval and modern vernaculars and retranslated into Sanskrit" (ix). Further, Olivelle notes that individual stories of the *Panchatantra* have become part of common folklore transmitted orally from parents to children. Similarly, Olivelle points out that the text has travelled all over the world. There are, Olivelle says, 200 known versions of the *Panchatantra* in over 50 languages.

Study of the Panchatantra by the Orientalists

Johannes Hertel, a German Orientalist scholar, undertook perhaps the first most detailed study of the *Panchatantra* in *Das Pancatantra, seine Geschichteund seine Verbrietung* in 1914. Hertel recorded several different version of the text and himself argued against erasure of the differences among these in the search for an "Ur-Panchatantra" or the master text that was the "original source" for all extant versions. Franklin Edgerton, much against the spirit that inspired Hertel, translating and embarking on exactly such a mission to locate the Ur text produced a three volume "Text, Critical Apparatus, Introduction and Translation" of the Panchatantra titled *The Panchatantra Reconstructed* in 1924. He explicitly states his objective as that of trying to follow the different versions of the Panchatantra listed by Hertel and others to "throw light on the ultimate sources of them all."

Edgerton posits his work as one of "literary genetics" that seeks to identify and "recreate the original" form of a work that had such impact on the world. Edgerton's process involved conducting a minute comparative analysis of the different versions of the *Panchatantra* to identify obvious correspondences that would lead him to a "single literary archetype"; every story, every stanza, every prose line at least in a general sense, the exact language of the original and the order of the original. Edgerton focuses on the following versions: Tantrakhyayika, Southern Pancatantra, Nepalese Pancatantra, Hitopdesa, the versions found in Somdeva'sKathasaritsagara and Ksmendra'sBrhatkathamanjari, the so called "textus simplicior", Purnabhadra and the principal offshoots of the Pehlavi translation to recreate his "Ur Panchatantra".

The *Panchatantra* in the Kavya tradition

A.B Keith begins his *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (1920)by focusing attention on the literary qualities of the Kavya. An understanding of a work like *The Panchatantra* requires, for Keith, an understanding of the Kavya tradition which gave birth to it.

Keith points out that the discussion of migration of fables and other literature is also futile in understanding its literature. No results can be obtained, says Keith, regarding the borrowing of tales. Keith argues that parallelism be admitted in the development of literature and

we investigate the origins of the fairy tales current among people in India. For example he says, "it is instructive to compare the scheme of development of the practice of emboxing tales within tales for India with that suggested by Schissel von Fleschenberg for Greek literature: the simple tale passes through stages illustrated by the *Milesiaka*of Aristedes, the work of Antonious Diogenes, the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, and the romance of Petronius, to the complete outcome in later romance" (xi).

Keith's aim is, he says, with respect to works like the Panchatantra, to sketch a history of the forms it uses such as didactic poetry, the development of the fable and the fairy tale. His attention in the study of these works is restricted to stress on literary form and style. While he seeks commentaries on the form by writers on poetics, he finds that Indian poetics did not develop specialized vocabulary to understand the genre represented by the *Panchatantra*.

The *Panchatantra* in a Nationalist Literary History

Krishna Chaitanya, the author of *A New History of Sanskrit Literature* (1977) claims that some of the world's greatest fables originated in India. Chaitanya engages with fables and tales in order to list out several formal characteristics of the genre. He argues that both the beast-fable and the tale cycles, in their fully developed form show some well marked out characteristics. The most important feature is the use of a frame-story into which the other stories are fitted. We shall find the device freely adopted in later literature, in the *Arabian Nights,* Chaucer's*Canterburry Tales,* Boccacio's *Decameron, the Earthly Paradise of* William Morris*,* in Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn, etc.* The second feature is that the tales get interlocked and emboxed. That is one of the characters in the story may come out with a fresh story to make a point, and a character in his story may also do the same. Thirdly, these stories use both prose and verse, the verse being sometimes original and sometimes apposite quotation. Recapitulatory stanzas are also used,[to sum] up the whole moral at the end of a fable (361).

His overview of the text reads as follows:

We read of the foolish monkey who tried to warm himself by the light of the glow worm and killed the bird who tried to make him see sense…A weaver obtains a flying machine and visits a princess every night , convincing her and her father that he is Vishnu and his vehicle is

Vishnu's Garuda. Later he is in a jam, but Vishnu has to come to his rescue as his own prestige is in danger, since everybody is satisfied that the weaver is Vishnu himself…"(363).

He argues that the stories lead to demonstrate such things as how "the weak checkmate the strong by intelligent stratagem… the lesson that trying to overreach one's station can cause difficulties is taught by an amusing tale in which a sage transforms a mouse into a girl… Occasionally the mood becomes as naughty as in Boccaccio… A balanced life-view emerges from the lively narrative…"(365).

He also provides readers a commentary on the style of the *Panchatantra* terming the style, "simple and idiomatic, the style of the *Panchatantra* is direct, forceful, smooth flowing. Occasional elaborations, multiplying epithet and imagery, reveal the influence of the Kavya manner, but even here the too ornate is avoided…Lyricism is combined with wit, but without the heaviness of the later Kavya manner" (366).

He discounts the differences in versions of the text and his emphasis on the descriptive framework of genre (prose and verse); presence of morals; separation of aesthetic and philosophical aims of the text all continue the tendencies of the Orientalists accounts of the text.

The *Panchatantra* in Colonial India: Literary Experiments, New Vernaculars and Missionary Zeal

Stuart Blackburn in his book *Print, Folklore and Nationalism in Colonial South India* (2003) provides a detailed account of the *Panchatantra* in the British Era in India. In 1850, Blackburn says, Richard Clarke, the Head of The College of Fort St George, asked the Head Tamil Pundit, Tantavaraya Mutaliyar, at the college to write a Tamil prose version of the *Panchatantra* to enable young civil servants to be educated in Tamil language and literature.. Mutaliyar's *Panchatantra*, Balckburn reports, soon found its way into the Madras Presidency's public school curriculum and was hailed as an example of modern Tamil prose. Even when removed from the curriculum towards the end of the 1850s, Blackburn says, it continued to hold sway over the popular imagination and be used in provincial schools. It remained embroiled in curriculum debates during the time when the Vernacular Department of the High School of Madras University was established. By 1850, the tales were also being seen as having

questionable ethics. The missionaries and British civil servants denouncing them some, Blackburn says, even without reading the tales. Glasgow-born missionary John Murdoch, Blackburn tells us, led a personal campaign against the use of Hindu stories in schools in Madras. Blackburn quotes Murdoch's objections to the ethics of the *Panchatantra* in his survey of Tamil printed books

Another most injurious influence exerted by some Hindu tales is, that they virtually inculcate INFLUENCE BY DECEIT [capitals in original]. The lesson has been taught to apt scholars. As a nation, the Hindu glory in the fox-like cunning, with which they so often outwit their bovine European rulers. The conscience of the people will never be right until it is felt that all trickery is bad and despicable. The Pancatantra contains many stories of the objectionable character now mentioned. They should be carefully weeded out of any selection used in schools (136).

Blackburn also points out that even though the *Panchatantra* was only taught after being expurgated and was soon dropped from curricula altogether, throughout the 19th century, it continued to be reissued, reprinted, pirated and imitated in countless editions both official bowdlerised versions and private, complete versions. In his 'Extensions' to the work Blackburn adds to this history of *The Panchatantra* (of TanvtavarayaMutaliyar) saying its influence reached far beyond Madras, beyond India and beyond the colonial period. European influences that made folklore an integral part of nationalist identity were, Blackburn argues, only one phase of an older and continuous circulation that moved back and forth between India and Europe.

2. What opportunities are lost in these critical tradition and academic conventions?

These scholarly traditions of Orientalist, Nationalist, Kavya literature or Missionary/colonial literatures ignore the multimedial dimensions of the *Panchatantra* folklore in sculpture, visual art and various performative traditions.

Samples of Extra-Textual *Panchatantra* Cultures: Image, Music and Performative Traditions

In order to get a rough idea of the availability of extra-textual cultural material citing the *Panchatantra* or closely linked story collections that make it suitable for reconceptualising the cultural history of the *Panchatantra* as a multimedial history, the next three sections will give a brief description of some traditions of visual art, sculptural works and performances based on the *Panchatantra* stories.

Images Depicting *Panchatantra* Stories

The work of archaeologists at sites like the Pattadakal Heritage site in Karnataka, The Mukteswara temple in Orissa and others along with attention to the findings by folklorists have revealed a rich visual tradition of motifs that also appear in *Panchatantra* stories saying. In recent years a number of seals and sealings with real or fabulous animals and birds, Buddhist panels at Bharut have been understood to all indicate assimilation of these motifs into developing religious traditions like Buddhism as well as literary traditions like the *Panchatantra*. An East Indian copy of the Jataka stories, *Karandavyuha,* indicate similar figures showing the wider prevalence of what is identified as the "West Indian" school of painting. Similarly illustrations in several manuscripts of *Panchakyana* a Jain version of the *Panchatantra* from the 15th century or later, give a "jaincolour" (temples become Jinalaya; Jain monks appear in the illustration) to the stories that resemble the ones in the *Panchatantra*. Some illustrated manuscripts of the *Panchakhyana* indicate a 'free-er', folk –like style of the "West Indian" painting tradition. In the Mughal period a number of illustrated versions of the *Kalila-wa-Dimnah, Anwar-e-Suhaili and Iyar-e Danish* texts, inspired from the *Panchatantra* began appearing .The *Panchatantra* was taken to the Persian court of Khusrau 1 in 6 A.D as the Pehlevi *Anwar-e Suhaili* and later formed the basis of the Arabic *Kalila-wa-Dimnah* by Bin al-Muqaffa, later Pehlevi versions (10th, 12, 13th and 15th century by Ibn Husain in Herat) and a later Arabic version titled *Iyar-e Danish* by Abul Fazl at the Mughal court of Akbar in India. *Anwar-e-Suhaili* manuscripts illustrated in Timurid court styles are available to us today. Similarly Akbar founded the Mughal School of painting and recruited a large number of painters to produce illustrated copies of the fables of *Kalila waDimnah*and *Anwar-e-Suhaili*. Since the model texts used in the atelier were illustrated in Timurid styles, they were introduced into the Mughal style of painting. Unsatisfied with the product, Akbar ordered a fresh translation from the Arabic *Kalila-* wa-*Dimnah* by Abul Fazl

titled *Iyar-e-Danish.* Today there are extant illustrated copies of these texts at SOAS and the British Library in London; Sir Chester Betty Collection in Dublin and Bharat Kala Bhavan at the Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. Persian styles of painting adapted the Indian *Panchatantra* motifs to suit the local idiom and later heavily influenced the Mughal renditions. Another body of visual cultures of the *Panchatantra* is represented by paintings of *Panchatantra* stories on material artifacts like vases; cave paintings at Ajanta and in the archaeological sites of Samarkand in Central Asia. The Afrāsiāb wall paintings in Central Asia refer to 7th-century Sogdian murals, discovered in 1965 in the residential part of ancient Samarqand (Samarkand), the most famous cycle of which was found in the so-called "Hall of the Ambassadors".

Sculpture and *the Panchatantra*

Several sculptural renditions of *Panchatantra* stories have been identified in Karnataka, Orissa, Central Asia, and Indonesia. There is today evidence of sculptures based on *Panchatantra* stories at over 16 locations in Karnataka: at Aihole, Alampur, Bagali, Balligave, Begur, Belur, Halebid, Kitttur, Kolar, Kukkanur, Mudhol, Narasamangala, Pattadakkal, Sirival, and Yasale. The most illustrated *Panchatantra* stories at these sites are: Geese and Tortoise; Monkey and Crocodile and Bherunda Birds. Many illustrations, Dr Nagaswamy says are seen as small panels and are depicted along with the narrative sculptures of Ramayana and Mahabharata, which show these 'secular' themes too enjoyed continuous popularity. In addition, there is strong evidence of the existence of sculptural traditions that borrowed from story cycles including the *Panchatantra*.

Image 1: Monkey and Crocodile, Mukteswara Temple Orissa, India

Performative *Panchatantra* Cultures

There are several well known classical dancers of Bharatanatyam (Ananda Shankar Jayant; and Rama and Swetha Bharadvaj); Mohiniattam (Sunanda Nair: Lion and Clever Rabbit); and dance theatre (Shanti Bardhan) who incorporate *Panchatantra* stories into their performances.

Rama Bharadvaj -an acclaimed dancer/choreographer & recipient of the Lester Horton Dance Award - and her daughter Swetha Bharadvaj lead their company of 10 dancers as they transform into forest creatures that narrate the wisdom of life in their production "Panchatantra Animal Fables". The production features original lyrics in 4 Indian languages with narration in English and was last performed at Houston, USA. Similarly many story-tellers like Vayu Naidu, Ramsay Wood and Zaarwar Mistry amongst others have carefully cultivated the art of oral storytelling adapting it to a modern audience. Wood uses stories from *Kalila WA Dimnah* to teach children with special needs. There are at least two vibrant traditions of puppetry which explicitly uses the *Panchatantra* stories; Wayang Tantri and the style represented by artist Gul Ramani's leather puppet shows which is conducted in India and Germany.

Implications of Findings of the *Panchatantra* in Visual Art, Sculpture and Performance

The definitions and concerns of conventional scholarship like the orientalist, nationalist, colonial or literary modes of study concerning folklore limits itself to understanding of the "origins", "moral" and form of folklore in India. This limits and interfere with the expansion of the study of the rich heritage of the folk in India beyond the frozen "...classes and levels of folklore and folk idiom...in folk songs and stories...(and) the level of the literate and literary"(Journal of Folklore Research,260)

Today, fortunately some folklore scholars have embarked on a more adventurous journey through the study of patachitra traditions, dance forms or examination of folk instruments in folk music. However the critical paradigm of the "literary" in the sense of the written continues to dominate the mode of scholarship and scholarly production. In this sense the "freeze" on the multimedial nature of the folk continues in the scholarly study of the folk.

With reference to the critical study of the *Panchatantra* several parallel text traditions in other languages, sculpture, music and dance traditions have been excluded or "frozen" out of the critical paradigm that is print-centric.

The dominance of conventional modes of scholarship and received frameworks of critical study also limit the inclusion of emerging folklore based on the *Panchatantra*. For e.g. the popular story of the Monkey and the Crocodile- where a male crocodile out to get the heart of a monkey on the insistence of his wife is outwitted by him from book four of the *Panchatantra*-inspired this meme called *Madam Crocodile*[ii]playing upon gender stereotypes

Would scholars of folklore have the critical resources to include this new creative production in the repertoire of the *Panchatantra* folklore? As Alan Dundes argues "technology isn't stamping out folklore; rather it is becoming a vital factor in the transmission of folklore and it is providing an exciting source of inspiration for the generation of new folklore" (1980,17).

It is now imperative to expand definitions- of what folklorists in India have been preoccupied with- in order to accommodate newly accessible aspects of folklore in India.

In the *Journal of Folklore Research*, B.A Botkin's definition of folklore from The *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*,highlights the following features

a) There is a preponderance of the handed-down over the learned element

b) The transference of oral tradition to writing and print does not destroy its validity as folklore but rather, while freezing or fixing its form**,** helps to keep it alive and to diffuse it among those to whom it is not native or fundamental.

c) Collective taste and judgement of the many rather than the few is important.

d) Within the realm of the handed-down several **classes and levels of folklore and folk idiom** may be distinguished, and each species or individual item must be judged in relation to its history and function in its own social and cultural setting, since folklore originates and spreads in many different ways and forms.

e)The central core of folklore consists not so much in **folk songs and stories** as in the customs and beliefs along with mass delusions and hallucinations of myths, especially in the presence of the "wonders of the world", and the apocrypha of hero-worship, with its legends of doubtful exploits of historical personages and "untrustworthy traditions of doubtful events

f)as folklore approaches **the level of the literate and literary**, it tends to become more elaborate and self-conscious in expression, to shape about itself a formal tradition with prestige value, and to become absorbed into the mainstream of culture. As it approaches **the level of the illiterate**

and sub literary, folklore constitutes a basic part of our oral culture, in the proverbial folk-say and accumulated mother wit of generations that bind man to man and people into people with traditional phrases and symbols. Folklore thus takes root in the "humble influence of place and kinship," of shared experience and wisdom, and has its flower and fruition in those works of art in which the individual artist succeeds in identifying himself with a folk tradition and giving it universal form and significance. On both levels- folk culture or folk art-folklore derives its integrity and survival value from a direct response to and participation in group experience, and the fusion of the individual and the common sense. B.A Botkin (260)

3. What possibilities does this open up for emerging born-digital folk content?

While inquiring into the prospects for folklore study in India given the emergent folklore material, it could be argued that continuing allegiance to received modes of Colonial/Oriental/nationalist frames of folklore study has a two-fold impact on the study of folklore in India. First, there is a retrospective implication of restrictive study of multimedial folk forms. The rich tradition of folklore produced in almost every instance of an ordinary enchanted life in India- in lullabys, nursery rimes, fire-side tales, in ancient games or merry making or year-end festivities; in the passing down of the family craft of fishing or farming and reading the moon or the wind or domestic activities of sewing or cooking; in teaching another generation on how to skin a sheep or carve a shovel; or simply recalling the experiences and wisdom of the past without reference to book or teacher- has to shed its coherent form comprising gesture-song-image to "freeze" into a written text.

What then happens to the folklore of the "illiterate or subliterary" especially in a country like India where the folklore was produced in stone cravings, scroll paintings, masks, dance, and tune as much as in oral traditions which could be later documented through writing? In addition the new communication system of the Internet and the World Wide Web has had a tremendous influence on expanding the definitions of folklore creation in India.

Trevor J.Blank argues that As the Internet developed as a communications facilitator, folklore emerged as recognizably on it as it did in "the real world." From the earliest moments of the modern Internet's existence, folklore was a central component of the domain, moderating the intersection of computer professionals with hackers, newfangled lingo, and the dispersal of

stories, pranks, and legends (Jennings 1990).2 Bruce McClelland notes that as a result, "the boundary between the actual and the virtual began to become blurred" (182).

Blank argues that the lens of social science, communication, and literature degrees prove inadequate when the folklorist approaches Internet folklore however he proposes this lacunae as offering an "opportunity to rethink folklore's disciplinary givens and to envision a fully contemporary subject"

In this context along with reflection on now accessible non-print folklore in sculpture, painting, or performance we can also ask what happens to the folklore or memes, gifs and tweets and others produced on the Internet?

If we step back from what is conventionally understood as folklore , we can perceive the more general characteristics of folklore, as Botkin's definition above makes clear- to be in its:

a) connection to context(group product a social group),

b) preponderance of handed-down material that is creatively appropriated,

c) encompassing a broad spectrum of form from literary like word and speech to non-literary like image and music

d) above all, being defined by how a particular material is treated rather than what it inherently is

These larger characteristics of defining the folk helps bring both multimedial folk culture "frozen" out of scholarly study in the past and emergent digital folk culture onto the same level as print-based folklore. It however becomes clear that there is today an urgent need for new paradigms of study for the folklore as there is for all cultural production. One interesting paradigm for moving beyond print inspired nationalist or traditional literary models of folklore scholarship is provided by Jaishree Odin in her conceptualisation of the "Net Aesthetic". Odin argues that...As nation-states loosen their hold on the imagination of people in a world of transnational capitalism, the role of information technologies is crucial indeed. These technologies are having a profound impact on our literary as well as artistic practices, creating a

new space that demands its own aesthetic. This new aesthetic, which I term "hypertext" or "Net" aesthetic represents the need to switch from the linear, univocal, closed, authoritative aesthetic involving passive encounters to that of the nonlinear, multivocal, open, non-hierarchical aesthetic involving active encounters... The "centred" or "monadic" subject of the modernist era is thus transformed as the nomadic subject no longer passively contemplates the artist's expression but actively reshapes it.(600)

Under this new aesthetic the very object of study of folklore scholarship e.g. the unitary text, image or performance is reconceptualised as a new, hypertextual, object linked backward to all its different renditions in word, image or sound as well as forward to all future creative appropriations of it. In addition each iteration of this new "text" or every "reading" becomes significant to the scholarship on the text.

Thus, a hypertext reading of the "Monkey and the Crocodile" story would navigate from the print text to parallels in the fables of La Fontaine or Aesop while simultaneously linking to sculptural and image references, like Image 1 above, and move into musical renderings of the story and extend even to the *Madam Crocodile* meme. This ordering can be navigated in numerous different ways and would leave provision for an infinite number of future renderings in image, music or text. Similarly the Gandhi memes, cited in the beginning of this article, would reference back to historical documents, oral histories of partition, visual art and performances on this theme like Manto's play *Toba Tek Singh*, actual quotes from him and even link into future appropriations of the role of the Father of the Nation.

Conclusion

Reimaging the folklore around the *Panchatantra* according to a "Net Aesthetic" would then incorporate the numerous textual traditions, parallel and successive translations, verse and material renderings inspired from its stories and emergent cultural memes from the books of *Panchatantra* within a hypertextual frame inclusive of image-music-text dimensions of the cultural production of these fables. It would also privilege each "reading" as unique and incorporate in its structure the role of each "reader" of this hypertext *Panchatantra* folklore.

Thus, we could argue that, the multimediality of folklore is freed in its reimagination as a new aesthetic and provision for future creative appropriations is made. Folklore then once again begins to function as a mirror for the society and the contexts of its creation and enables folklorists to examine the values and norms it upholds. Additionally, with this new reconceptualised object of study in folklore scholarship, the emergent cultural forms of folklore on the Internet such as memes also gain inclusion into the folklore scholarship in India as it has elsewhere.

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Oral Traditions in Unwritten Languages in the Face of Digital Technology

Anand Mahanand

Abstract

The objective of this paper is to explore tenets of cultural forms of some specific tribes such as the Binjhals of the Western Odisha, Didai, Paraja, Gadaba and Bonda of the Southern Odisha and study how these forms undergo changes in the process of digital technology which toois associated with globalization. These tribes have a rich heritage of oral traditions in the forms of folk dance, songs, folktales and drama in un-written languages of their own and in link languages such as Desia and Kosali/Sambalpuri. These forms are performed and manifested in the dance forms such as Karma,Dhemsa and many songs and folktales traditions. They are primarily part of the rituals performed by the tribal communities. However, with the advent of globalization and in the process of market economy and electronic circulation, they are undergoing changes. The paper discusses what kinds of changes these forms undergo when they are converted from ritual mode to digital and stage mode. Richard Schechner in his book-*Performance Theory* (1988) links rituals to performances and shows how rituals culminate into performances. He affirms: "performances are made believe in play, for fun" (p, XVIII).The focus of the paper is to show what kinds of changes take place when a ritual is turned to a stage performance. Using Schechner's theory of performance it examines the Karma festival of the Binjhals, Dhemsa dance of the tribes of the Southern Odisha and folk songs and folktales of certain tribes of Odisha and shows the changes in the process of transformation

(Key Words: *Rituals, Performance, identity, Karma, Dhemsa, Culture, theatre*.)

Schechner in his above mentioned book *makes* a list of aspects of a form that can undergo change in case of conversion. As shown here some aspects may change into another in case of conversion from ritual to (stage) performance:

Ritual	Performance
• Results	Fun
• Link to an absent other	Only for those present
• Symbolic time	Emphasis now
• Performer possessed	Performer knows what he/she is doing
• Audience Participates	Audience watches
• Audience believes	Audience appreciates
• Criticism discouraged	criticism flourishes
• Collective creativity	Individual creativity

(Schechner, p.130)

We are aware that ritual is an actual practice and theater is an enactment and the both can't be the same, still we can make some observations on the process of change. Rituals are performed for cultural efficacy. They are not mundane activities but considered as sacred. Rituals are spiritually driven whereas theater is mostly commercially driven. In case of ritual one is not supposed to intrude, innovate but one has a lot of freedom to innovate, invent and intrude. This is not to say that there have been no efforts to link theatre to liberate theatrical process to link with the masses. Ngugi WaThiongo did make efforts to link it with the community by encouraging spontaneity and audience participation in the performances to delink theater from producing a galaxy of active stars. In India, the eminent dramatist Habib Tanvir also made attempts to link theatre to the community by involving actors from the local communities and by contextualizing locally. But these were just a few efforts, the basic features of theatre otherwise remain as dominant characteristics.

One can notice the rising trends in commodifying tribal cultural forms by industrial houses and groups and marketing them in the forms of videos, albums and through electronic devices making the life world of the tribal communities into plastic arts. Tourists departments

also include description of Karma in their travel brochure. One is not arguing against such activities, but would like to study how the new forms transform the indigenous genre and how they are received.

The Karma Dance

The Karma dance performed in Karma festival is also known as the Karamsani festival. It is celebrated by the Binjhal tribes of Odisha on the   Bhadra Ekadasi (eleventh day of Full moon of Bhadra) or August –September month. The Binjhals are the indigenous tribes of Western Odisha in habiting primarily in the districts of Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Balangir,Sudargarh, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Boudh, Mayurbhanj and Phulbani. They celebrate Karma festival in reverence to GoddessKaramsani. Karma festival is celebrated by different tribes in different ways. For instance, the Karma celebrated by the Oraons is different in which women also participate. The ritual is also different.

The Karma festival described in this paper is from a tiny village called Balipata in the Bargarh district of Odisha. Here there is a sizeable Binjhal population. In addition, there are people from other communities such as the dalitsand OBCs who live together sharing many similar cultural practices. The Karma festival has many parts. The important part is the ritual which consists of installing the Karamsanibranch at the centre of the stage. GodddessKaramsani is worshipped in the form a branch which is installed at the centre of the festival ground. The priest of the community called "Jhakar" offers prayers followed by prayer song:

Juhar go ma Karamsani.

Tor padekaruchhudaini

Go Ma Karamsani

Tor padeKaruchhudaini.

Translation

Hail you Mother Karamsani

We bow before your feet

and offer our prayers.

The second part consists of song and dance as part of the celebration. The Binjhals and their neighbours participate in song and dance throughout the night. The main musical instruments used are Mandal and cymbals. In between they have a short interval for drinking a drink called "Kusma " prepared from herbs and is slightly intoxicating which make the participants spirited. Then there is another event in the festival in which the priest tells the story of "Karma and Effort" concluding that if you have good fate, you can enjoy good results, if you don't have it your efforts will go waste. The story of Karma is narrated by the story teller. Here Karma is not the concept of "karma" or as understood by the dominant tradition as duty , but karma for the people here means fate. People usually say if it is there in your karma or fate you will get. Based on this philosophy the story teller tells a story which explains that because the character did not have good fate, karma, he did not receive good result. The full story has been appended below.

The festival is celebrated to drive away insects from crops, and diseases from cattle. It is celebrated for better yield of crops. It is celebrated for their wellbeing, for fostering fellow feeling and peaceful co-existence. The song and dance go on from evening to morning. Though the rituals are performed only by the Binjhals, the non-Binjhal villagers also participated in the festival many ways. For instance, the one person who is good in playing *mandal* has been invited regularly to play *mandal* in the author's village.

Karma Enacted on Stage

Because the song and dance of the Karma festival is unique and aesthetically very pleasing, commercial artists try to stage- show of the Karma festival and the rituals associated with it. There have been videos and programmes made to make them available in the market. It is worth examining how they try to "show the doing" in these forms. We need to notice what kinds of changes take place when a ritual is turned into a performance.

In case of Karma, it is performed to enhance good crops, please the goddess Karamsani so that she would protect crops and cattle. Through this, there is ecological harmony as well as social fellow-feeling, but the stage performance aims at pleasing the audience. When a ritual is performed, the performers have mainly the deity in mind and they do it out of devotion, but in stage performance, the actors are conscious of the audience. In case of ritual, the performers are

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possessed with the spirit. So they are not self conscious, but the performers on the stage are self-conscious and conscious of their audience. In a ritual the participants participate and there is no audience, but in a stage performance, the audience is present. In Karma festival too all members of the tribe participate as participants. There is no audience watching without participating. Even the non-Binjhal members of the village feel as part of the ritual as they believe in the goddess as well as in the ritual. As it has been said rituals are not meant for criticism hence criticism is discouraged but in act of performance criticism is encouraged. Rituals enhance social knowledge. For instance, though the song people learn about the day of the celebration of the ritual. They sing:

Karma keekadasi

Phoolphute bara masi

Karama gadilesarbebasi go maa karamsani

Tor padekaruchhudaini

Translation

Karma festival comes on the *ekadasitithi*

As flowers blossom round the years

And we install the Karma branch together

And surrender to you offering our prayers

Hail O mother Karamsani

We do surrender

The song embodies the day of the celebration of Karma festival that it is celebrated on the eleventh day of full moon of Bhadra month. If we remember the song, we remember the day (*tithi*)when the Karma festival is celebrated. A ritual is connected socially. The community feels obliged to perform the ritual but a theatre may not have social obligation. Because a ritual is a community event, ethos of the society are embodied in it but in a theater performance of selfhood is associated in it. In ritual no individuality is performed but "individuals" or collective

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identity is performed. The performers are just mediums not the creators. Rituals are performed following conventions but theater is performed as per the script. Walter Benjamin in his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Preproduction" opines that eventhough a work of art is perfectly presented it is uprooted from its context. Hence it will miss certain elements associated with the context. Though both are performances, the ritual is deeply rooted in the context and conventions of the society where as the theatrical performance is removed from the site and is artificial in a number of ways. For instance, in the ritual, musical instruments are played but in the performances, recorded music is played. In the ritual, a branch of Karamsani tree is planted on the ground, but in the performances, it is not plate but shown as if it has been done by the artistes. Now we shall examine the change in other folk forms.

Dhemsa Dance

Dhemsa is a tribal dance form of Odisha's undivided Koraput district. Many tribal people suchas Paraja, Gadaba, Didai, Bonda, and others in the district practice this dance from. It is called Dhemsabecause adrum instrument calledDhemsa is used in the dance. It is arranged on social and religious occasions. Tribal and non-tribals, all participate in it. Other instruments used are Mohuri, Dhol, Dhamak, andTidibidi. The Mohuria sets the Dhemsatone and then other instruments accompany him.

In one form of Dhemsa, people stand in a line holding one another's waist in left hand and a peacock tail in the right and start moving on the tune of music bending their heads and shaking their hips. Their number may vary from five to two hundred. The leader of the group is called Batkata. They move in circle or semi-circle. There are different forms of Dhemsa such as HindaniDhemsa, Sira Dhemsa, Bonda DhemsaGodiBetni, Dhemsa, DaunaniDhemsa, Luhamara, Demsa, EkasuasgundariDhemsa and so on.

Dhemsa is usually performed on the occasion of Chaitparab, Pus Parab or Puspuni. It is also performed on the life cycle rituals like, birth of a child, as part of marriage celebration and so on. Typical folk music is associated with it. All these elements may not be present in a stage/ recorded performance.

In stage performance, whenDhemsadance is performed by commercial groups, the instruments are not used on the stage. Their tunes are recorded and played. If it is done regularly,

the art and craft of making the instrument will disappear slowly. The instruments themselves may vanish one day. When the dance is removed from the ritual and no mention is made about it, the cultural practice may also be slowly forgotten. Now we shall observe what kinds of changes we notice when a song is performed on stage by commercial artistes.

Tribal Folk Songs

Songs are an integral and significant part of folklore. They are expressions of human feelings, of joy, sorrow and pain. Kunja Behari Dash explains: "A folksong is a spontaneous outflow of the life of the people that live in a more or less primitive condition outside the sphere sophisticated influences. It is the earliest poetry of any people, unpremeditated and unwritten, fresh and simple, genuine and natural. It is popular because it alludes to incidents connected with people's lives. It carries the voice and vocabulary of the masses" (1991, p.1) through songs people express their emotions, thoughts and feelings. These feelings and emotions could be of love, despair and sorrow. Thus we have love songs, songs of happiness, separation and sorrow. The songs sung by young couple or "dhangda" and "dhangdi" are related to love, waiting and meeting whereas the song of the daughter sung as she leaves for her in-law's house are that of separation. The song sung by a young buffalo boy sitting on his buffalo or the ploughman's song is a song of joy and happiness. These categorizations of songs are based on themes. We can categorize them under genres too. For instance, we can divide them as folk ballads, folk lyrics and folk epics. In this module, we shall discuss these three important forms: folk ballads, folk lyrics and folk epics.

Before we move further, it is worth mentioning some features of songs. Folk song is inherited and transmitted through oral tradition. The author might be known or unknown but the singer plays an important role in singing the song. The peculiarity of folk song is that the audiences also know the song and take part in the performance. They are not passive listeners but active participants.

Songs can be accompanied by music. The "dandanacha," "dalkhai," "mailajada," "chutkuchuta," "jamudali "of Sambalpur and the Chait Parab of Koraput in Odisha and Bastar accompany dance and music. But song may not be accompanied by music in certain contexts. For instance, the ploughman song, the workers' song, the buffalo boy's song are not accompanied by music. Song

is known as "geet" in most parts India. It is worth discussing some features of tribal folk songs as described by scholars in the field.

a. Folk songs are associated with community life. They are mostly part of communal activities such as dance, rituals or festivals, or social occasions.
b. They are usually narrative and refer to significant mood, situation and emotion.
c. They have their origin in the past.
d. They have excellent themes and can be studied as literature
e. The use symbols, metaphors , etc. prompt us to study them as literature
f. They can be religious or secular

As discussed earlier, song is a large genre and it has many forms of folklore. They include lyrics, epics, ballads, and so on. It is not possible to discuss all genres of all regions. We shall make an attempt to discuss a few of them in brief.

Each language in India is rich with lyrics. From the following song we can observe that it is narrating the story of the paddy spirit. The narrative style of original text is retained by the translator and it goes likean oral narrative. Lines are repeated expressions are emphasized and so on. As can observe in the following song:

There was a Kondh couple- Dokra and Dokri- living in a village

One day Dokra went to the forest to hunt. He saw a deer and got ready to shoot an arrow at the deer.

The deer turned back to the Kondh and said,

'Oh friend, don't kill me,

After seven days there will be a terrible rain

For seven days and seven nights,

And there will be deluge on the earth.

Creation will perish in this rain, including you.

Try to save your life than to kill me. '

The Kondh was surprised to see a talking deer.

He knew that this must be a miraculous god.

Throwing his bow and arrow,

Folding his hands he asked the deer,

'Forgive me. How can I save my children?

How can I survive?

I am not worried about my life.

I am worried about my children.'

The deer said,

'Keep your children in a gourd,

They will survive floating on the water of the deluge

They will create a new generation of human beings.' (Mishra , 2007, p. 90)

The above few lines are just the beginning of the epic. The entire narrative goes on to describe creation of the earth and men and women, birds, animals, trees, mountains, and rivers and finally how the first son Gond and second son Kondh and subsequently twelve brothers were born; the Gond and the Kondhs being first and the second.

Apart from this song, Kondhs' song includes Bhima Sidi, NangmatiRajaphulia, Manduka Majhi and KandhameliGeet.

Saora Songs

Saora, also known as Sora, Saura, Sabara are a tribal people from the Southern Odisha. They also live in northern coastal Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Maharastra. They are also known as LanjaSarora as they wear a loin cloth which hangs like a tail or "lanj" in the local

language. They speak a local language. Saoras are animist and practice shifting cultivation. Their headman is called Gomango and their religious head is called Buyya, the messenger is called Barik. Their cultural traditions are full of songs, dance and music. They sing songs on social, religious and life cycle rituals. The following lyrics are examples of their life cycle songs. They have been documented by Verrier Elwin and ShamraoHivale and anthologized by G.N. Devy. Following one of the songs:

1

My little son

Where have they hidden you?

My little son

Have they put you behind the grain bin?

Have they hidden you down in the wheat field?

Have they taken you to the forest

And covered you with leaves?

O where have they hidden you

My little son?

2

My father

Where have you flown away, my father?

Where will I see you again?

Who will I call father now?
Who will care for your orphan boy and girl?

You have left us alone in Banbrinda

Where are you hiding?

Who will live in your house?

How suddenly you orphaned us

Where are you hiding

My father?

3

My son, while you lived I was a queen

For you lay between my breasts

As on a royal throne

But now you are dead

I must lay you

To the hard ground

4

So long as my lord breathed

I lived upon the throne

But since died

How worthless are my bangles

And the world is empty.

(Devy, 2002, pp. 160-161).

Songs are powerful medium of expressing one's emotions, history and heritage. They represent the collective memory of the people. Through mythical narratives and legends they remind us of our forgotten past and glorious history. They also deal with social life and everyday problems faced by the people. These songs could be soothing and appealing. They could be vibrant and full of zest. They are precious not only because they are vehicle of past, social life, knowledge and our cultural heritage, but also because of their aesthetic appeal. We feel so proud that we inherit such a beautiful and enduring resource. There is an urgent need to document them and study them.

The songs are also recorded and made available on CDs. Traditional singers lose their patent. They are modified, remixed and marketed. The authorship and copyrights issues are problems associated with the commercialized form whereas these are serious issues in traditional

form. This is not to say that modern elements should not enter into the realm of these forms and cultural practices, but one needs to study the change as they enter.

Tribal Folktales

Story telling is an age old tradition. It is as old as human civilizations. It perhaps began with people sharing their experiences with one another after a day's work. People would sit together and share their experiences of the day. They also told stories about gods and goddesses, legendary persons and other supernatural power. Slowly, imaginary stories with proper structure might have emerged.

People thus told stories and listened to them from one another. Stories were transmitted generations after generations. Thus, they became vehicle for transmitting knowledge, wisdom, culture and traditions. They also helped in educating people about their rights and duties, morals and sexuality.

In early times, tales were mostly in oral form. In course of civilization and with the development of technology, they were found both in oral and literate forms. People inscribed stories to preserve them and to document them. Many oral stories were inscribed, told and read by people.

Being a plurilingual nation, it has tales in many languages both in oral and written forms. Even today, there are many tales which are still in oral form. They are predominantly available in rural areas. Hence the rural and the oral go together though one can't ignore the existence of urban folktales. Nevertheless, the rural common folks seem to be preserving this tradition.

Folktales are important forms of story telling tradition. They are popular short fictional narratives passed on from generation to generation. Folktale may include myth and legend as both narrate stories. Myth tells story of the past and through it human beings rationalise the supernatural. M. Eliade rightly says:

> Myth narrates a sacred history; it relates to an event that took place in
> primordial time, the fabled time of the 'beginnings'. In other words, myth
> tells how, through the deeds of supernatural beings, a reality came into

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existence- an island, a species of plant, a particular kind of human behaviour, an institution. Myth, then, is always an account of a 'creation,' it relates how something was produced, *began to be*. Myth tells only of that which really happened, which manifested itself completely. (Eliade, 1964, p. 20)

We may find many myths and folktales tell stories about why the moon is so far, how poison was obtained, how man appropriated fire and so on.

Legend tells story of a person or place. All these constitute collective memory of people. In this module, we shall discuss the genre of tribal folktale in detail.

Another category of tales are the religious tales or *bratakathas* which are narrated as part of rituals in religious ceremonies.

There have been efforts by any scholars to collect and document some of them. Some have also translated them. The efforts made by organizations like Sahitya Akademi, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Bhasha Research Centre and State Tribal Akademis, Folklore Foundations are noteworthy. Among the scholars who have made contributions in collecting and documenting folktales are Verrier Elwin, A.K. Ramanujan and Kunja Bihari Dash. In recent times, one would like to mention names of scholars like Sudhin Ghose, Khageswar Mahapatra and MahendraK.Mishra and Paramananda Patel, Bhagwandas Patel, who have been engaged in collection and study of folk forms.

If we take the case of Odisha, being a state of great linguistic diversity it has a repository of tales in numerous languages. This richness drew scholars like Verrier Elwin to document tales from the nook and corner of Odisha. His monumental work *TribalMyths from Orissa* is such a pioneering work. LokaratnaKunja Bihari Dash not only collected folktales but also other folk forms from different parts of Orissa. These forms include myths, riddles, songs and proverbs. Department of Oriya, Sambalpur University has brought out two collections of folktales titled *PashchimOdisaraLoka Katha* (Kahani)or *Folktales from Western Orissa(Tales)* and *PashchimOdisharaLoka Katha (Brata Katha)* by collecting stories from the districts of Sambalpur, Balangir, Sundargarh of Orissa. All these efforts are praise worthy.

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An in depth analysis of the folktales will reveal a few major functions. Dorje Penjore (2010) in his article titled, "Folktales in Values Transmission" explains four functions of folktales. The four main functions are:

1. Children education
2. Entertainment
3. Repository of history, language and values
4. Spiritual function

The folktales of the tribals also perform similar functions. It is pertinent here to discuss some of the features of these folktales. Most of the folktales are about common folk. We do find a king or queen here and there but common folk like farmers, servants, labourers form major part in these tales. The common jobs performed by them are food gathering, collecting firewood and farming. Human labour is the key point.

Many tales carry master and slave relations. The servant outwits the master. We also find that a person even he is a servant can rise to the level of aking though his efforts. Many characters are disguised as tiger, jackal, frog, mouse, crocodile and hippo. More importantly, each of these tales has something to teach.

Now let us discuss a few folktales from the collection *PashchimOdisaraLoka Katha* (Brata Katha) or(*Folktales of Western Orissa, Religious Tales*) and study the contexts in which they are narrated. The religious tales are told not to entertain the audience but to evoke a feeling of devotion and fear for the deities. These tales make the audience listen to the tales with attention and devotion and practice things they learn in their everyday life. From these tales we come to know the relationship between humans and the supernatural. They tell us about the unlimited power and capabilities of God and goddesses and the miracles performed by them. For this reason, the audiences are drawn towards them. The canvas of such tales is large. It covers the earth, sky and the underworld. Certain religious festivals in which these tales are narrated are "PuoJiuntia", ritual for one's son and "Bhai Jiuntia"and ritual for one's brother. In this sense they can be called tales of rituals or ritual tales. These festivals are only celebrated in Western Odisha and primarily by the tribals. Bhaijiuntia is part of the Dalkhai festival which is celebrated by the Binjhals, Kols and

Saura tribes of western Odisha. But girls from other non-tribal communities also participate and pray for their sons and brothers' well being. Other festivals include KukutiBrata, Savitribrata, and Sudashabrataand so on. These tales cannot be termed as exclusive tribal tales, but they are prevalent among the tribal communities too. Some of them are very popular among all communities in the western part of Odisha.

The Southern Odisha inhabits many tribal communities such as the Paraja, Gadaba, Didai, and Bonda and so on. Out of 62 tribes of Odisha 26 tribes are in Koraput region alone. There are numerous folktales of these communities too. Ashok Kumar Mishra and Girish Chandra Dash have documented the tales of thecommunities."The stories are organized around different tribes" (Mahanand, p.xvi). These have been translated by Anand Mahanand. In these tales, animals are the main characters. Each story reflects the economic and social life of the community.

Ranjan Pradhan's collection of folktales titled-*Tales from Hill and Jungle* is a valuable contribution to the world of folklore. In this collection we have fifty folktales of the different tribal groups of the Koraput region. The tribes include Kondhs, Parajas, Bhotras, Souras, Gonds, Bhumias, Halvas, Santals, Banjaras, KoyasBondas and so on.

The Bratakatha mentioned above are special stories meant for certain rituals. If they are performed on secular occasions, they will miss many elements. Tales also undergo a lot of transformation when they are transformed from oral form to written and recorded (frozen) forms. There is a change in performance, audience, language, culture, and genre; and so on. Stories are narrated to the audience who is part of the community and who also participates in the process. The story teller and the audience share many common elements which is not the case if a story is transmitted, translated or staged. This dislocation may bring several cultural, linguistic and reception issues to the fore.

Conclusion

We have observed that most of the folk forms are from the cultural practices of various tribes. They are mostly part of the rituals performed by these tribes. If these are displaced from the ritual setting and performed on stage, they lose many elements which are inherent in them. They confront issues, related to language, culture, audience, genre and so on. This is not to tell

that because the stage performance of the ritual takes away certain elements, they should not be performed or one should discourage digitalization. Our intension is not that as we understand that culture is a fluid thing and there is going to be change, innovation and intrusion of technology, but our objective is to understand what kind of changes that take place in such a shift. In fact it is through technology and such medium we are able to preserve these forms. But it is interesting to see how things change in the process.So what are the ways to save this live world? One of the ways could be saving the habitats where they grow and thrive. This includes saving the environment, people, languages, forms of culture and cultural practices. Another could be to documentthese elements as a whole and not as parts. Do it in such a way that they are not removed from their original sites. If we remove them and present parts of these for entertainment, excluding others, those elements will vanish to oblivion. There could be many other ways. We all need to think about them.

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'Vyasa's Leftovers': Shifting [Con]texts of Draupadi from Myth to Fiction

Aloka Patel

Abstract

How do we understand the tale of Draupadi? as a single event, or as an inclusive part of a series of events in an epic tale about a great war? The Mahabharata, with its many oral and written variations, translated and transcreated in various languages down the generations, forms one of the many cultural legacies of India. "How many Ramayanas?" asks A. K. Ramanujan (131) as he points out that "classics like the *Mahabharata* or the *Ramayana* have multiple existences" (131). The many variations of the Mahabharata as "history, poetry, moral law, and scripture" (224), Sheldon Pollock states, subjects it to multiple meanings and entails "quite different protocols for interpretations" (224). Events and tales from the Mahabharata have been isolated and given different folk and literary forms as creative variations. B. N. Pattnaik reminds us of the story as it grew from Bharata to the Mahabharata, and of storytellers such as Pampa (10th century), Nannaya (11th century), Kumara Vyasa (15th century), Sarala Das (15th century), Kashiram (16th century) and others who retold the story or parts of it in different literary forms. In this context I try to understand Draupadi, as she has been received by the literary world down the ages as one of Vyasa's 'leftovers', engaged in the discursivity of legal ambiguities of women's rights. Her question before the Kuru *sabha* to which she is dragged in, if Yudhisthira had staked her before or after losing himself in the game of dice, has led to discussions on the legal rights of women, and the morality of woman's status as property, thereby, making her one of the subjects of many recent feminist discourses.

By 'leftovers' I do not in any way mean that the canonical Sanskrit epic has not given sufficient space to this character. Rather, I believe that events dealing with Draupadi are an essential part of the form of the epic narrative, without which the Mahabharata, either as a narrative tale, or its action leading to the catastrophic end, would not have been possible. Even the unfortunate incidents that make her a victim of certain social and political systems, while significantly, but sadly resounding in current times, are inevitable to discussions of the central

issue of 'Dharma' in the epic, and also to the devastating end that the narrative is heading towards as a consequence of disregard of the issue. It may not be ignored that Draupadi only forms a part of a long epic, T R S Sharma calls "a leviathan of an epic, three times the size of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* put together" (2) with various legends and tales, political, philosophical and ethical discourses, and claims to historicity of a specific era.

These past few decades have been witness to empathetic responses to Draupadi in the form of adaptations and commentaries, and rewritings of this character in various literary forms such as short stories, novels, and plays. The list might include Saoli Mitra's dance drama rendering *NathabatiAnathabat* (1991) based on IravatiKarve's interpretation of the Mahabharata in her *Yuganta: The End of an Epoch* (1989), regional works like that of Subramanya Bharati's Tamil narrative poem *PanchaliSabatham* (1912), or the Assamese plays *DraupadirBastraharan*and *Beni Samhar* by Ratneswar Mahanta, and a long poem *Draupadi* by Assamese poet ToshaprabhaKalita. By "leftovers" I refer to this ever proliferating responses to the epic, that keep emerging out of their predecessors, in an unending process of interactive literary discourses. Notable among these various revisionary rewritings, and of particular interest to this essay are the Odia novel *Jagyaseni* (1985) by Pratibha Ray, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's*The Palace of Illusions* (2008), and the Bengali activist and writer Mahasweta Devi's short story "Draupadi" (1978) which have emerged as the site and source of many a debate and critical insight. The paper aims to take a critical look at this intertextual process of [re]writing Draupadi, not as isolated acts, but as products of the epic tale's dialogic engagement with the social, cultural, historical and literary contexts within which it exists.

Since the form of a discourse is determined by its purpose, these available rewritings of the story of Draupadi make us wonder about this recent urge to represent her in different genres. Could it be that Vyasa has really left something unsaid, or that Draupadi's sentiments have not been amply, or aptly portrayed, or that she has not been sufficiently avenged in the epic, for the humiliations she suffered in the Kaurava court? Or still, something that is almost impossible to believe in India, that the myth of Draupadi has not found sufficient circulation in popular culture for common people to empathize with her?

It is not as if within the 'original' epic Draupadi has not had the opportunity to express her sentiments and dissatisfactions. There are number of instances where Draupadi is seen to be voluble, as she is after Duhsana's disrobing attempt, or even during the Pandava's exile when Krishna, and her brother Dristadyumna, along with Chedi King Dhristketu and Kekeya Prince come to meet them in the Arjunabhigaman Parva. She speaks her heart out, vents her anger, complains before Krishna against her husbands' apathy, and desires revenge. In response, she is assured by Krishna, and others present, including Arjuna, that she shall be avenged. Krishna vows to make her the queen, her brother promises to kill Drona, and assures that Shikhandi shall kill Bhisma, Bhim vows to kill Duryodhan, and Arjuna to kill Karna. Draupadi cannot be lacking in sympathetic responses within or outside the text. In the Van Parva, on their way to the Gandhamadan mountains when Draupadi faints and falls down, a remorseful Yudhisthir laments, and curses himself for having given in to the temptation of the dice game and making his wife suffer. Kunti too expresses her sorrow and anger in the Udyog Parv stating that Draupadi's humiliation was the saddest and most painful event of her life. She desires revenge for her daughter-in-law, and expresses her displeasure when the Pandavas are reluctant to go to war. Even citizens of Hastinapur are said to have mourned her departure to the jungles, as she walked down the street with the Pandavas, menstrual blood staining the single piece of cloth that she had wrapped around her. The urge to re-present her pains is surprising when it is impossible to believe that the story could have been erased from public memory.

Pratibha Ray tries to give a reason, not purely creative, when in the Preface to her novel *Jagyaseni* she states that some unpleasant remarks made against a woman of her acquaintance named Krishna instigated her to defend the mythical character. Ray illustrates the situation of mythological Draupadi through the example of this twentieth century woman named Krishna, who had divorced an alcoholic and abusive husband. She had later married a German and settled in Germany. Ray criticizes friends in India who had earlier sympathized with Krishna in her suffering, but are now bad mouthing her:

ନାମଟିଯେତେବେଳେ   "କୃଷ୍ଣା"
ସେଗୋଟିଏସ୍ୱାମୀପାଖରେସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟରହନ୍ତାକିପରି?କୃଷ୍ଣାତପଞ୍ଚପତିବରଣକରିମଧ୍ୟସେଟିକିରେସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟନ
ରହିକର୍ଣଏବଂଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କପ୍ରତିଅନୁରକ୍ତାଥିଲେ...

How can a woman named Krishnā be satisfied with a single husband? Krishnā herself, even after taking five husbands was attracted towards Karna and Sri Krishna…

(My translation)[1]

Perhaps, Ray supposes that it is possible to bring about a social change in the attitude towards women in a conservative society through a revisionary rereading of Draupadi's story, as was, and still is intended by the television serials of epics in which, in the words of Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, "[t]he traditional is represented as the timeless, and hence inclusive of the modern, while the modern is viewed merely as a transitional phase which disguised the permanent 'essence' of timeless tradition" (*Real and Imagined Women* 134). I do not, however, agree with Rajan's view when she goes on to state that the serials do not lead to "real change" (135) because Draupadi, both in the serials as well as in the epic, does raise her voice against injustice and poses pertinent questions regarding the rights of women. This surely would have an impact on the consciousness of the common people, who form a major part of the audience of such popular television serials. The awareness that is thereby created among the audience, about the 'universality' of Draupadi's suffering, would be able to make the audience contextualize and empathize with the sufferings of the heroine. The intentions of the representations, however, become ambiguous when it is in the form of a written work primarily meant for an educated and elite readership, when someone with self-proclaimed feminist concerns like Pratibha Ray, in spite of all her supposed best intensions, chooses a woman from the twentieth century to defend her concern for Draupadi. What emerges as a consequence, even while she tries to rewrite the sufferings of the mythical Draupadi, is a total lack of social and historical consciousness which

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[1] All translations of Pratibha Ray's *Jagyaseni*, in this essay are mine.

appears to make her insensitive to current social evils. Only a few lines immediately following her expression of concern for Krishna, in the same Preface Ray goes on to state

କଳିଯୁଗର ପତି ପରିତ୍ୟକ୍ତା ନାରୀ କୃଷ୍ଣା ପ୍ରତି ଏ ଭଳି ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ ମୋ ବ୍ୟଥାର କାରଣ ନୁହେଁ।... ଦ୍ୱାପର ଯୁଗର

ଅସାମାନ୍ୟ ବିଦୁଷୀ, ଭକ୍ତିମତୀ, ଶକ୍ତିମତୀ ନାରୀ କୃଷ୍ଣା ପ୍ରତି ଏ ପରି ବିଚାରଶୂନ୍ୟ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ ମୋ ଦୁଃଖର କାରଣ।

> My heart does not pain for the abandoned woman of the Kaliyuga…. My anguish is caused by such thoughtless remarks against the highly learned, devoted and powerful woman, Krishna of the Dwapar Yuga.

In other words, Ray betrays a total disregard for the real people around her while trying to espouse the cause of a mythical character. Impervious to the sufferings of "Krishnā" at the hands of an abusive husband, Ray is troubled by the flippant remarks made against Draupadi. True, Ray has every right as a novelist to defend and speak for Draupadi, but sadly, in a way, her words mirror a moral stasis and restricted perspective. If we are supposed to shed tears for the disregard of *satitva* and *patibratya* in mythical characters like Draupadi and Sita, we certainly cannot also ignore the suffering and plight of women of our times. After all, Laurence Coupe opines, "the present exists as a tension between the way things have always been and the way things ought to be" (97). He cites Ricoeur to state that myth is "all about this dialectic of past and future, it is a narrative whose beginning and ending continually inform the middle" (97). The Indian narrative of ancient tales, similarly, as Indra Nath Choudhuri points out "is laid in the timeless dimension of the ever present" (4). His claim regarding the Indian narrator of oral culture as different from others is based on the selection of a "vantage point sometimes in the time past or the present or in the time future" which gives him "a holistic vision and time turns (4). It is necessary to remember that the myth of Draupadi, although essential, is only a part of the composite epic, which may have originated orally, as is generally believed, or based on written archetypes, as Pollock argues (224). And, in order to have a holistic understanding of the tale it cannot be read independently of the entire epic as a narrative structure. Keeping in view the holistic and timeless nature of the Indian epic, I wish Ray had reversed the situation and

taken the mythical character as an example in order to illustrate the harassment still meted out to women in a society yet to evolve out of the domineering world of a patriarchal order.

This essay will depend on the interactions between the historical and literary dimensions of such rewritings on Draupadi to find out if fictional narratives of mythical characters can ignore specific historical and socio-cultural contexts in which they are created, or exist independently of the discourse that conveyed them in the first place. After all, as Jonathan Culler suggests, a story "is determined by discourse" (8). And, the epics, upon which the modern rewritings of characters such as Sita or Draupadi depend, "are not mere stories of love and adventure or of mere war and heroism. They are neither pure histories, nor romances" (Narayanchar 114). A. K. Ramanujan argues

> Texts may be historically dateless, anonymous: but their contexts, uses, and efficacies, are explicit. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* open with episodes that would tell you why and under what circumstances they were composed. Every such story is encased in a meta-story. And within the text, one tale is the context for another within it, not only does the outer frame-story motivate the inner sub-story, the inner story illuminates the outer as well. It often acts as a microcosmic replica for the whole text. (42)

In their novels, which can best be defined by a term Rajeswari Sunder Rajan borrows from Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow Sacrifice"— "psychobiography" ("The Story of Draupadi's Disrobing" 333)—Pratibha Ray and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni project Draupadi as a sensitive and responsive character with an independent cast of mind. Their attempt to invest a new dimension to our understanding and appreciation of the mythical character from the perspective of our own time is indeed commendable. But a mere character analysis, as it turns out to be even with the first person narrative voice, and plot restructuring, without reference to the social and historical contexts in which they develop makes the characters appear stunted, biased and stereotypes of their original with only slight variations. "It is not often recognized," says Pollock, "how significant features

spatiality is for the *Mahabharata*, both internally in the story it has to tell and externally in the kinds of literary-cultural practices that ensured the text's reproduction and promoted its circulation" (224). The story of the Mahabharata comprises both texts and contexts. Composed by Vyasa, with its multiple narrators, some of who stand outside the narration not participating in the events, like Rishi Ugrashrava, who initiates the story of the Mahabharata having heard it from Vyasa, and some inside, including Vyasa himself, it is so complex a tale that a literal lifting of the characters, along with their ideologies and faith, from their historical space limits the possibilities of interpretation of a text, which in its original not only evokes rich interpretations of complex ideas of the times when it was first written, but also provides a cultural legacy for reclamations by every generation of writers and readers.

Pratibha Ray's *Jagyaseni* was originally written in Odia for a regional readership. It was later translated into English in 1995. The novel adopts the European epistolary form of writing with Draupadi narrating her story in first person to her *sakha*, or friend, Krishna. Ray effectively uses the discourse of the epistolary form to place a woman of the ancient times in a position where she can speak out, albeit within the frame of a letter as a subversive act, to accrue power to herself. But even as Draupadi expresses her disillusionment with her husbands and her victimhood in a partriarchal set up, the narrative becomes an account of her devotion to Krishna, and her spiritual growth, constructing herself as a devout subject. The narrative method can also be said to be in the style of the Western self-begetting novel, an account usually in first-person of the development of a character to a point at which s/he is able to compose and begin writing the novel we have just finished reading. The end of Ray's novel is the beginning from where she starts all over again. The ending itself is a consummation which directs us back to the flux from which it arose. This manner of projection of the character helps in the construction of a 'new' woman. 'New' in the sense of having arisen as a modern and liberated woman in response to the times in which she is [re]written.

The epistolary form which had served a particular purpose among English women writers of the nineteenth century also had its influence in India with the coming of literacy to Indian women in the early part of the twentieth century. Literary writers in India also exploited the letter

form to project the "new" literate Indian woman as she tries to challenge established notions about gender ideologies, and come out of her domestic confinements. Rabindranath Tagore's short story, "The Wife's Letter" stands out as an example to "communicate the idea that marriage, segregation, and gender politics of the domestic space were forms of socially sanctioned servitude that rendered women invisible to the outside world" (Mukherjee 67). Written in colloquial Bengali it is the story of coming of age of a young woman, Mrinal who terminates her marriage as a protest against women's subordination in a typical Indian bourgeois household. Although attempting to come out of the confined nature of her existence Mrinal is still trapped within socially prescribed gender roles, and unable to make any truly radical statements. As rightly pointed out by Reshmi Mukherjee in her discussion of the new *bhadramahila* in Tagore's stories, she is "typecast as a pastiche of extraordinary qualities: arrogant but disciplined, feisty but moral, independent but caring, and modern in logic but traditional in practice" (71). Ray's Draupadi similarly, although modern, is still a generation older to the time in which she is [re]written—the 1980s, in belonging to the class of newly literate Indian women of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century "whose literacy was deemed an enabling factor 'for the perusal of religious tracts with greater devotion that would generate more diligent and devoted wifely duties'" (Mukherjee 71-72). Draupadi's narration in the case of Ray too, like Mrinal, is the story of her rise from material to spiritual realization. Her letter, after all, addresses Krishna, her spiritual mentor and friend. Ray's Draupadi is also like her older counterpart Mrinal in her literary aptitudes in writing poetry. Ray's choice of the epistolary form of communication like Tagore's is therefore, "in congruence with the same tradition that expects women to write in silence rather than speak....As a result she is not created from a new mould but rather, modified to influence the cultural imagination of the time" (Mukherjee 72).

Ray's Draupadi, with her acknowledged equal education like that of her brother, her learned debates, and intellectual discourses, her strength of will, her revolutionary thoughts along with her courage to protest against injustice, emerges as a modern woman. She is a woman with progressive ideas and a civilizing mission. She refuses gifts offered by Kuber (after Bhim's mission to pluck golden lotuses for her from Kuber's lake at Kailash) and instead proposes education, roads, temples, rest houses and wells for the Sabars and other tribes of Kamyak Forest

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(337-338). And yet, when she plays the role of a devoted wife and compassionate mother she can at best be called a "new woman" in the tradition of Tagore's Mrinal from "The Wife's Letter," or Bimala from his novel *GhareBaire*, and not the "protofeminist" we would like to believe her to be. It would not be inappropriate to say that applying Western literary models to rewrite tales from ancient Indian classics, if innovative and thought provoking, can also sometimes become restrictive. Adapting a spiritual mode of narrative for Draupadi restricts her desire for freedom and gender equality, which a rebel woman's personal letter promises. Ray also often forgets the epistolary technique she has adopted and speaks to her addressee, Krishna, in third person, and not second:

"ମୁଁ ଗୋବିନ୍ଦଙ୍କ ଚାହିଁଲି । ମୋ ଆଖିର ଅସହାୟତାବି ଗୋବିନ୍ଦଙ୍କୁ ଆମୋଦିତ କରୁଥିଲା । ସେ ମୁଦୁ ମୁଦୁ ହସୁଛନ୍ତି... (116)" [I looked helplessly at Govinda. He was amused at my helplessness and kept smiling…]

In the same way, whereas the novel *The Palace of Illusions* is written in first person, Divakaruni is unable to accommodate the shock of Draupadi's personal intervention to refuse Karna's candidature at her *Swayamvara* in first person and reports it in third person:

> Then, out of the silence that shrouded the marriage hall, a voice rose, sweet as a koel's song, unbending as flint. Before you attempt to win my hand, king of Anga, it said, tell me your father's name…. It was Draupadi, and as she spoke, she stepped between her brother and Karna, and let fall her veil. (95)

Ray's narrative device to frame her fiction in a self-reflexive and self-begetting mould, or Divakaruni's first person autobiographical mode to represent the psychological turmoil of a woman in a slow process of coming of age, is as if legitimized by the writers' gender. Even so, as we all know, every representation involves a gap between how we see things and how, potentially, they might be, and like Gillian Beer in her essay "Representing Women: Re-presenting the Past" states:

> …gender is largely a cultural product. It is risky to read women's representation of women, even as if the gender of the writer makes them thereby automatically

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authoritative. Such an assumption is to simplify our understanding both of the writing and of our internalization of past gender constructions. (65)

Ray celebrates and glamorizes Draupadi as a model of female virtues of chastity, purity and devotion in a mythical world which could well accommodate women like Kunti and Madri, who begot issues outside marriage, with dignity. Of course, *Niyoga*, or the practice of bearing children from other men when the husband is impotent or dead, as in the case of Pandu (husband of Kunti and Madri) or his father respectively, was not always done with consent. Ray's Draupadi becomes representative of the iconic feminine Shakti in Indian mythology, the ideal mother and wife, the violation of whose chastity rouses her wrath to bring about a devastating war. There are moments in the text when Ray stereotypes women by presenting Draupadi as the ideal Mother figure who willingly sacrifices her identity, individuality, and material pleasures to follow the path of her husbands. The novel, in epistolary form, rewrites Draupadi's story and in the process almost the entire epic narrative in brief. But with the stereotypes of women that it produces, it would not be out of context to suggest that women's role as historians is still marginalized by stereotypes that deny them a capacity for rigorous and objective analysis. Ray attributes to Draupadi the power of the Shakti, to be eulogized and tries to convince the reader that violating her chastity is sure to lead to some sort of catastrophe. If Draupadi is loving and caring, Ray would have us believe that she can also be the wrathful destroyer of evil:

ମାତ୍ରଜଗତଜାଣିରଖ୍ୱବାଉଚିତଯେଉଁନାରୀସୃଷ୍ଟିକାରିଣୀଓକଲ୍ୟାଣୀ,ସେଇପୁଣିପାପାମ୍ୱୁରାଚାରୀମା
ନଙ୍କରଧ୍ୱଂସକାରିଣୀହୋଇପାରେ ।

The world ought to remember that the generous and benevolent woman, who is the source of all creation, can also be the destroyer of wrong doers. (285)

But strangely, her power to perform such feats lies not in her physical strength or prowess in warfare but ironically in her devotion, loyalty and faithfulness to the same husbands who, she says, betrayed her. Ray repeatedly tries to convince the reader that Draupadi was a chaste and loyal Sati in spite of her five husbands. Implying, if Draupadi had not proved to be a Sati it

would have been justified to condemn her. What Ray, after all, is displeased with is the twentieth century twice-wed Krishna being compared to a Sati like Draupadi. Her concern excludes those women who are victims of sexual abuse and violence or, for that matter, those women who defy the norms of conventional morality. Ray seems to have internalized the norms of a conventional social order with her ideologies constructed primarily by the principles of a biased society. She fails to question, or even to critique social dogmas that breed under cover of ambiguous terms such as honour, dignity, chastity and morality. There is no denying that even the mythical Draupadi had been a victim of such social dogmas.

Although Ray does not denounce the act of the modern day Krishna in her example, she also does not accept her as a fit comparison to the legendary Draupadi, whether to glorify or to condemn. The presupposition is that women in general are tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized beings. And, any woman, who like Krishnā suffers social injustices and rebels against established norms and values can only be pitied, but not compared to the ineluctable Draupadi—an embodiment, for Ray, of self-sacrifice and self-control. Ray's Draupadi does not forget to remind us of her superiority as one born of a sacrificial fire, and therefore, spiritually and morally above ordinary mortals. She is super human in her birth, her beauty, a part or "*ansh*" of goddess Laxmi. The following passage expresses Draupadi's outrageous sense of self-importance:

ପୃଥିବୀର ଅଧିକାଂଶ ନାରୀ ଶରୀରରେ ଅସତୀ ନ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମନରେ ଅସତୀ । ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଏକ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେ ମାନଙ୍କ ମନ ତଲେ ଅନେକ ପୁରୁଷ ଆଲୋଡନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରନ୍ତି । ଶରୀରକୁ ଦୂରେଇ ରଖିଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମନେ ମନେ ପରପୁରୁଷ ସହ ସେମାନେ ମଧୁଶଯ୍ୟା ରଚନା କରନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋର ସେ ପରିସ୍ଥ ଏ ନାହିଁ ।

Most women are not physically unchaste, but they are unchaste in their thoughts. Even though they have only one husband, a number of other men also excite their passions. Despite keeping physically apart they dream of bedding men other than their husbands. But this does not happen with me. (234)

Instead of questioning the ethical imperatives of a traditional society and presenting Draupadi as a site of feminist conflict, which Ray perhaps intended to but was afraid to admit, she presents a Draupadi who complies to the demands of her society. Located as her regional readers are in a traditional, conservative society, Ray feels the necessity of dedicating the novel to Lord Krishna, in the same way as Sarala Das, the fifteenth century canonical Odia transcreator of the Mahabharata had done, and who she acknowledges to be one of the influences on her writing.

Sarala Das had not translated Vyasa's Mahabharata but he had retold it in Odia. Odias have reason to take pride in Sarala Das as the *Adi Kavi* or the First Odia poet, and the glorious literary tradition that he began with his Odia Mahabharata popularly known as Sarala Mahabharata. The text lacks in philosophical deliberations, and localizes the events for its uneducated peasant addressees, and even today is read ritually in almost every village temple of Odisha, and is given the status of a puranical religious text. It is also known to be the first Mahabharata to be written in a regional language in the Eastern states of India. However, eulogizing such transcreations should not overlook the fact that these texts have also promoted social biases against women. While stories from the 'original' could possibly have led to a more liberated womanhood, the Sarala Mahabharata appears to have bred, and if not bred then certainly contributed to a significant degree to the demeaning status of women of succeeding generations. Bibudhendra Narayan Patnaik points out to us of Sarala Das's perception of Draupadi's "revengefulness" as a "moral failure" (Patnaik 87). Das considered Draupadi as the "worst offender" and went so far as to give the view that the

> Kauravas had humiliated her on account of their ignorance… but her response to it was vile and vicious. He condemned her for keeping her hair loose for fifteen long years only to tie it up with the blood of a brother. He held her responsible for the death of the Kaurava brothers and the destruction of the lineage." (86-87)

Instead of providing a scope for women to advance towards a more modern culture, Sarala Das has been instrumental in the regression of a culture so far as women are concerned.

The following lines from Sarala Das about Drupad during Draupadi's parting after her marriage, which Patnaik quotes, would shock any sensitive modern day reader:

> Unable to control himself, [Drupad] burst out saying what a misfortune it was to be the father of a girl. No matter how great and powerful one might be, one simply turned into the most helpless of servants… to the family to which one gave one's daughter in marriage…. [I]t would be better for one to abandon one's wife if she gave birth to a girl than go through such humiliation…. [O]ne should abandon that girl child as well. (138)

Vyasa, of course, enters at this moment with a different view, but only to comfort him with the story of creation and the role of women as Shakti in it, and then only to be interrupted with a stronger argument verging on a retort from Drupad that Uma was the cause of her father's death. A worse statement comes when Yudhisthir rebukes Bhima for swearing to kill Duhsasana after the disrobing act: "ଦ୍ରୌପଦୀପରିଭାରିଜାଣତେମିଳିବେଥୁଲେଭାଇ / ନିଜଭାଇମାରଇଆଉପାଇବାଟିକାହିଁ" roughly translated by Patnaik as "one would get a hundred wives like Draupadi if one had brothers… but one would not get brothers if one killed them" (140). Patnaik also cites examples from Sarala Das of women who share his opinion of their low moral status, and suffer from low self-esteem. In Das's tale Ambika confides to Satyavati that women are born impure as they have always hankered for handsome men. His Draupadi, similarly, corroborates the statement in another context when she hints at incestuous desires of women by saying that this "handsome and well dressed man could be just anyone—may be a brother or even a son" (Patnaik 140).

Just as Sarala Das's*Mahabharata* arose in response to the Sanskrit and classical original, Ray's novel in many ways arises out of Das's work. But whereas, Das's [re]writing was a subversive response by a non-Brahmin to the canonical Sanskrit, Ray's work emulates the Odia version's stereotypical and derogatory representation of women.

Although Ray's heroine does make powerful strategic interventions in lines such as:

ଦୁଃଖ ଏବଂ କ୍ରୋଧରେ ଭାବୁଥାଏ, ନାରୀ କ'ଣ ପୁରୁଷର ସ୍ଥାବରଜଙ୍ଗମ ସମ୍ପତ୍ତିର ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ?... ମୁଁ ନାରୀ ବୋଲି ମୋର କ'ଣ କିଛି ନିଜସ୍ୱ ସତ୍ତା ନାହିଁ? ମୋର ଆମ୍ଭ ଉପରେ ମୋର ମଧ ଅଧିକାର ନାହିଁ? ମୋର ଏ ଦେହଟା ଉପରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଅଧିକାର ବୋଲି ସେ ତାକୁ ନେଇ ଯାହା ଇଚ୍ଛା ତା କରିପାରିବେ?

> Sad and angry, I was thinking if woman was one of man's personal properties?
> Does a woman have no claim to her selfhood? Have I no right to my own
> identity? Just because they have a right over my body can they do as they please
> with it? (266)

These ideas get diluted and moderated when the same heroine, to the disappointment of the reader, talks of herself as an "object" of desire, and feels sorry for all the men who could not "obtain" her:

> ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟପତି ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ମଣିଷ ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ ହୁଏ। ... ଉଚିତ ମାର୍ଗରେ ପାଇନପାରିଲେ ଅନୁଚିତ ମାର୍ଗରେ ତାକୁ ଆୟତ୍ତ କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରେ। ଲୋଭାତୁର ମଣିଷ ସେତେବେଳେ ବୁଝିପାରେନାହିଁ, ସେହି ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟଟିକୁ ଲାଭ କରିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ଓ ସାମର୍ଥ୍ୟ ତାର ଅଛି କି ନା। ସବୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାରେ ବିଫଳ ହେଲେ ଦୁଃଖୀ ହୋଇପଡେ। ତେଣୁ ଆଜି ଲକ୍ଷେ ରାଜାଙ୍କ ଦୁଃଖର କାରଣ ମୁଁ।
> Human beings are attracted towards beautiful objects. If they cannot be obtained
> by fair means, they try to adopt unfair ways. The greedy man fails to understand if
> he indeed has the strength or means of obtaining them. If he fails in achieving the
> desired object he becomes sad. Therefore, today I am the cause of the sorrow of
> one million kings. (50)

Just as Sanskrit held its dominance over the less privileged vernaculars by silencing their voices "in both the literary and documentary records" as Pollock points out (35), Odia literature too, such as Ray's rewriting of Draupadi, has not freed itself of the authority of Sarala Das. Although he might be referring to the dominance of a classical language over the vernaculars, Pollock's statement reminds us that the ideals perpetuated by literatures of the past "will not go

away by ignoring it or pretending it is past: either we master it through critical historical analysis or it will continue to master us" (36).

Ray's novel, instead of questioning the idea of Satitva, merely re-phrases and re-writes with a bit of imagination the psychological workings of a character that has undergone several traumatic experiences. Perhaps, the representation of Draupadi in popular media like the one shown on an Indian Entertainment TV Channel better recognizes women's potential and individual talents by sensitizing its audience to the twenty-first century predicament of women. Unlike the Sarala Mahabharata, it presents a Drupad who expresses his wish to shelter an unwed daughter at home instead of pushing her into a polyandrous marriage. The Kunti of the serial is, similarly, a repentant one who does not wish her daughter-in-law to honor her word, and marry her five sons. This Draupadi, like Ray's, is also a pageant of beauty, but with the moral responsibility of keeping the clan together. It is she who decides to surrender to an unjust marriage even when she has the choice to opt out of it, so that she might not to be the cause of quarrel among brothers who might all nourish a desire for her beauty. Ray's Draupadi, on the other hand, is so obsessed with her beauty that she forgets that the narrative mode adopted by her in the novel is a recapitulation of events which she chooses to remember as she lies dying, having fallen down from the steep path to heaven. Her husbands have decided to proceed towards heaven without interrupting their journey, or giving a thought to the faithful, and now suffering wife. Under such circumstances, when she has been dispossessed of her mighty husbands, and of heaven, it is highly improbable that a sensitive and sensible victim, who possessed wit enough to question the nature of justice [*Dharma*] to the wise elders in the court of the Kauravas, would devote a number of pages to the celebration of her beauty (refer, for example, page numbers 8, 46, 50). The following lines are illustrative:

> ମୁଁ "କୃଷ୍ଣା" ନୀଳପଦ୍ମର ପାଖୁଡ଼ାପରି ମୋ ଦେହର କାନ୍ତି। ସମୁଦ୍ରଲହଡ଼ି ଭଳି ଘନନୀଳ ଊର୍ମିଳ କେଶଦାମ, ନୀଳପଦ୍ମଭଳି ଝଲଦଲ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ବୁଦ୍ଧିଦୀପ୍ତ ମନୋହାରିଣୀ ଦୁଇଟି ଅଫଟଆଖ୍। ବିଶ୍ୱର ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠଶିଳ୍ପୀର ହାତଗଢ଼ା ନିଖୁଣ ପ୍ରତିମା ଭଳିଆ ନନ୍ଦିତ ମୁଖଶୋଭା, ସୁଠାମ ସୁଗୋଲ ଅଙ୍ଗସୌଷ୍ଠବ, ଦୀର୍ଘଦେହ... (8)

I am Krishna. My body glows like the petals of the blue lotus. My hairs are dark blue and flowing like the waves of the sea; attractive eyes as bright and beautiful as the blue lotus. My face is meticulously hand crafted by the best sculptor of the Universe. My body is curvaceous…

Although Ray has tried to effectively use the epistolary form in the manner of a self-begetting novel, her prolixity makes the narrative ramble off the rigid format, which would otherwise be the portrait of a self in the process of developing its sense of identity. It is also interesting to note at this point what Ray has to say in the Preface, about beautiful women:

କାମାନ୍ଧ ପୁରୁଷ ଦ୍ୱାରା ସୁନ୍ଦର ନାରୀ ଯୁଗେଯୁଗେ ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତିତା ଏବଂ ଅପମାନିତା ହୋଇଆସିଛି। (୪)

Beautiful women have been tortured and humiliated by lustful men through the ages.

One fails to understand what fate the 'ugly' ones suffer (or do not suffer). The suggestion perhaps is that they are lucky to have been born so! Ray's Jagyaseni is morally irreproachable, and a flawless beauty. It is her beauty that provokes men to immoral acts, and not the attitude of the 'lustful' man. Ironically, the author who has obviously internalized the demeaning view of women, lays the responsibility on god, or nature for making women beautiful:

ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ମୋ ପ୍ରତି ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇ ସେ [ଯୁଧିଷ୍ଠିର] ଯଦି ଏଭଳି ବିବାହର ଆୟୋଜନ କରିଥାନ୍ତି, ତେବେ ସେଥିରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଦୋଷ କ'ଣ? ଦୋଷ ତ ତାଙ୍କରି ; ଯିଏ ନାରୀଦେହରେ ଭରିଦେଲେ ଏତେ ରୂପ ଓ ଯୌବନ , ଯିଏ ପୁରୁଷ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ଭରିଦେଲେ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟର ପିପାସା। (79)

In fact, being attracted towards me, if Yudhisthir has arranged such a marriage, how is he to blame? It is only he at fault who has made women young and beautiful, and men lust after the beauty.

Ray subscribes to the patriarchal ideology of a gender-biased society which conveniently offloads the blame on to the woman for her victimhood. As a therapeutic means of dealing with her problems, as mentioned earlier, in the form of a "psychobiography," Ray's Draupadi tells her difficulties to Krishna. This makes the novel an odd combination of a letter and a confessional, and even a diary, when Ray forgets the narratee through the course of the narrative. But as we

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notice, instead of challenging the unreal demands made on her, in this particular instance by Yudhisthira, which a diary would have done, this Draupadi, like in a confessional, has internalized the problem as her own. As it happens in the case of Ray's Draupadi, to put it in the words of Sara Mills in her book on *Discourse*, "One of the ways in which subjects are disciplined is the confessional…. The confessional, where women talk about their difficulties, may be used as a way of dealing with these problems in ways which are not in the woman's interest" (81-82).

Ray's Draupadi, just like the mythical one, is rebellious, but she will not abandon the culturally inherited conventional values as Mahasweta Devi's character Dopdi, in her short story "Draupadi," could. Ray's Draupadi is the upholder of social morals, albeit, with the all too human weaknesses of attraction towards Krishna or Karna. Ray's concern is that, in spite of everything, Draupadi exercises self-restraint, and proves to be a Sati during the disrobing act at the Kaurava court. But the moot question is, what would have been the possible authorial stance in case there had been no divine intervention of Krishna with his miraculously endless supply of clothes to prove Draupadi's 'Satitva,' and without her large-heartedness to forgive her husbands? And, how would Draupadi have responded without her power to curse the perpetrators? Without 'Lord' Krishna's help, who is, not coincidentally, also a male god, Draupadi would not have proved to be the Sati that she is perceived to be. Would she then have had the privilege of gaining the sympathy of an author who wishes to defend her against slanderous tongues? Would she then have been eulogized the way she has been, or condemned to the unwritten pages of history?

Jagyaseni can be said to be Pratibha Ray's most self-consciously 'feminist' fiction. But throughout the novel she exhibits the age old and unmistakable trappings of power-play to which she too willingly succumbs. Obsessed with her beauty, Ray's Draupadi exemplifies the contradictions with which women are culturally conditioned to grow up as recipients of public gaze as both "admiration and scorn" (Rajan. "Draupadi's Disrobing" 335). "[N]either response," Rajeswari Sunder Rajan points out, "is free of the overtones of the other, or of sexual significance. The woman's response to the gaze is also ambivalently divided between pride and

shame" ("Draupadi's Disrobing" 335). Rajan further points out this contradiction as represented in the mythical Draupadi's exposure to public gaze twice:

> In the *Mahabharatha* episode Draupadi explicitly recalls the only other occasion she had been viewed in public in the *swayamvara* arena by the assembled kings come to woo her, when she had chosen her future husband, Arjuna, for his feats of prowess. So she laments: "Alas, only once before, on the occasion of the swayamvara, I was beheld by the assembled kings in the amphitheatre, and never even once beheld afterwards. She whom even the winds and the sun had never seen before is exposed to the gaze of the world. I think these are evil times when the Kurus allow their daughter-in-law to be thus tormented." Then she had been a cynosure of all eyes. Her appearance—in both senses of the word, her dishevelment as well as her presence in the court—is a very different matter now…. I am led to the intuition that what she experiences as trauma is not the shock of the unexpected but the recognition of the familiar. (335)

One must realize that it is not the physical denuding of Draupadi that would have caused her to be shamed, and that it was her divine power (or divine intervention of Krishna) that saved her from the fate. The act of the disrobing could only have been a symbolic illustration of the shame that Draupadi had already been subject to, even before a divine intervention could have saved her, having been dragged into the court in a single attire while she is menstruating, exposed to the gaze of the courtiers, derided and denuded as she was by the slanderous words of Karna, the Kauravas, and others present.

'Polluted' and isolated because menstruating, and yet dragged into the court, Draupadi's menstruation becomes symbolic not only of her imprisonment, enslavement, and finally exile, but also of the exclusionary practices of the discourses of dharma that subject her to humiliation under public gaze. And the supernatural act that 'saved' her from being 'shamed' was just a consolation but not justice. If her 'satitva' made an impact on the audience within the epic, her 'shaming' was essential to the narrative purpose of bringing justice to all victims, and in this specific instance, to Draupadi. Every humiliation of Draupadi (except in the Kaurava court) as that by Kichaka or Jayadratha, is avenged without delay. But Draupadi's complaint in the epic,

and of Ray's in the novel is against the apathy of the Pandavas in the court. Had Bhima responded to the appeals of his wife and appeased her by killing Duhsasana and Duryadhana, only the shame of her physical denuding would have been avenged, and justice would have been partial. But, technically speaking, all those present in the court had been responsible for, and compliant in the shaming of Draupadi by their silence and voyeuristic gaze.

In an epic whose narrative is structured around a group of observers and observed, the denuding of Draupadi cannot be said to be her shame alone, but it is a representation of the shame and impotency of those who watch the act being performed. Just as Dhritarashtra's auditory observance of the war through the eyes of Sanjaya becomes a mark and reminder of his helplessness and impotence, and so his shame for the injustice he had approved through his silence, greater justice to Draupadi is done only by leading the epic to an end where each of the 'gazers' is punished to establish *Dharma* or 'Law'. The women in the 'harem' of the Kauravas are also equally punished for being silent witnesses, by raising no voice of resistance. Of course, they were helpless, but the story of silent victimhood is no different today. Surrender to injustice is not what the Mahabharata proposes. And, Draupadi is not the only example of the 'resisting' woman in the Mahabharata. There is the story of Nandini, the Kamadhenu (cow) preceding the episode of Draupadi's *Swayamvar*, who avenges her own violation by sage Vishwamitra. She resists, and it is her breed of *mlechhas* or the underprivileged classes who fight a war and bring her freedom. Draupadi resists and a revolution is possible. It is precisely this potential of Draupadi's humiliation to raise a revolution that demands our attention.

In an age which has witnessed women being stripped and paraded naked through village streets as traditional punishment for what are believed to be sexual offences, in times when resistance to such forms of public humiliation and/or denial of human rights is essential to bringing about a social revolution, Ray's feminist concern is directed towards defending the sexual morality of a mythical character. Ray seems to forget that traditional moral codes are merely means of exercising social control, and myths provide contexts against which literature attempts to grapple with such contemporary issues. She merely participates and provides an alternative reading to a mythical situation without being sensitive to contemporary social and political issues, ignoring the lived realities of real women in real social settings.

Mahasweta Devi, the Bengali writer, journalist and activist, who died in 2016, castigates writers of her time in the Preface to *BashaiTudu* "for their lack of social awareness" (Chakravarty 96). Against the traditional manner of rewriting the myth of Draupadi, her short story, "Draupadi" which first appeared in 1978 in Bengali in a collection called *Agnigarbha*(*Womb of Fire*) as Spivak informs us in her Translator's Foreward (4), brings together myth and reality "as a way of envisioning alternatives to the social ills that her fiction addresses" (Chakravarty 96). By giving to real events the form of a story Devi addresses the problem of oppression of landless tribal peasantry of West Bengal by the landlords with unofficial support of government officials. The story is set in 1971 immediately following India's defeat of Pakistan when the armed forces of India cracked down on the Naxalites of West Bengal, as Gayatri Spivak reports, because of the supposed "alliances between the Naxalites of West Bengal and the freedom fighters of East Bengal (now Bangladesh)" (Translator's Foreword 8). The central character, DopdiMejhen is a Naxalite Santhal woman on the run. The name Dopdi, obviously derived from Draupadi, is given to her at birth by her upper-caste mistress whose husband had been killed by the Naxalites. She is finally apprehended by the police and ordered by the police chief, Senanayak, to be gang-raped into giving information about her comrades. The story ends with a brutally tortured and naked Dopdi triumphant over an intimidated Senanayak as she stands unarmed, refusing to be clothed: "I will not let you put my cloth on me. What more can you do? Come on, *counter* me…. Draupadi pushes Senanayak with her two mangled breasts and for the first time Senanayak is afraid of standing before an unarmed *target*, terribly afraid (36-37). Her nakedness, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan opines in her essay in the book *Signposts*, "is offered as an affront to their masculinity" (353). Dopdi refuses to be shamed, and rape or nudity is no more a sign of humiliation or fear. Her refusal to be clothed rather becomes a reversal of the accepted meanings of nakedness as public disgrace and shame. Mahasweta Devi rewrites the story of Draupadi, and Spivak rightly calls it "at once a palimpsest and a contradiction" (11) in her Translator's Foreword. However, in rewriting or rereading the tale of the epic heroine it would not be altogether right to go by the common feminist readings of Draupadi, as Spivak agrees to, when she blames "male lust" in making reference to the disrobing episode, an idea to which Ray subscribes. In her introduction to the collection *Breast Stories*, Spivak states: "God had prevented male lust from unclothing her [Draupadi]" (ix). It would be

erroneous to believe that public stripping or rape could be an act of sexual gratification when it is motivated by political intentions of State authorities like the Kaurava princes in the epic, or the police in Devi's short story. Similarly, again in the Translator's Foreword Spivak notes: "In the epic, Draupadi's legitimized pluralization (as wife among husbands), in singularity (as a possible mother or harlot) is used to demonstrate male glory" (11). Such a response to Draupadi's marriage would only give a partial understanding of the epic where the marriage of Draupadi to the Pandava brothers is undoubtedly represented as a political decision of Kunti and the eldest Pandava, Yudhisthira to keep the brothers, and later the nation, united. We have to agree with Pollock that "[w]hatever else the *Mahabharata* may be, it is also and preeminently is a work of political theory" (17). Moreover, if we go by Spivak's opinion of the possibility of 'Dopdi' being the original tribal name of the ancient, but Aryanised/Sanskritised Draupadi, polyandry among certain tribes was not an unknown fact in India. If we agree with Spivak to the colonialist function of the Mahabharata to integrate the Aryan invaders with the tribals of India, then surely a polyandrous marriage was a political necessity in the epic.

Devis's story is rather more in agreement with the epic when it identifies the predicament of its protagonist with that of the ancient Draupadi. It testifies to the existence of the epic, in Pollock's words, "in a quasi-universal transregional space and spoke across this space in an entirely homogeneous voice" (229). For Devi, the particular incident of the disrobing of the mythical Draupadi becomes a symbol for State manipulated violence, and an illustration of nudity as a political act of resistance. Devi's "Dopdi", which projects the cause of the tribals like her other works, raises issues of class, caste, and gender. Dopdi, as the menial subject of her mistress who had given her the name, is a victim of the feudal Zamindari system as well as of the carceral disciplinary networks of institutions of the State. Senanayak orders his men to "Make her. Do the needful"(34). And so, like the mythical Draupadi who had suffered humiliation because she raised questions about women's slavery and sexual oppression by the masters in the court, Devi's Dopdi is a victim of sexual humiliation as punishment as she finds herself trapped in the intersections of political power and social ideologies of gender, class and caste.

Published in 2008, much later than Ray's *Jagyaseni* or Devi's "Draupadi," Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's*The Palace of Illusions* is written in the psychobiographical tradition

mentioned earlier. The cover blurb of the novel declares it to be "Panchaali's Mahabharat", and makes its subversive intention clear by giving it the subtitle *A Novel* as against the original epic narrative. Nevertheless, the novel turns out to be a mere rehash of the epic with a different narrative perspective—the first person—and a different form and structure. Keeping an eye on her Western non-Indian English readers of the novel, the writer, Divakaruni caters to the cultural stereotype of the Indian woman by creating a Draupadi who endorses such notions. In the novel Draupadi emphasizes on gender discrimination in India and describes a childhood when she was denied the same education as her brother. Later, when she was finally given an education, it was with much reluctance, and because of the divine intervention of Krishna, for her unusual birth from a sacrificial fire to serve a specific purpose:

> A girl being taught what a boy was supposed to learn? Such a thing had never been heard of in the royal family of Panchaal! Only when Krishna insisted that the prophecy at my birth required me to get an education beyond what women were usually given, and that it was the king's duty to provide this to me, did he agree with reluctance. (23)

Such discriminatory feelings against Draupadi's learning or scholarship had never been questioned in the epic in terms of gender, although her scholarly questions, to her disadvantage, may have caused a lot of debate.

Divakaruni does give a twist to the story of the Mahabharata by imagining a childhood for Draupadi, whose mythical birth is believed to have been of the sacrificial fire as a full grown woman. The novel concentrates on the anxiety of being brought up in the absence of a real mother or father, by a surrogate mother. As such, the novel deviates from the original epic which presented Draupadi as a loved daughter. IrawatiKarve notes "How beloved [Draupadi] was in her father's house can be seen from some of her names" (81). Divakaruni's character hates the "damp" and "bare" confining stone walls of her father's palace as cold and unbearable (6-7). Dejected and lonely, she identifies with, and dramatizes the predicament of her postmodern author's diasporic identity as a displaced woman, who ponders over the "illusion" of a stable home, given the significant title of the novel. The author's state of home/lessness determines Draupadi's notion of a 'home' that eludes definition:

Truly it was a transient world we lived in. Yesterday in a palace, today on the road, tomorrow—who knows? Perhaps I would find the home that had eluded me all my life. But one thing was certain: the currents of history had finally caught me up and were dragging me headlong. How much water would I have to swallow before I came to a resting place? (139)

The Author's note at the beginning of the novel reminds us of Divakaruni's Indian origin, of her parents' home in Kolkata, and her grandfather's village home in Bengal (xiv) where she had gained her first experience of the Mahabharata and decided that if ever she wrote a book she would "place the women in the forefront of the action. [She] would uncover the story between the lines of the men's exploits" (xiv-xv). Relying on the postmodern emphasis on perspectives, Divakaruni presents a narrative that questions its own validity and points to its constructedness, and the possibility of variant readings:

Were the stories we told each other true? Who knows? At the best of times, a story is a slippery thing. Certainly no one had told us this particular one…. We'd had to cobble it together from rumours and lies, dark hints Dhai Ma let fall, and our own agitated imaginings. Perhaps that was why it changed with each telling. Or is that the nature of all stories, the reason for their power? Dhri was dissatisfaied. 'You're looking at the story through the window,' he said. 'You've got to close it and open a different one. Here, I'll do it.' (15)

Instead of a shared sense of intimacy with her reader, and acutely conscious of her foreign audience, who, as Ramanujan says, are appalled by the epic (162), the narrator goes to the extent of qualifying and explaining certain obvious facts about Indian culture. Thereby, irrespective of its narrative perspective, the novel denies an independent existence to the story in its mythical origin. The narrator even feels it necessary to explain the significance of the cow as a sacred animal to Indians. She gives the reason for Karna's being cursed by a Brahmin to die defenseless for killing a cow with an explanatory phrase, "the most sacred of animals," as a tag to "cow": "he realizes he has killed a cow, the most sacred of animals" (87). Similarly, we find Drauapdi expounding on the disgrace a married woman "could face" when she is sent back to her father's house.

Further, although Divakaruni's narrator, like a true feminist, refers to the silences that women have been subjected to (40) she does not rise above the petty quarrels of *saasbahu*— mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. The magnitude of the epic narrative gets reduced to the triviality of quarrels between the *saas* and *bahu* in the novel. The *saas-bahu* episodes tend to get irritating with Draupadi's complaints against Kunti, which begin at page 105 in chapter 14, and continue for pages, at least, upto chapter 23. After this, Draupadi's interest shifts to the other wives of the Pandavas. The novel plays on the stereotypes of such representations in popular culture, such as in the popular soap opera *KyunkiSaasBhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* televised on Star Plus from 2000 to 2008, the year Divakaruni's novel was published. Some references from the novel are illustrative:

"from the moment she saw me yesterday, my mother-in-law regarded me as her adversary." (105)

"I asked her if I might have a bit of turmeric and some chillies. Perhaps some cumin. She replied, 'This is all there is. This isn't your father's place!" (107)

"Kunti and I (yoked together uneasily by our desire for Pandava glory) had frozen into our stance of mutual distrust." (125)

"My [public] appearance [with Yudhisthir] were greeted with much cheering, a fact that caused Kunti to teeter between pride and annoyance." (128)

Not half an hour had passed after Duryodhan's mishap when Kunti summoned me to her quarters. (It made me wonder how many of my women she had bribed to be her informants.) I was surprised at the summons; since coming to this place, my mother-in-law hadn't behaved in such an imperialistic manner. When I went to her, I found on her face that old expression, exasperation at my stupidity. For a moment, it was as though the years had spun away and I was a new bride again. Politely and scathingly, she wondered how it was that I could not control my women's tongues. She recommended that I confess what had happened to Yudhisthir without delay. (174)

The result is that Divakaruni's Draupadi emerges, not as the dignified and learned Kshatriya princess of the ancient narrative, who recognized the sufferings of her mother-in-law,

but as an irritatingly quarrelsome, jealous, possessive and conceited woman—a stereotype of an illiterate 'housewife' which any feminist would question—in contradiction to the narrator's claims that she had wished to be different from the women/queens in her father's palace. While on the one hand she finds it "intolerable" to "sit among bent grandmothers, gossiping and complaining, chewing on mashed betel leaves with toothless gums" (343-44) on the other hand, her insistent complaints against her mother-in-law become somewhat exasperating for the reader. She even goes to the extent of imagining the nature of tête à tête between Kunti and Gandhari when they meet: "Perhaps the two dowagers relished this chance to complain to each other about their daughters-in-law!" (183). I believe, we need to understand that a character, or even an action, arises out of its historical context. The temporal distancing from the original might lend to the character a different psychological insight. However, the character will always be determined by the social, cultural, philosophical and political ideologies with which she is brought up, and within which she exists. In the words of IrawatiKarve, "Kunti alone among [the women] seems to have been born to endure only sorrow. A dozen years of happiness were too few to compensate for her long life of sorrow and humiliation" (42). Divakaruni's narrative perspective, on the other hand, denies a sympathetic response to this character and presents a Draupadi who is so obsessed with her mother-in-law that even her response to Kunti's generosity, towards the end, is tinged with irony: "Kunti surprised me by donating artifacts she'd held on to all these years, things that had belonged to Pandu" (324). With a twist to the epic, Divakaruni presents a more socially responsible Draupadi, when after the war she and other women like Uttara begin a social mission of helping the families of victims of the war by donating their ornaments and furnishings. They set up destitute homes for the war victims and provide women with the means of being self-sufficient, and the novel claims that "Hastinapur became one of the few cities where women would go about their daily lives without harassment" (325). Except for the social mission and utopian vision of a *Satya Yug* for women, which is yet to come, and the first person narrative perspective, the novel turns out to be a drab summary of the epic narrated by Draupadi, like the ones we find in the comic series, *Amar Chitra Katha*. The flat tone of Draupadi's narration, full of jealous responses against other women in the family, and always disapproving of others, a tone that does not find any expression of love even for Arjuna (but indicates attraction towards Karna) or even of anger at being 'shamed,' is wanting in some

of the redeeming passions that the mythical heroine is recognized for. Re/presentation, of course, involves selection and re-arrangement of events in a narrative. But, the discursivity of a complex epic narrative missing, and without a plot that is crucial to giving the narrated events a meaningful structure—"as parts of an integral whole" (White 9) Divakaruni's novel becomes merely a bland and sequential ordering of major events. Instead of becoming the space "within which discourses are elaborated and transmitted, a *dispositif* in which social forces and institutions, storytellers and tellers of counter-stories… either come into conflict or collude with one another" (Salmon ix) it becomes what Hayden White refers to as "annals": "consisting only of a list of events ordered in a chronological sequence" (5).

If we go by Foucault's understanding of discourse as something which produces something else (Mills 17) the first person monologic narrative of Divakaruni, in a way, closes off any possibility of productive discursivity through dialogic intervention by the reader. It aims mainly at directing the readers' sympathy towards a particular character. But, at times it fails to achieve the purpose with a reader who finds it merely a rehash of an early story in a new form, without actually allowing for the character's potential to grow beyond its specific space and time.

Literature, as in the case of Ray or Divakaruni's postmodernist rewritings may corroborate Foucault's opinion of it as a "self-reflexive activity" (Mills 24). However, one needs to keep in mind that such rewritings as these are in fact re/tellings of myths and epics that may have origins in oral cultures, and are invariably taken up by a mass of literate elite as their social and political privilege. As such these rewritings/retellings bear the responsibility of rendering the mythical "discourses itself a subject for discourse," as Sheldon Pollock puts it, and we might agree:

> [W]riting claims an authority the oral cannot. The authorization to write, above all to write literature, is no natural entitlement, like the ability to speak, but is typically related to social and political even epistemological privileges. For another, writing enables textual features far in excess of the oral; for literature it renders the discourse itself a subject for discourse for the first time, language

itself an object of aestheticized awareness, the text itself an artifact to be decoded and a pretext for deciphering. (4)

He reminds us that even Bamaha thought of the *kavya*, which the Mahabharata obviously is, as a text where form and content receive equal attention. Although events in the Mahabharata may appear to exist in isolation, or in a confused jumble, nevertheless, Pollock argues that the epic insists on contextualizing the events that get narrated, "placing the action and thereby producing a specific macrospace, one with a uniformity, coherence, and salience" (226). As an illustration of this fact, Ramanujan cites the example of the tale of Nala and Damayanti which is narrated in the middle of the Pandavas' exile after losing the game of dice. Although the story of Nala appears to be an independent tale, its narration by a sage to Yudhisthira, in fact, gives him a perspective to view his acts and their consequences, and comes to the reader/listener as an illustration of the depth of Yudhisthira's despair. The temporal, spatial and the political contexts of the epic, in fact, become mutually constitutive in giving to it its structure.

All the texts discussed above also operate within certain historical and political contexts: Ray's novel contextualizes the fate of a modern day Krishna trapped within her personal aspirations and the value systems of a morally blinkered conservative society; Devi places her heroine in a Naxal affected Bengal struggling against institutionalized violence of powerful forces; and Divakaruni contextualizes a diasporic self in search of social acceptability, and a stable identity. However, these texts even while operating within the context of the epic from which they originate, and challenging established ideologies, also sometimes spill out of the discursive structure of the epic, or get entangled within the ideological inheritances of their leftovers. The shifting [con]texts of Draupadi, I believe, can become truly discursive only when they "make allowances for the complex and unstable" (Mills 44) processes that have produced her, and from which she has originated. The Mahabharata raises a number of issues about *dharma*, sexuality, subjectivity, slavery and kingship, and much more, without in fact challenging them. But it does participate in a discursive act that allows its women characters, particularly Draupadi, to engage in debates and pose questions to established laws. The "ongoing intertextual process" (Smith 161) of rewriting Draupadi is proof of its discursive powers.

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The Mimic Men: Ralph Singh, the Marginalized Politician

Dr. Pradip Kumar Panda

Abstract

The Mimic Men are dethroned individuals represented by Ralph Singhoften looked down on by the facilitated ones, the colonizers; they are forced to tolerate a hiatus, often at the psycho-social level connived by the colonial strategy of exploitation. The politician, Ralph Singh, despite being a representative of the colonized expresses his helplessness before the European rulers who despise the colonized in Trinidad, maintaining a distance resulting in "loss and disconnectedness." The colonized seek to ape the decorum and the style of the colonizers, the big; it is a deliberate attempt to imitate the European ones by those termed lowly, stagnant and deprived, in short, the Mimic Men or the inhabitants in the vicinity of the Island of Isabella and the region around in Trinidad. The protagonist along with others from his community fails to build self-confidence in his own personality as they have to settle amidst social fractures, chaos and colonial distance. The distrust in their own ability spreads around because of colonial strictures undermining their disposition, belongingness and persistent discord between the colonizers and the colonized. Politics seems a petty business to be humiliated often before the Europeans. The leader of the Mimic Men experiences a society which is "a haphazard, disordered and mixed society" often liable to be suppressed by colonial cruelty.

[Key words:- Disorder, Politics, Drama, Corruption & Dehumanization]

VS Naipaul seeks to make infamous colonial transformation which in the name of urbanizationvand development breeds corruption, inactivity and insipidity. Nature of politics changes from its alignment with benevolence, conscience and philanthropy to corruption, degeneration and petty concerns. In the days of Ralph Singh's grandfather, politicians were honoured and revered highly where as in his own days; politics seems to go to the dogs.

The playfulness and joy of involvement of the protagonist with Sandra also give in to barrenness of his political life. The political exuberance in Ralph Singh is a rare occasion; it often purged him of the sauce of his life. He foregoes joy, activity and enthusiasm to submit to inaction, frustrations and a sordid living bereft of colours.

VS Naipaul pleads the people of the world to have a common consent to atone the heinous indifference as a serious sin on the part of the European colonizers to leave holding the bag the migrant inhabitants of Isabella, a Trinidadian island, assuage them from the creeping narrowness of human existence and not let them be in queer streets.

The third world protagonist of Naipaul, Ralph Singh fights the cause of the aggrieved individuals hoping to find life, sustenance and stability in the world which denies such tranquility of life to them in the real turn of events. The individuals are marginalized, suppressed, tortured and threatened by socio-economic forces which they cannot voice against because of political and psychological strictures in the colonial world. They are super-imposed with an order that restricts and imprisons their wanton playfulness. They are alienated, segregated and dethroned from the social and colonial pedestal keeping hold of the reins of power. They in order to reduce the hazards of decolonization feel their stability and security short-lived. Freedom, joy and permanence are rather ephemeral entities; the socio-political predicament is captivating them for a dogged existence of insipidity, desolateness and decrepitude. They lose their fidelity and hopefulness in the present social order. They fight for a security which they hardly feel to attain ever. The expatriates along with Ralph Singh, the protagonist feel a difference with the old world order and hope to build a new class of opposition. The novel obtains a deterministic path, taking the expatriates towards frustration and nihilism. They move heaven and earth but much of a muchness, they are never able to transcend their sad plight. The events are arranged in a pat formula for them which seem contrived to be in malicious symmetry and oddly expected. The author voices, "We pretended to be real, to be learning to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the new world, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the new. (Mimic-157)

Ralph Singh tolerates a disenchanted existence. He shelters in a boarding house of London. He utters his speeches in retrospection. He comments on the traumatic situation voicing his own state of existence being insecure and impermanent. The exploited and the colonized, Ralph Singh, is put in a surrounding, that is disenchanted, dark and gloomy. The mention of "cold" and "crushed ice" (Mimic 4) suggests about a desolate, dry and deadened state of the being purged of enthusiasm after years-long exploitation; the protagonist is enduring the draconian laws and strictures connived by colonization since past years. He is never offered an arm-chair. Rather ceaseless and breathless endurance in his personal struggle has made him backward, dethroned and disgusted in life. Naipaul begins to portray the surrounding, "Snow, At last, my element. And these were flakes, the airiest crushed ice." (Mimic-4). The images of an empty, void and sapless existence feature Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*. An isolated and alienated sustenance is defined and suggested by Naipaul, "The room felt cold, exposed and abandoned. The boards were bare and gritty." (Mimic-4)

Ralph Singh is confused despite being intelligent and sensitive. The unequal society does not recognize him. He is a thrown away individual in a boarding house of London. He wants to access to recognition and express himself. His inability and the hindrances posed by the circumstances create in him "loss and disconnectedness" (The Mimic Men; A world without a center) Ralph Singh is unable to transform his present state of being. His wishes to share relationship with the big and create an affable and humane society remain impossible. He remains confined to the typical colonial situations. The kind of exploitation is usual, well-known and pre-designed where as the protagonist is uncertain about his own career. The author writes on behalf of the protagonist, "My career is by no means unusual." (Mimic-6)

The immigrants cannot enjoy the grandeur of existence, rather compromise with "lower-middle class surroundings."(Mimic-7) The immigrant is aware and endures the wrath of the society. The author says, "The Pacific Society has its cruelties." (Mimic-7) The inhabitants of Isabella, the island compose "a haphazard, disordered and mixed society." (Mimic-57) They are the backwards lagging behind in economy and development from the other groups. He looks down on his success as a politician as the well-placed in the society condescend to equate him with them for he belongs to the category of lowly established immigrants. The thought that

dominates all around is about "atheism and revolt." (Mimic-8) He cannot act as a politician but remains stagnant, passive and commits to inaction and he procures the "final emptiness."(Mimic-9) The joy of living is shattered being in permanent endurance to torture and subjugation. Ralph Singh voices, "Hate oppression, fear the oppressed." (Mimic-9) It is obvious that Ralph Singh who has experienced oppression is afraid of the same plight as a burnt child is afraid of fire. The immigrants expect nothing as the society has scarce benefits for them. They expect less and think of no significance to flog a dead horse, the colonial government.

The immigrants feel themselves cut off from the order of the past. Their present is disjointed from their past. They experience disorder around their abode of existence and hope for order but often, they do not enjoy it. They hope for a way out, they try to seek light but experience darkness left to them for they receive humiliation and torture. The protagonist purged of joy and enthusiasm experiences no colour where there is colour. The heart from the natural recreation is seized. There seems to be lack of unity in the natural phenomenon. Everything appears fragmented and void. In the tram, the crowd of people does not impart any joy but "Each man returning to his own cell."(Mimic-18) The factories whose lights radiate till the rivers look empty themselves. So, it is in the strain of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, the image of existence is felt "Empty and fraudulent." (Mimic-18) His amorous relations are half conquered. He does not conceive an attractive image of the girls but the continental girls are of "pale, bloodless colours" (Mimic-21) almost in their late forties. The protagonist recollects himself with Leini, Beatrice and others. The relationship with Leini only seems relevant and accepted; all other relations are distorted. Ralph says, "all else was perversion." (Mimic-24)

The social consciousness does not appear integrated, rather it seems hazy and irregular. The author states, "for all the continuing consciousness of wholeness and sanity, we had become distorted." (mimic-26) The protagonist has forgotten the real and the usual. He is disordered, out of way and tormented. Ralph says, "I found myself longing for the certainties of my life on the island of Isabella, certainties which I had once dismissed as shipwreck." (Mimic-26) There appears a fragmentation between them and the environment, "a growing dissociation between ourselves and the city." (Mimic-27) Experience and personality are kept apart, thus, destroying the integrity of their being. The protagonist has lost his tranquility of mind and expresses about

his vacillation. The imageries of decay and dryness feature the background of the novel. Avon Mouth is described as "a port set in a grey-green wasteland." (Mimic-31) The protagonist feels it difficult to pin his faith on his own personality and the circumstances around. Thus, existential moments feature his person and his locality for he expresses loss of trust and fidelity. He smells corruption at his own behest. He says, "My world was being corrupted." (Mimic-30) He expresses his abhorrence at the prostitute's supper peasant food, on a bare table in a backroom. He is a lusterless being. Ralph Singh is susceptible to "restlessness"(Mimic-32) that forms the essential theme of his life. Power measures the permanence of a leader. The politician seems wise at the beginning. A hearty and struggling politician proves "weak and vacillating." (Mimic-38) The colonial politician does not fall into the category of common politicians. The common political ambition is remarkable as "Desire for eviction and succession." (Mimic-36) The colonial ones are forced to quit order and sanctity. The moment he succeeds as a politician, then the harmony of order is destroyed. His condition of being in power is simultaneously a destruction of the order caused by the high-graded ones from the colonizing society. The politician who, one day, is down-graded "mean, intemperate and infirm"(Mimic-38) poses himself affable and charitable, described by the author as revealing "generosity, moderation and swift brutality." (Mimic-38) But the colonial politician out of bitterness and humiliation "Turns sour with in him." (Mimic-38) His spirit of rebelling for the good cause diminishes. He is compelled to spare his individuality, dignity and integrity of his being. Politics is just a celebratory mood to pass the occasion for a colonial politician. Ralph Singh features himself "As politician, as dandy, as celebrant." (Mimic-40) He develops a pessimistic opinion about his political career. He says, "The tragedy of power like mine is that there is no way down. There can only be extinction. Dust to dust, rags to rags, fear to fear." (Mimic-41)

The erotic sensibilities within Ralph develop a deep emotional tinge that turns to sensuality and love. Ralph thinks of Sandra as an attractive one to counter attack his feelings of "waste and helplessness." (Mimic-42) Ralph expresses his feeling, "we exchanged glances but for some reason did not speak." (Mimic-43) The author's description adds to the sensuality of the couple and does not image a love to be worshipped as ethereal. However, it is a way out from the hesitations caused by humiliations from his political engagements. The physical love turns to marriage in the end. Love, at first seems to be a passion, then a celebration to turn into

surrender for each other. Ralph finds solace for his empty self in Sandra. He hangs after Sandra for a life's cause but feels nervous to express his desire for marriage to Sandra. Both Sandra and his mother remain repugnant at each other which the author calls "mutual dismay." (Mimic-54) It is a relationship that imparts strength and happiness to Ralph despite the odds, to emancipate each other towards a kind of freedom and bliss of existence. Ralph does not look a gift horse in the mouth. Rather, he has a green eye to possess her.

V.S. Naipaul calls the society of Isabella, a hybrid society lacking order and equality. The expatriates are from diverse backgrounds. The conglomeration of all getting detached from their past and residing in a single island presents a picture of a mixed and multi-ordered life. The author says, "for everyone, the past has been cut away." (Mimic-57) The narrowness of island life features the lives of the people. The expatriates want to be recognized being under the shadow of the opulent ones. The narrator writes on behalf of them "We were dazzled to be among the rich." (Mimic-57) As they form a panoramic life, they appear as cosmopolitans arousing curiosity and better felt than that of the "halls of British Council." (Mimic-58) The British council offers chairs to the representatives from various regions and so is Isabella shattering persons from multi-faceted backgrounds. The natural landscapes of their native lands are differently attractive. But they coalesce in Isabella. One, from the west state of Mississipi and another from English midland, unite, here, in Isabella. A disjointed and diverse world is put to unity. After Ralph's marriage with Sandra, they recreate themselves in a newness and serenity of liveliness. Ralph finds strength, a new approach to his life, personally constructed from within and not to be sabotaged by external hurdles that is being free from the fear of getting damaged. Thus, the married couple imparts a joy of living in Isabella.

The married life of Ralph helps him to overcome the "narrowness of island life." (Mimc-69) The island politician suffers from restraints and constrictions. The same humiliated politician seeks refuge in the pleasure of married life, i.e. sharing relations with Sandra. He seeks an escape from the political turmoil that is nothing but a social disgust and distaste in the colonial context. The freedom of living offers the couple – a tranquility of existence that seems placid, wanton and playful. It offers them "A new life of activity." (Mimic-59) A departure from London is, in return, a blessing showered on them. It is newness and an elated living

ordained on Ralph. At the same time, money-making is indispensable in the life of an adult. His enormous adventures are partly inhibited by his want of money.

The surroundings around Isabella undergo a transition, that is, from the rural to the urban, from the medieval to the modern, the people parting with superstitions to accept an urbane rationality. The people catch up with the urban standards of life-style fetched with water, electricity, roads and varieties of awful urban developments. Ralph deals with people and money with the same temperament. He has given up racial discrimination in employing his foreman, clerk and labourer. He recognizes the man who lets him down and remains cautious. Ralph says "I handled man as I handled money, by instincts." (Mimic-61) The town of crippleville gains the capitalistic tendencies slowly pervading within. Ralph, through his speeches expresses his awareness of money, buildings and property. The two members of the couple, themselves, undergo a change in relationship. Ralph expresses and reiterates the joy of a new living. The name of the city has changed from former Kripalville to present Crippleville synchronizing the development of the city. The foreign banks such as American, Canadian or British increase in numbers from day to day. Thus, it now, signs of economic adventure. The developments that come later on add to the glamour of the old that glittered. The author says, "Crippleville acquired an integrity which was to last. It wasn't forethought; it was instinct, intuition." (Mimic-63) The unity of varied developments fetches an elation that expresses itself as the spirit that is spontaneous and natural to the joy of Crippleville. It blossoms as the morning flowers coming up fresh and brightening. Naipaul illustrates, "Success led to success." (Mimic-63) Ralph before marriage was unsettled, the indulgement of Ralph everywhere seemed to be without fidelity; it was unreal and Ralph lacked faith in himself. He experienced a sense of loss and faithlessness. Time has wiped away partly to the distaste and the affairs around do not seem perverse. Ralph longs for affability from Sandra. Ralph develops taste for the belongingness with Sandra. He wants to share all relations with Sandra. He praises Sandra, "Sandra appears all naturalness, all delight. And perhaps she is." (Mimic-66) Ralph considers himself fortunate in being with Sandra but does not convey her anything about his desires for money, his passions of youth and the delightful tranquility he enjoys sharing her relations.

Ralph gives utterances so as to modify the dispositions of each other towards one another. He should command but he adjusts and obeys. Sandra battles where she should consider and understand. Ralph hopes to strengthen and better their mutual relationship. Ralph says, "I thought that Sandra shared that placidity, partly her gift, which had come to me with our marriage." (Mimic-70) They, at times, feel the "narrowness of island life." (Mimic-69) People do not talk embracing each other. In other words, the society seems less homely. At times, they feel the absence of recreation or inability of enjoyment even from either the theatre or an orchestra. Sociability seems to degrade down. Ralph is calculative on economic matters but Sandra is less demanding. She is less greedy and expects less of money. The author comments, "with every new encounter, every new friend, she fashioned a matching myth of racial niceness." (Mimic-71)

Isabella is brimmed with natural recreation and gaiety. Ralph and Sandra move in wanton playfulness offered by beaches and mountain villages with their "slave history and slave customs," (Mimic-72) the Negroes inhabiting the rundown villages. Also, they enjoy wandering about the air-port, bars, restaurants, night clubs and lounges. Ralph has no pleasure, yet, of building a house of his own. He lives in an old-rented house which is no home but a decrepit shelter to pass the days. Further, Ralph is building a Roman house that may offer the exotic pleasures and warmth of living. The author presents images of both infatuation and disgust for the new house.

The narrative proceeds with extension of self analysis by the author with simultaneous exposition of the theme. The words are repeated with slow proliferation of the threads of the narrative. However, the novelist always ends with dark conclusions at every sub-topic of typical colonial situation. Pessimism pervades the entire course of the novel. The images of the Negroes bring instances of the dark culture, their slavery and the distance of the community from civilization, for instance, the Negroes wander being without apron.

The narrator foresees a vision of disorder that has no centre and under no rein of control, Crippleville is dying and decayed. It grows mechanical in the succession of days. Ralph is totally frustrated, "I am one, riding below a sky threatening snow to the very end of an empty world." (Mimic-86) Ralph seeks to part with the servitude that Isabella has tolerated for long

years.   The author expresses, "He was the late intruder, the picturesque Asiatic, linked to neither." (Mimic-82) He is neither a slave nor a master. He wants to renunciate from the bitter discrimination against the indentured suffered and endured. Ralph's successes rather keep him apart and aggravate the breaking up of relationship. The development of his surroundings, the city is also affected by corruption. Kripalville, the name has degenerated into Crippleville, which is a wretched indication to corruption. Ralph's interests are developed, refined and urbane but his social surrounding is narrow and constricted. He wears "the profoundly cosmopolitan mold." (Fanon) Thus, Ralph's dispositions and the island life are poles apart. In the long and short of it, Ralph does not want to be left in the lurch and expresses his desires to abandon the clumsy and confined living in Isabella, corrupted and distorted.

The politicians take themselves low in their birth; expose a humble status of them. They project themselves as fallen down as the street children. The author says, "Politicians proclaimed the meanness of their birth and the poverty of their upbringing and described themselves with virtuous range as bare foot boys." (Mimic-89) The inhabitants of Isabella feel under a silent pain caused out of tortures, frustrations and failures of generations. They lack enterprise and exhilaration in their works. Ralph feels the repercussions of the outer world apart from the confinement of Isabella. Ralph says, "I resolved to abandon the shipwrecked island." (Mimic-127)

The communities of the eastern hills around Isabella are far removed from one another. The Spaniards do not allow the Negroes to shelter in their vicinity and keep them at an arm's length. There are no intermarriages and exchanges among the communities such as the Negroes, the Spaniards and the Caribs. The author says about the Spaniards, "They permitted no Negroes to settle among them; sometimes they even stoned Negro visitors." (Mimic-130)

The hegemony on the lower classes is characterized by disregard and hatred incurred upon them. There are repeated movements by the lower classes and they are at daggers drawn against the government. The movements are characterized by labour strikes and agitations by the workers for better economic reforms. The working classes are struggling to obtain some of the liberal rights from the British parliament to access to political democracy altering Trinidadian

history. The movement led by his father is politically docile. He wants to give a boost to the people while they are on their agitated ways to rebellions and movements.

Ralph is frustrated by pointing at the motives of corruption and alludes its cause to the colonial society building itself at the expense of blood of the indentured. The instances are forced consumptions of "tainted oil" and "raw flesh". (Mimic-142) Ralph's involvement in the nationalist movements is intended to establish a society purged of corruption but it is already impregnated by taint and dishonesty from the history of the past. Ralph impersonates himself among the dockworkers growing unruly and violent. The movements by the lower classes are considered by the author as "eccentric." (Mimic-136) They want to win the glory and pride of their community. However, the territories had undergone a kind of dehumanization that was termed "a disease". (Mimic-137) The author says, "Each territory reproduced its own symptoms of disease." (Mimic-137) The eyes had become stolid enough to tolerate the evil trends superimposed that were bigotry, "disorder and drama." (mimic-137) Disorder was eluded by the people as if it was order. The initiation by the leaders such as Ralph's father was genuine concern for order. Ralph's father could settle the strike to win the hand of the mass and soothe their anger.

The expatriates want to emancipate their status that for the rulers is condescending to consider; the lower classes' plight remains unmitigated. The aboriginal is also "fighting his way up and out of poverty and darkness". (mimic-138) Naipaul repeats the words "disorder and drama" (Mimic-137) to emphasize ceaseless revolutions as the burning of sugar-cane fields. Naipaul says about the temper of the time, "Riots and burnings to continue." (Mimic-134) The leaders and the Deschampsneufs guide the agitating class.

It was an unusual affair to wound each other's racial belongingness. They paid a heavy price for it, that is, till "bloodshed and bitterness." (Mimic-143) Each community had the common enemy, the colonial or the British government. The agitations were settled and the volunteers were appeased. It was a kind of mechanization by Ralph's father to win the "Comradeship" of the working class. (Mimic-137) The excitement of rebellions displeased the people of Isabella for them being men with petty domestic interests could not pay interests to the

large events of movements. They did not strain their nerves in social upheavals. They did not rub shoulders with the working class rebels.

There was wide hiatus between the facilitated section and the down trodden; yet, the Deschampsneufs, despite their pride of aristocracy could socialize with the poorest of the boys. In the war between the two breeds, the master and the slave, the Deschampsneufs were involved. Ralph's father's concerns with strikes and burnings had become remote and did not come into the scene. The new activities of excitement such as the Christmas meeting of Isabella Turf club organized horse racing as royal sports, which was named as Malaya Cup. The evil incident of killing the prize race horse, Tomango was linked to heinous corruption and malevolence. Such episodes had backlashes of the bad deeds having liaison with his father backed by administration and having the favour of the governor after him. Ralph reminds of "raw flesh" and "tainted holy oil," (Mimic-150) time and again, implying at the misdeeds of corruption. Ralph says, "But what I next heard chilled and sickened me and gave me more strongly than ever the sensation of rawness and violation: rubbery, raw flesh, tainted holy oil. It was more than a death." (Mimic-150) The Killing of Tomango as the race-course suicide and the suffragette movement were intimately linked. Politics and movements were thrown cold water by the people guided by virtue but the unholy incidents added fuel to fire for the political issues to the flare around. Ralph fights shy of his father's day.

Ralph's father had pioneered revolutions with a purview to the economic improvement of his fellow beings. The unrest after the war, where his father was the leader, begged for increase of seats for the local representatives from the British government. Ralph, after winning the seats among the representatives realizes that he gets no real power being elected a politician since they do not have the ability either of the unity of the workers' union or of the sufficient capital offered to them. Ralph realizes that the support of his companions was insignificant and learns that "Success changes nothing." (Mimic-20) The island still remains under the British authority and they have to dance to the tune of the British authorial power. Hintzen comments that the colonial politicians elected from the down trodden are compelled to cater to the interests of those powerful actors that they cannot control." (Hintzen-9)

The relationship of Ralph is linked to a tradition of politics continued since the days of his father. With the advent of the Americans, the new look of urbanity presented a developed and prosperous city of Isabella at which his father's movements seemed past and evaded from memory. His father's day was to win people's favour, working for their cause through strikes, burnings and the hullabaloo of those days begging electoral seats from the British paramountcy. But the present day's appeals seem grand and create "A new sense of nearness to great events." (Mimic-159)

The relationships with his friends like Deschampsneufs, Browne, Hok, Cecil and others were sharing feelings of adolescence, secrets and temperaments of one another. They commonly developed abhorrence and disgust at the island and its colonial rule. They felt confined, dejected and distressed. They tolerated the bitterness of marginalisation and were counted as the left-outs of the world. They felt castigated like the "abandoned and forgotten." (Mimic-157)

The author points out the pain and isolation. The disease and the corruption of the past world pervade into the new; the evil encroaches more of the good to frustrate the inhabitants making them feel entangled by the rubbish and disenchanted being cut off from the mainstream of the society despite their struggle for recognition and an identity. The pretence by the adolescents is a mask to hide the suffering that is real.

The desire for escape is strive for an order and a settlement. The 'absurd disorder' (Mimic-166) and "placelessness" (Mimic-166) create a sense of hollowness which sustains its effect within them till their painful end. The unease is permanent and it is a gradual sabotage of the colonized confined till their doom. Naipaul rightly points out and speaks in the voice of the threatened, "I sickeningly recognized that sense of captivity and lurking external threat, that pain of a rich world destroyed and rendered null." (Mimic-166)

"Poisoning feeling of inadequacy "(Mimic-194) is internalized by the inhabitants by its long deadening effect. The Childhood friends, Hok and Browne share also the feelings conflicting with him but the feeling disheartening about their racial origin is common. Browne, being politically active, composes a novel in the pattern of Uncle Tom's cabin about a slave, who out of disgust with his work escapes and "Returns willingly to slavery and death." (Mimic-169) The colonial apparatus does not change and operates by its permanent hegemony. Slavery is the

usual form of exploitation. It is to discount to chant the creation of a healthy society. Memmi writes that the colonized society "is a diseased society in which internal dynamics no longer succeed in creating new structures." (Memmi-98-99) The Internal strength of the colonized is fragile enough to break off the colonial stringency. Gradually, they seem to with draw themselves from the tenacious struggle and attain dormancy till a further upheaval. However, an anti-colonial sentiment resonates its voice all around. The name called, "Whitey-pockey", (Mimic-183) pronounced by Mrs. Deschampsneufs as commonly used by the street Negroes to point at the whites is an indication of women's bitter awareness against the European colonizers. A woman attempts at vulgarity. Often the remark is used to mock at those who seek to abandon the island and also its rules. They seek pleasure of coining money elsewhere. The influence of the oncoming culture is prominent. Eagleton implies, "trying somehow to go right through those estranging definations to emerge somewhere on the other side." (Eagleton-24) The exploited protagonist passes across the colonial phenomena of severity and transcends one culture to reach the other so as to escape its rigours.

Ralph is ready to leave the island of Isabella and take voyage to London. As he feels suffocated inside the island, he is repeatedly asked about his intentions and actions behind his planned journey. For instance, he is asked by Mr. Deschampsneufs how he would spend a Sunday in London. Ralph, has, already, undone the limitations imposed by the rules of the island. He feels he is abroad already. Still other people speak in high terms about the island and assume Ralph might return to the island again after reaching London. During the days, when he wants to commence his journey, people try to convince him that the island of Isabella is a paradise which he would discover after arriving at London. It is a change of place which demands accommodation and adaptation to new ways of life, new sentiments; assimilation to the new individuals and face a foreign society with the different breeds of inhabitants. Thus placelessness creates a disturbance in identification or allocation of an identity. Homi Bhabha in his "Signs Taken for Wonders" discusses that he literally loses a feeling of a place or his sense of identification with a place and he equates placelessness with loss and disorder. (Mimic-154) The attitude to a place and a run of history are disoriented while he marches from Isabella to London. Albert Memmi terms it "permanent duality." (Memmi-106) A dislocation characterizes the psyche, feelings and disposition of the protagonist that occurs out of a haphazard existence and

frequent migrations. Ralph, first of all, feels shy of the people and the surrounding and then he changes his abode from Isabella to London, the European landscapes, essentially being the background.

The racial theory involving division, fragments and apathy among the communities is well projected by Naipaul. Naipaul brings in a variegated cosmopolitan picture:- "He divided nations into the short visioned, like the Africans, who remained in a state of nature, the long-visioned like Indians and Chinese obsessed with the thoughts of 'eternity; and the medium-visioned, like himself."

The transformed version of Ralph a politically aware being presents itself in London. He is a changed being, yet he reminds Sandra and the Roman house. Browne and Ralph are poles apart in their interests though they stay together in London. The journal, *The Socialist*, Browne and others combined with the joint efforts help in serving the motto of their politics. The author says, "so long as our dependence remained unquestioned, our politics were a joke." (Mimic-206) He continues, "These politicians were contractors and merchants in the town, farmers in the country, small people offering no policies; offering only themselves. They were not highly regarded. Their names and photographs appeared frequently in the news papers but they were slightly ridiculous figures; stories about their illiteracy or crookedness constantly circulated." (Mimic-206)

The scene of politics is dogged enough for the people; that is, just to go ruthlessly with the herd and pass the occasion with the common people, not of higher status, belongingness or power. Their names are published for no bigger cause; the stories about them are of the concerns of the hacks and the haggard's. Politics is not a big game but of down to earth treatment. The scene is condescending when the politicians are termed "ridiculous figures" (Mimic-206) susceptible to the cynicism and sarcasm of the people. The people pooh-pooh them often. Politics does not remain a glorious ideal of pride but a casual concern for all. We never find an Apple pie order. The success in politics is never up to the appeal of the people. The present days' politicians are ridiculous to such a degree that is far degenerated than the days of his grandfather, esteemed in politics. The "order, benevolence and service" (Mimic-207) showered bliss on his grandfather but the present days' leaders are petty people to be laughed at. The game

of politics comes in contrast with the change of days. A loving affair of the past dispels bitterness in the days of Ralph. He being a politician does not recognize the warmth in politics in a changed context of turmoil of colonial dependence. The politicians plough the sands being in queer streets.

The predicament of a chaotic political state and a simultaneous aspiration for order exposes the protagonist as a colonial politician responsible to his people despite severe discouragement to the political act ending in attacks of cynicism, distrust and condescension. The order is a superstructure that the politician strains all his nerves to maintain and continue though "the chaos lies all within." (Mimic-209) The politician, being in servitude to the cause of the people stays impersonal and devoted to public affairs only. He contributes labour in enthusiasm with the awareness of a public figure. He is detached from his own person to work in abstractions that is; he remains fully indulged in public organizations and administrative works. He foregoes himself to pay to others. Ralph describes elatedly his initiation and engagement as follows:-

"Imagine the public meetings in squares, in halls. Imagine the tours along dusty country roads in the late afternoon and at night, the headlights illuminating the walls of sugar-cane on either side. Imagine the developing organization in the Roman house, the willing black-bands of clerks from business houses and our civil service. Imagine the lengthening reports of our speeches in the Inquirer."(Mimic-210) The politician keeps sweating while he manages gatherings, mob-violence and vulgarity.

The movement is a success in drawing the people from all races and communities to create a drama undoing hindering impulses and inhibitions, the Roman house being the central metaphor of the movement. The movement inculcates in the people a sense of intimacy, sincerely accepted by the people, allowing the leaders a room for manipulation of the mass and furnishing before all the fidelity towards the cause of freedom, dethronement to slavery, partition with disorder and purposelessness. Poverty and hunger of the working classes are in priority to be rooted out. *The* voice *of The Socialist* resonates, "we were socialists. We stood for the dignity of the working man. We stood for the dignity of distress. We stood for the dignity of our island, the dignity of our indignity. (Mimic-215) The politicians do not look a gift-horse in the mouth.

The scenario foregrounds active political participation. The "processions, demonstrations, motorcades" (Mimic-217) specify the activities around the election hours. The grievances of the people are termed authentic and the speeches are connived to beguile people's sentiments for a success seeming at near-end. They confide in Browne to lead them with new tempers and approaches to deal with people both colloquially and solemnly with the differences of situations. People are allowed to express before them their claims for justice, listening to which Ralph and the election associates are often fatigued. For instance, the Negroes are pathetic and passionate enough for their dignity. They are out of sorts, harassed by insensitive white arrogance.

The prescriptions of the constitution and the grand slogans behind power are far removed to respond to amelioration of the distressed and alleviation of poverty. But a hold on power enables them to act against poverty and hunger. But racial antagonism is a hurdle serious and adamant on the way to seek liberation, a freedom and redemption from all colonial causes. An integration of all responsible social elements to build up an able national structure is the prime issue of the hours of colonial independence. The politician stands like the beacon light to the oncoming occasions hoping for order and tranquility. Ralph says, "A man, I suppose, fights shy only when he hopes, when he has a vision of order, when he feels strongly there is some connection between the earths on which he walks and himself." (Mimic-225)

Hintzen comments, "Racial issues soon destroyed only potential for lower class solidarity." (Hintzen-43) Thus, hostility between the communities and the ambiguity of order and disorder cause to vacillate, the colonized stays in dilemma between the possibility and impossibility of sustainability. Ralph further says, "But there was my vision of a disorder which it was beyond any one man to put right." (Mimic-225) The image of disorder is heinous and the evil looks more powerful to the colonial politician. Yet, penance is cherished to overcome the absurdity of "riding to the end of the flat world." (Mimic-225) The protagonist among the distressed is yet to hold out the olive branch. Much of a muchness, the disaster is permanent and the atonement is a rare vision.

The politician being either in the cabinet or in the council broods over the fragile economic structure. The peasant suffers out of failure of crops. The taxation policies that change over time and the land resettlement bill occupy the politician's mind for they are the

events of his time. The colonial politician is ridiculed being in concerns of the plight of the people. The poverty of the people makes him droop down and power makes him susceptible to people's criticism.The politician keeps up appearances despite the presence of odds. The presence of the English expatriates is treated as "indignity and an intolerable strain on our treasury." (Mimic-228) The salary of the officials and the expenses of the government are met from Trinidad's treasury.

The English rulers had their say in administration and monopolized it. But at times, the white rulers and the Trinidadian ones worked in harmony in administration. Besides, the natives expressed loyalty in civil service. The indigent ones that were absorbed into civil service were colored men, who stayed in England for years together. Their complexion was fare. Besides, their children studied in English medium schools.

The colonial politician responds to the moments of his success with his personal esteem. He is the pivot of hope and dependence for all his men. But, he realizes the insignificance of his position for he is soon captivated by his humiliated state, that is, the colonial politician is liable to all sorts of criticism. Above all, the futility of his power is that he is handicapped before the European colonial tyrants. He is purged of his freedom and enthusiasm of political indulgement.

The folk-leader out of poignant relationship and self-disgust is remarked by the novelist as follows: "Even if there had been the will to go forward from the emptiness of his position, this recognition would have weakened it." (Mimic-220) In his letters are seen this nostalgic past, that includes his days in Isabella, the elated occasions with his parents, the school fellows and the days of rebellions led by his father. He remains affected by his own race and his own past. His friend, Browne is seen active in public meetings and the council and heard in radio broad casts. He appears as a bright statesman in racial clubs and diplomatic along with his political retinue. He had before him the Negroes and the discrimination between the master and the slave is deep within. The brutality of racial hostility creates pain and self-disgust in him. The leader of the colonized, who had an eye on the main chance, feels him a man of straw.

Drama, is, otherwise, an activity that presents us an idea and builds up an insight into the active world. It specifies our action in the world and adds to our pride. The colonial politician equates his drama with public works such as construction of buildings, roads and activities of

prosperity and development. Drama contains mirth and interest in life. The activities in the island now mean "industrialization and investment." (Mimic-235) The industries are for making biscuits and filling tubes with toothpaste. The adventures in industrialization, business and contract boost the economy to save the people of Isabella from a ruin and a rebellion. Work and activities replace slumber and loneliness; and urbanity replaces the old rural landscape. Thus Isabella undergoes a transition to shelter the new factories and enterprises.

As a leader, Ralph is, at times, between the devil and the deep sea to gamble with plans and foresees the efficacy, either to establish the alumina plant or venture for the bauxite contract. He is an ugly customer of the uncertain contracts. He loves his interest in the drama of nationalization. *The Socialist* preaches in favour of nationalization despite his hesitation. He is to build "the fortunes of his race." (Mimic-239) He becomes surreptitiously, the devotee of nationalization overcoming the violent incidents of burning the sugar cane fields along with the rigours of the civil servants. People have confided strength in him. To let down their wishes is to be killed or there is no other way. He is expected to be active where he can no more be in tunes.

The movements and delegations keep Ralph occupied in the sway of the people. London is the centre of politics where the decisions regarding political inclusions and exclusions are held. It is a crucial interval hot with the issues of burning sugar-cane fields. The demonstrations are held in front of the air-port and Ralph makes a speech proper to the occasion. The talk with the officials is postponed. Thus all aides and associates disappear to seek pleasure at different corners of the city. Each day, the politician is entangled in activities with the boys. He banquets with London representatives and holds interview with BBC's overseas service. The officials also discuss about the results of nationalization. There are held press conferences to which the London gazette does not respond.

"The hardening of attitudes in Isabella" (Mimic-244) is observed about as everywhere he faces an obstruction. The impression in the surrounding mocks against him. His request is often refused and he is not allowed to carry on issues as per his volition. He is cut short. The game of politics stretches far long in his career and he wants to deviate from consistent assistance to the big in politics.

He, with his dexterity and veracity in politics has brought colours into the city. The moment he shirks responsibility, he feels nothingness of taking revenge on the city that has caused his humiliations. A departure from politics, at any cost, makes him feel "undignified" (Mimic-245) and Ralph adds, "I felt I was bleeding, with that second intimation of the forlornness of the city, on which, twice, I had fixed so important a hope." (mimic-245) After his brief acquaintances with Lady Stella and Lord Stockwell, he expresses his pessimistic vision about the world order. London seems hollow. He can never locate any joy or harmony of existence as expressed by him, "and soon I was saddened, but pleasurably, not by the loss, in this roaring red city of village greens and riders on horse-back and milk-maids and fairs and eggs in baskets and journeys by country folk in London town, but also by that timid, direct vision of the world, neither of which had been mine, neither vision, of delight, nor world, of order." (Mimic-251)

The departure from London to Isabella is a moment of flux, a gradual shift from the scene of politics, as departure from Sandra; still he reminds Lady Stella. A farewell to politics offers calmness, but the past seemed troublesome until he aspired for the present to be free from responsibility. Just at the moment of departure, the present seems spoilt. (Mimic-254) He says, "Within minutes, my world was spoilt. So recently whole and my calm was gone." (Mimic-254) He feels he is ambulating in an unreal world. The places and streets strike him with his faint memory. The departure from politics makes him perceive the world from a distance for which he remains reflective and produces a vision. The world is not gay and delighting but looks perverse.

He feels sick and retarded. He has lost the power of judgement and feels sigh in his deepest corners. He reminds of Sally, Sandra, his father and Lord Stock well. The warmth of sex and flesh also does not appeal to him with passions. He is further, committed to no action. The moment of inactivity and nothingness stretches far and far having no limits. There are both fear and calmness in the moment. The protagonist without spiritual solace does not experience fulfillment but turns neutral with inaction. Standing beside himself, he is at his wit's ends. He remains unable to communicate from his self. He cannot make a resolution at the termination of his career. He seems to take the wind out of his sails. He utters, "The Self dropped away, layer

by layer; what remained dwindled to a cell of perception indifferent to pleasure and pain; neutral perception, finer and finer, having validity existing only because of that probing which growing fainter, yet had to be apprehended, because it was the only proof of life, fine perception reaching minutely only to time, which was also the universe." (Mimic-258)

Ralph justifies the "nature of his political life." (Mimic-260) He cannot put up with his retirement from active politics. He comes at odds with "resignation and silence." (Mimic-260) The calmness which he sought while he held the reins of power offers him new tediousness and deserted solitude. His private life and his public disposure are, now, the two sides of the coin. His private pecuniary engagements, his establishments in Crippleville, his marital relations with Sandra and his advancement with Windy and Stella have also added to the impression of his public conduct. Thus, his abstain from power drives him towards a deadening of the drama and he, even, hesitates to read the newspapers that brought out his names and pictures.

The persons, who are not popular and recognized, now, are rising to the seat of power. They aspire to rise from the state of chaos and access to the chair revered by the people. They breed disorder and obtain it as an efficacious means to ascend till the zenith of power. They commit to politics to relieve themselves from distress. Naipaul writes, "The faceless man, who out of disorder of this sort rise to the top and are briefly glorious, are never guilty." (Mimic-262)

Ralph, now plays false with politics. His concerns were blessing to his people but his "inactivity and folly amounted to his cruelty." (Mimic-262) The tales of distress are not paid heed to by him anymore. He keeps himself engaged in pleasures when several families are destroyed; distressed children and women are harassed. Thus he wants to be in action and appease his quest for fulfillment. He wants again to play at the behest of a responsibility. He feels himself a betrayer without duty and involvement. That he comes to terms with another role is not a surprise as he prefers to harp on the same string.

The desolate feelings of "despair and emptiness" (mimic-265) are replayed by order and solace by Ralph's engagement in a hotel. Ralph has lost the glamour in his experiences purged of colours. They have lost their forms and do not pertain to the present setting. The experiences appear hollow, shapeless and do not appeal to him anymore. The protagonist, Ralph is detached and segregated from his past. He seems to throw cold water on his past that has lost its relevance

to the present. Ralph is searching for an order in the history of events. He wants to visualize himself as a student, as a politician and as a refugee-migrant.

His engagement in radio discussions, preparing radio talks on third world matters in regard to colonialism stands to reason that he is a devotee of the destitute. He works for the third world cause at a pinch and he has the political issues on the brain.

His existence is of an isolated and alienated sort. About his stay in London, [which I suppose] Ralph says, "so this present residence in London, which I suppose can be called exile." (Mimic-271) His homelessness is wretched. The state of desperation makes him faint and dull. He is cut off from his past. The helplessness is deadening. He justifies to have spent his life in the manner of four fold division as prescribed by the Aryans. He says, "I have been a student, householder and man affairs, recluse." (Mimic-274) He counts his emotions as frustrated. His marriage is "an episode in parenthesis." (Mimic-274) Till the end, the fare look of society is never blessed on his life. His history is ought to be real between the lines as a tragic legend of the colonial exodus, who had been at least a leader for the inhabitants and the colony.

He is by long odds, a frustrated being. N. Rama Devi points out the irony in Ralph Singh's life where he is forced to play a perverse role. She writes that he is "condemned to play a role which can only perpetuate the bastard status of his little world." (Rama Devi) She further points at the duality of perversity: "Politics is a challenge as well as a trap for a colonial politician." (Rama Devi)

The Mimic Men reaches the tragic status of the novels of Thomas Hardy such as The Mayor of Casterbridge. Michael Henchard falls into the tragic course of fate, which Hardy calls "the general drama of pain" (Hardy) that is inevitable. Ralph, in the similar manner, due to incapacity in terms of power, finance and colonial assistance fails to alleviate the political crises arranged spatially to curse him with misfortunes. Life plays him false.

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The Enexplicability of Events in '*The Trial*'

Prachi Mahaima

Abstract

The works of Franz Kafka, the well-known existentialist of the twentieth-century, are characteristic of their engagement with the flaws and loopholes of civilization while also dealing with the minutiae of individual consciousness and psychology in modern times. 'The Trial' is one such literary text in which the author has led an exhaustive probe into various layers and dimensions of the legal system of the modern state through the story of Joseph K. A critical analysis of any of the texts of Kafka is a demanding one because of the ambiguous references and the exaggerated metaphors incorporated. This paper aims to study the inexplicability of the events as they transpire in 'The Trial' and shed light on the deeper messages posited by them. In addition, the paper also attempts to relate the fictionality of the experiences of the protagonist with the reality of the modern citizen of the State who is constrained by Law and Justice. The later part of the paper is an exploration into the condition of modernity which is marked with uncertainty with humans drifting in search of purpose and meaning, reiterating the existentialist stance of Kafka.

Keywords – absurd, alienation, justice, identity, modern

"When there was peace, he was for peace: when there was war, he went.

Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:

Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard."

These lines taken from the poem "The Unknown Citizen" composed by the twentieth-century English-American poet W.H. Auden is perfectly in tune with most of Franz Kafka's writing. The poem sarcastically brings into notice the condition of a citizen in a world dominated by the bureaucracy where his identity boils down to mere numbers and letters, even after he dies. Eventually, they are unknown and faceless and nothing can ever be ascertained as to what their fate holds.

Franz Kafka, born on 3rd July, 1883, was a German-speaking Bohemian novelist who preeminently wrote to explore the existence of an individual in the modern world. Kafka constantly suffered and struggled, venting his pain through art. Most of his writings are heavily inspired by his life which is draped in multiple allegorical narratives. He lived a short life but the versatile gamut of his work encompasses almost all the primary existential dilemmas of the modern man. The characters in Kafka's fiction are merely mouthpieces who voice the collective crisis of every reader, crisis which transcends temporality and is relevant at all times. It, therefore, is in keeping with the present times too. *'The Trial'* is Kafka's masterpiece and can be categorized as an absurdist piece of literature where every subsequent occurrence in the narrative instead of contributing to a logical conclusion, complicates comprehension further. The story follows the life of Joseph K., the chief clerk in a bank, who is suddenly arrested one morning without being informed of the reason or who the accuser is. Starting from the first sentence, Kafka creates an air of mystery and uncertainty around the plot and the protagonist - K.: *"Someone must have traduced Joseph K., for without having done anything wrong, he was arrested one fine morning. His landlady's cook, who always brought him breakfast at eight o'clock, failed to appear on this occasion. That had never happened before"* (Kafka 7). The tone of the narration immediately marks a shift from the usual pattern, emphasizing on the break from routine and simultaneously hinting at something absurd and uncommon along the way. The entire novel revolves around ascertaining who this 'someone' is and what did he traduce about K. As the story of K. progresses, the inexplicability of the things he experiences in the course of the lawsuit, becomes more and more evident. The story begins and not only the reader but the protagonist K. is also deep into confusion. The reader and K. both expect for an explanation to follow, but to no avail. One of the literary critics Thomas M. Kavanagh has pointed out in one of his papers how the reader is actually removed by one degree from the plot as compared to the central character K. While K. directly participates in the events and is still unable to derive logic from the entire set-up, the reader who observes everything from behind the objective third person narration is at a severe loss of meaning throughout the text.

Joseph K. inquires the warders Franz and Willem expecting some explanation of why he is a prisoner in his own home. Unfortunately, even the direct statements made by these two characters fail to serve the purpose. They say - *"We are not authorized to tell you that. Go to*

your room and wait there. Proceedings have been instituted against you, and you will be informed of everything in due course. I am exceeding my instructions in speaking freely to you like this" (Kafka 9). It is noteworthy that as one ascends the hierarchy of the bureaucracy, the epistemological hiatus becomes more and more prominent. Franz who first greets K. does not speak to him at all. Willem, who is above Franz in rank, says the above to K. which again does not shed any light on the matter at hand. Soon after, K. is taken to the inspector who is above these warders in position and responsibility and who is expected to reveal why K. is arrested, but the conversation between him and K. also turns out to be disappointing. He says- *"These gentlemen here and myself have no standing whatever in this matter of yours, indeed we hardly know anything about it. I can't even confirm that you are charged with an offence, or rather I don't know whether you are. You are under arrest, certainly, more than that I do not know"*(Kafka 19). Evidently, the entire system fails to clarify who instigated the trial. In later parts of the text, when K. is called for his first interrogation, he and the reader again harbor hopes for some form of justification but are, as expected, let down. In the Court of Enquiries, K. ends up venting his own frustration amidst the strange crowd of people who turn out to be officials. They do nothing except stare at K. like he is a mad man while the Examining Magistrate concludes by saying *"I merely wanted to point out that today-you may not yet have become aware of the fact- today ye have flung away with your own hand all the advantages which an interrogation invariably confers on an accused man"* (Kafka 58). The targeting of individuals randomly by the powerful authorities has been showcased here. The ruling court of justice and the various officials working under it are always shrouded in darkness as the search continues. K. points it out several times that the higher officials never come into the picture which indicates that there is something suspicious behind the functioning of the entire legal system of the modern state. In the later parts of the text, on meeting Block, the corn-merchant, he realizes not just the judges but the higher lawyers of the main court are also never in reach. The biblical story which the prison chaplain tells K. rather symbolizes the same through the man who never succeeds in entering the court of law where the most powerful officials exist.

Kafka's works are characteristic of their complexity and bizarre occurrences where one is expected to participate directly in the narrative and look for the denotations and connotations in every episode. The specialtyof Kafka is that the irrational elements of the plot are incorporated

so intelligently in the framework of a fictional world which resembles reality that they become an indispensable piece of the puzzle. On such occasions, the irrational and the inexplicable just become another possibility for the reader for interpretations instead of their perception as a disruption of reality. The pattern of this narrative substantiates the same. K. explores the entire landscape of his town, visiting the strangest corners, in desperation to find any significant cause of the troubles he is being subjected to. In the year that passes between his thirtieth and thirtyfirstbirthday, none of the potential helpers of K. actually help him towards an explanation. The inexplicability persists throughout. Albert Camus points about Kafka that he "*expressed tragedy by the everyday and the absurd by the logical*" which is exactly the case with The Trial as well.

The style of narration contributes to this absurdity of things in the plot. Too often in the story, when K. is in conversation with a character concerning his lawsuit, the statements made by them which make complete sense when looked at separately, reach no logical conclusion when analyzed collectively. One of the most prominent exemplifications can be seen in K.'s encounter with the painterTotirelli. On the recommendation of one of his clients, when K. visits the painter overwhelmed with despair, he returns even more clueless than before. Totirelli talks to K. about three possibilities in front of him which are definite acquittal, ostensible acquittal and postponement respectively. While explaining to K. that definite acquittal is out of the question yet probable according to legends, he contradicts his position as a mediator. He says- "*In the code of the Law, which admittedly I have not read, it is of course laid down on the one hand that the innocent shall be acquitted, but it is not stated on the other hand that the Judges are open to influence*" (Kafka 172). The rest of the conversation is equally senseless as the painter points out different possibilities but never tells K. which would be best suited for him and how he should move forward with it. He also constantly emphasizes that if K. is innocent, he will be definitely acquitted which is a situational irony. Titorelli concludes by saying- "*I hope my statements were lucid enough*". While his statements are undeniably lucid, the elucidation is not. The pointlessness of every such conversation bears heavy on both the protagonist and the reader. The culmination of the opposite effects of the direct statements made by significant characters occurs in the cathedral. The priest narrates an entire story of a man who fails to access the Court of Law. The man may be a representative for K. But eventually, the facts that have already been

established in the text are reiterated through the priest's story, providing no insight into the structure of the court procedures or to what K.'s fate holds.

The kind of helplessness K. finds himself in throughout the story makes him physically sick quite often. The narrator remarks *"Could his body possibly be meditating a revolution and preparing a new trial for him, since he was withstanding the old one with such ease?"* (Kafka, 85). While the plot closely follows the activities and experiences of Joseph K., the vivid descriptions of the condition of the modern city does not escape notice. In the search for answers, K. is often found strolling the pallid, dark and shabby streets of his hometown. The picture Kafka paints of the modern city actually forms the perfect setting in which the alienated and lost hero wanders directionless looking for the meaning of the experiences he is subject of. In this case, K. becomes that hero. Rolf J. Goebel in one of his essays notes that *"K. is the archetypal modern city dweller whose attempt to penetrate the obscurities of the legal system turns into an obsessive, futile, and often comical process of observing, deciphering, and journeying through the surrealistic, dreamlike spectacle of his city"*. The most striking of these locations are the court offices. This is because against the expectation of the reader and K., the offices are small, dingy and stuffy. While the randomness of events is already overwhelming, the delineation of the locale also induces discomfort. Curiously, the people who actually belong to these places, that is particularly the court officials, are the least bothered by them. In fact, these "hard-hearted" people are ill at ease when exposed to fresh air owing to the fact that they are merely accustomed to it. While K. is nauseated inside, the case with these officials is different. This modern city is highly significant in the novel as its ambience is in congruence with the dark and devastated spirit of the protagonist. The irony becomes evident in the haphazard structure of the narrative only towards the end. On his thirtieth birthday, when just as expected, K. is sentenced without ever finding out the source of the trial, he is escorted out of the city to conduct the deed. It is noteworthy that till the end the city fails to provide him any success in his exhaustive search for explication. The same city which K. considered his home becomes a large prison which takes away both life and death from him. His fate does not let him die peacefully surrounded by familiar countenances in his home which is disheartening and characteristic of the somber disposition of Kafka as an author.

The Trial primarily reports various stages of the clash between K., a man who believes he is innocent and the Court which is bent on proving him guilty. Except the fact that K. is charged with some crime, the nature of the charges is never revealed. A majority of the encounters in the novel between the characters, occasionally punctuated with the objective narration, is a probe into the reality of the hierarchy of power possession in the domain of justice. The high judges, lawyers and the ultimate Court of law are all cloaked in mystery along with the cases of the random individuals who are charged with guilt. The narrator then confirms that not just the accused but the lawyers who are directly working under the Court are also clueless to various stages of the proceedings of each person as justice relies on secrecy. The strangeness of the entire situation is that those that are easily approachable have fragmented knowledge about things and the ones who are directing the trial of all the accused citizens never enter the picture and are completely inaccessible and these are the ones who actually have the answers K. and others like him are looking for. This is a clear representation of the vague laws and justice prevailing in the modern state that Kafka has attempted. The narrator comments on the situation and lays down that *"The ranks of officials in this judiciary system mounted endlessly, so that not even the initiated could survey the hierarchy as a whole"* (Kafka, 133). Another ironic fact about this hierarchy is that the lowest of the lawyers, who still have the power to affect change, are aware of the exact state of affairs but none of them dare to point it out even though they are the dealers of justice. It is the helpless citizens who actually raise a voice, cognizant that they can be easily crushed by the La -*"For although the pettiest lawyer might be to some extent capable of analyzing the state of things in the Court, it never occurred to the lawyers that they should suggest or insist on any improvements in the system, while - and this was very characteristic - almost every accused man, even quite simple people among them discovered from the earliest stages a passion for suggesting reforms which often wasted time and energy that could have been better employed in other directions"* (Kafka 135).

The meaninglessness of every occurrence in 'The Trial' including the arrest and the first interrogation comes to the fore and into limelight particularly in the episode in which K. meets the painter, Titorelli. Seeking advice, when K. calls on Titorelli, who is well acquainted with the officials of the court, he receives a long explanation on the paths he can take but there is no solution which the latter directly gives. While explaining one of the scenarios of Ostensible

acquittal, the painter says while the accused might temporarily be relieved of his charges by the joint plea of the various officials, there remains a chance that he might be arrested again because the charges are removed only from the lower courts. And thus, continues the cycle where *"The second acquittal is followed by the third arrest, the third acquittal by the fourth arrest, and so on. That is implied in the very conception of ostensible acquittal"* (Kafka 179). This is just one of the instances where the continuous and inconclusive cycle of courtly procedures are highlighted. Even then there is no one who can raise a question on the status quo. While narrating the story towards the end, the priest says the same about the door-keeper of the Court of Law who represents everyone working under the Law. He says - *"Many aver that the story confers no right on anyone to pass judgement on the door-keeper. Whatever he may seem to us, he is yet a servant of the Law; that is, he belongs to the Law and is as such beyond human judgement"* (Kafka 246). The Law is elevated to the position of the almighty.

Several other instances in the text which are not of much value to the progression of the plot augment the element of inexplicability in the narrative. Titorelli's presence in the plot is of no importance except laying down facts in front of K. while simultaneously discouraging him from his efforts in the fight. The place, the girls in his building and the painter himself account for the ambiguous nature of things. K. reaches the place and asks the young girls about where the painter lives, stating that his purpose is to get a portrait made of himself. The reaction he gets in return is strange as they make way for him while continuously staring at him. On reaching the studio, their behavior gets stranger as they try to get in the apartment but fail to do so. They keep peeping through the cracks tracking every movement of K. What surprises K. is that even the studio was stuffy and suffocating just like the court office he visited previously. Following the unfruitful conversation with the painter, K. is presented with three paintings which are exactly the same with two trees, grass and sunsetwhich confuses him even more. The significance of these paintings and Titorelli's interest in the return of K. are lost on the latter just like it is on the reader. In another encounter with the corn-merchant at Dr. Huld's house, K. finds out that on the day when he visited the court office last, the other clients had judged his fate for him by just looking at the lines of his lips. The fact that people hold such superstitions while scrutinizing individuals is weird in its entirety. The prediction that is made by them is that K. will be sentenced very soon and they avoid talking to him at all out of condemnation. Unfortunately, the

fact that K. actually gets the order for sentence makes the entire episode peculiar in retrospect since it foreshadows K.'s death.

The choice of name of the protagonist is also of importance in the novel. Joseph K. whose story is narrated here, is addressed as K. throughout the story. The use of a single letter as the identity of the protagonist is indicative of the elusive individuality of every other person in reality who is bound by the laws and customs of a state where the judiciary is given the highest power. The allotment of such power in the hands of one single body can have its drawbacks and may become problematic in the course of events which is exactly what happens with K. Running to and fro from one office to the other, K. becomes just another faceless inhabitant of a town, modern in sense, where he is helpless even to plead his cause. The occasional burst of frustration in front of these officials is all he is entitled to. During the first interrogation, instead of waiting to listen to the Examining Magistrate, K. addresses him and the whole crowd in the room and talks about their cruelty and inefficiency as a body of law. In turn, all he gets is a warning that he ruined his case with his own hands. Ironically, what everyone fails to realize is that the case was never in K.'s hands and was actually subject to the whims of the court.

Along with the emphasis on the domination of Law, an undercurrent of sexual desires of the characters runs through the plot. While the importance of this factor is minimal as compared to the account given on the shortcomings of the hierarchy in society, it exists nevertheless. Kafka, being more of an existentialist writer, has brought to the fore the feeling of detachment exhibited by every modern man. This detachment, particularly with the society and its rules, becomes prominent in the intimate relationships of a man or woman. K. in the novel is constantly seen pursuing or being intimate with different woman in spite of whatever crisis befalls him. He coerces his sexual feelings first on FräuleinBürstner who is much younger to him. Later on, in the office where the first interrogation takes place, the usher's wife expresses her attraction towards him which he reciprocates even though he was actually irritated by her demeanor the first day he saw her. Leni, another young girl who takes care of Herr Huld, K.'s lawyer, lures K. into another room to gratify her sexual feelings towards him which she instantly catches on seeing K. The fact that these three women, who are rather strangers to K., are willing to extend any help to him in return for his attention throws light on the objectivity of love in the new

world. Devoid of feelings and emotions, each character seeks the gratification of their sexual feelings without any expectation for a long-term relationship. This absurdity of human nature is inexplicability in the narrative, the source of which cannot be ascertained. This existential question is posed by Kafka time and again in his stories. The cold detachment experienced by each individual hails from some unknown darkness etched deep inside their being, which finds expression in the dark and lonely streets of the town, in the strange dispositions of various characters and also in the weather.

The weather conditions in the novel support the tone and style of the novel in the most absurd manner. More than just complimenting the incidents, the weather also foreshadows what is about to come. The anxiety of the readersgets stronger without them realizing the uneasy feeling induced within them. It is always snowing in K.'s hometown. While the cold may be symbolic of the coldness exhibited by those in power towards the powerless citizens, the persistent fog is representative of the anticipation about what lies ahead as nothing is visible. The inability of K. to calculate what his fate holds for him echoes in the environmental conditions around him. The day K. visits the cathedral is also marked with dark and gloomy weather which resonates with his resignation and despair after talking to the prison chaplain who reiterates the inapproachability of the Law through a biblical story. Even though, the weather is usually in tune with the overwhelming feelings and emotions of K., this is not the case on the day he is finally executed. The weather is extremely pleasant and breezy with moonlight flooding the streets and the quarry side where he is sentenced. The contrast between the environment and K.'s unfortunate plight prompts an inexplicable feeling of despair and failure in the readers who by the end can relate with K.'s experiences and see similarities between K. and themselves. Kafka's conclusion to K.'s story summarizes the entire theme of the novel when he says *"Logic is doubtless unshakeable, but it cannot withstand a man who wants to go on living"* (Kafka 255).

'The Trial' is certainly one of Kafka's greatest works which delves deep into the intricacies of the legal infrastructure of the modern state through the character K., a man crushed under the weight of his ontological being. The search for the accuser is never satisfied which will supposedly haunt K. beyond death and also the reader who never finds out what was K. really guilty of. Then, the question posed by Auden in his poem 'The Unknown Citizen' whether he, in

this case K., is really free is the only thing that makes sense in a narrative composed of events which are through and through bizarre. This inexplicability extends till the last line when an unknown man appears in the window of the house near the quarry, hands outstretched, just before K. was stabbed. *"Who was it? A friend? A good man? Someone who sympathized? Someone who wanted to help? Was it one person only? Or was it mankind? Was help at hand? Were there arguments in his favor that had been overlooked?"* (Kafka 255). Kafka ends the story with a string of questions which are left unanswered yet again. K. dies 'like a dog' and the questions linger on, deafening the reader with the silent hope encompassed within them.

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Language Learning, Cognitive Theory and Multilingualism: A Proposal for India

Deepshikha Das

Bidisha Som

Abstract

The place of language in making humans unique has been, in essence, non-controversial. Which means language is part of 'being human'. After all, in spite of sharing more than ninety five percent of genetic material with our closest primate relative Chimpanzee (Britten, 2002), we cannot 'talk' to them. Although our collective smugness in this respect does get called out once in a while (Wolfe, 2016; Semple, 2010; Vernes, 2017). Take for example, the recent findings about other species' specialized communicative systems:'prairie dogs' calls can not only 'identify the predator but specify its size, shape, color and speed; the animals could even combine the structural elements of their calls in novel ways to describe something they had never seen before'(Jabr,2017).There are numerous kinds of ways that other species use to communicate and those are also unique in their own ways, from prairie dogs to song birds (Fletcher, 1988; George et al 1995). But it would be a while to start worrying seriously [surely dogs cannot have knowledge of syntax!].

There have been debates on the role of language in achieving this 'special' status. Whether it is the Cartesian logic of language giving *expression* to something uniquely human, [i.e. reason] or the later enlightenment philosophers' position that language, at least in part, is an *enabler* for human reason, the debate has ceased to rest till today. Cartesian position was, in many ways, precursor to the theories of universality and innateness hypothesis, although "Descartes would perhaps have questioned the conceptualization of this faculty in terms of modular ***mental organs*** as proposed by Chomsky" (Sinha, 2009; 289). On the other hand, language as *enabler of higher mental function* position put forward by Condillac (1987] rejected Decartes' *nativism* by drawing upon the works of Hume and Locke and is in line with Vygotsky's position on the same theme. This basically looks at language as a vehicle of social interactions that 'enables and constitutes the uniqueness of human mind' (Sinha 2009; 290). This uniqueness hypothesis still holds, albeit with some caution these days. Hence language, both

verbal and sign language, is something we are born with, it is an innate property, with cortical-area correlations as Broca (1861), Warnicke and others (Bellugi and Klima,1996) pointed out. These regions however, do not function in isolation, as recent findings prove. Innateness in terms of universal algorithm for all languages, however, is an issue far from settled.

Last couple of decades has seen a waning of strong nativist program and it has become more usual to see language as part of general cognitive mechanism. Children acquiring language is seen more as an epigenetic interaction between the innate capacity and environmental inputs (Sinha 1988, 2004). Though linguistics as a discipline has been the main point of departure for language acquisition research, the change in perspective, in part, was also aided by developments in the area of cognitive psychology as well as neuroscience, and this has added a wealth of knowledge to the question of language in nature/culture.

1. Introduction:

As Smith & Miller (1968) state, communication system has come into existence because it is required for the preservation, growth and development of the species. All communication systems are capable of conveying information and some even have common features with humans. The primary difference in human and non-human communication system is that non-human species *react instinctively, in a stereotyped and predictable way* and humans have language which is unpredictable and creative. (Hedeager, 2003) It has been proved that some animals which possess similar auditory systems that of humans *tend to respond to speech patterns much like infants younger than eight months* (Kuhl, 1987; Ramus et al, 2000). Premack (1971, 1986) states that apes and dogs have *'lexicons'* in their system that can reach at a few words though this cannot result into a grammar like human language has. (Mehler et al, 2005, p.254).

However, human language, in all its complexity, has given rise to more questions that it has solved. The issues range from the structure of language to evolution of language and everything in between. One of the enduring theoretical issues in this regard is that of language acquisition. How humans acquire their languages, both first language and the subsequent ones needs ro be understood not only because languages are fascinating but also it could hold the key to something more fundamental: the human learning mechanism/faculty. While learning the first

language is kind of automatic in most cases, the case of second language acquisition is a little different given the fact that understanding the same could have its potential use in pedagogy. Many sub-disciplines within linguistics have contributed in different ways towards this goal, though not all theoretical positions within linguistics have been equally enthusiastic about contribution to language teaching or for that matter, any practical application. As Chomsky famously said, "you are a human being and your time as a human being should be socially useful. It doesn't mean that your choices about helping other people have to be within the context of your professional training as a linguist. May be that training just doesn't help you to be useful to other people. In fact, it doesn't" [Olson et al, 1991. pp-30]. Much has been written about language acquisition in terms of sequence of structural entities learnt, kind of learner autonomy, role of environment, the critical period hypothesis and so on. More recent approaches to the question has been from a completely different angle, namely that of findings from language processing literature. We discuss the major focal points in the history of second language acquisition and the shift that has taken place within these paradigms in some key domain, below.

It is not enough to have a theoretical understanding of language and its acquisition, it is also important to utilize the same knowledge towards making it applicable in pedagogy, since linguistic oriented second language acquisition 'impinge on questions of language pedagogy, language teaching methodology, or classroom behavioral studies' (Lightbown& Spada, 2006). The present paper is an attempt to look at the bigger picture and propose a way forward. Though this is not the first attempt of this kind, the authors would like to stress the need for a fresh approach, specifically for the Indian scenario. The multilingualism in India is not only fascinating but also can be useful tool towards unearthing some fundamental issues of language acquisition. Multilingual education has been proposed by scholars in India for a long time (Mohanty 2008), and though the Government follows a three language formula for the same, using all the available languages for education is a tricky domain to propose and succeed. Nonetheless, the very fact that a large number of people in India do speak at least two or three languages is in itself an astounding fact and much can be learnt by documenting those processes at work that goes unnoticed as it is not regulated or tutored in a certain set up.

As opposed to 'structured instruction' in a second or third language, language acquisition in the social set up happens very differently. Apart from data of children acquiring language in home domain, there is very little data available on this type of learning.

2. Traditional approaches and their focal points in SLA research:

Majority of literature in SLA is form-focused, meaning they look at learning of structural properties of the target language in terms of lexis, morphology, syntax etc. Literature abounds in description of the structural properties of language X as learned by the speakers of language Y and certain structures are more difficult to learn than others and sometimes, why these steps are important from the perspective of universal grammar. While studies such as these are immensely useful from a theoretical standpoint, to give perspective to structures of the world's languages, it often cannot be translated into a practice. Also problematic is the overwhelming use of English language data in these studies. Grammar, though the backbone of a language [abstract form of it], is not what the speaker/learner typically has in mind while trying to convey her thoughts to a stranger in an alien land. Imagine yourself stuck in the Kilimanjaro and you meet a local who does not speak English. The very first thing one would try to put across is the 'concept' of her being lost.

Below, we discuss the main findings with respect to the traditional points of departure, namely, age and input.

2.1.Age: It has been long argued that language may be like other neurological development Processes, such as the ocular development in kittens, [Hubel & Wiesel, 1970] and have a critical period early in life, after which no amount of experience can bring the development to normal ranges. Based on the Critical Period Hypothesis (Lenneberg, 1967), which was derived from first language acquisition research, researchers have sought to find out the L2 ultimate attainment (UA) and claimed that there was indeed a time constraint on L2 learning as well. Which means the younger the learner, the better are the chances of ultimate attainment. Findings in this domain usually show that non- natives do not attain native like *grammar*. And those who have been found to have near-native attainment started learning their L2 before 12 years of age as shown in a large scale study carried out by [Abrahamsson and Hyltenstam 2009]. Findings such as this have been tied to Critical Period Hypothesis. The interpretations of such findings imply that late

learners receive input equal in quality and quantity with early learners. However, this is not necessarily true as early learners have received decades more of input compared to late learners.

Alternatively, many researchers argue that language development may have a sensitive period, after which some impairment normally occurs, but problems can be occasionally compensated and reversed.Secondly, it has also been argued, on theoretical grounds, and continues to demonstrate, that native-like attainment is possible for some learners with respect to some modules of the grammar, even individual properties within modules. Thus, age of acquisition need not equally affect all areas of grammar, and linguistic theory is in a position to predict differential difficulty for principled reasons [Kim and Goodall ,2011].

Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978), Bialystok and Hakuta (1999), Flege (1999) have argued against the critical period in a second language, supporting the fact that adults acquire native-like fluency only if the optimum context (one similar to that for children) is provided to them to learn a second language. The counter argument for the critical period hypothesis is further supported by the linguistic interdependence hypothesis proposed by Cummins (1979, 1999). It states that the skills developed in the first language transfer to the second language. He distinguished between basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) and theorized that while children may acquire native-like BICS by 2 years, they take time 5–10 years to catch up academically in English (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1999). Cummins (1999) also theorized that the transfer of skills occurs only after a certain linguistic competence in the second language is attained which he termed as 'threshold hypotheses'.

More interesting proof against brain rigidity with respect to a particular age for learning language comes from cases like where the entire left hemisphere of a girl was surgically removed and she continued to learn language with the help of her right hemisphere (Liégeois, F. et al.2008). Reports like this, point to the enormity of possibilities in brain plasticity that is also relevant for language acquisition research.

In case of Childhood SLA, the question of age has also been examined in combination with another important variable, namely, the *interaction methods*. Long (1996) pointed out that children need not only positive evidence – what is possible in L2 but also negative evidence ---

what is not possible in L2.Research within this domain looks into the interactive conditions of children learning an L2. Oliver (1998) found that children [N= 192 in different dyads (non-native speakers (NNS)-NNS, native speakers (NS)-NNS, NS-NS language tasks] negotiate for meaning ,using a wide range of strategies (e.g. clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks and repetitions). However, she found proportional differences - lower for children than for adults - especially in the use of comprehension checks.

Differences have been found in the L2 UA (ultimate attainment) of younger and older child L2 learners based on longitudinal studies. The researchers noted that the differences in UA (younger achieving higher), may be accounted for by the language preferences of the two groups which emerged over time. For example, Jia and Aaronson (2003) conducted a study over three years in an ESL setting with six Chinese L1 children (ages 5-9) and four adolescents (12-16). The researchers noted that the differences in UA (younger achieving higher), may be accounted for by the language preferences of the two groups which emerged over time. While the younger children switched their preference to English in the first year, the older learners maintained a preference for Chinese even after three years.

However, contrary results have been found in FL settingfrom children who began L2 learning at a different age. These studies have shown that after the same hours of instruction, learners who started learning a language later showed advantages over those learners who started learning the foreign language at an earlier age. The amount of input and practice that the children were exposed to in FL setting may be one reason for this.

2.2.Input:

Input is given importance within the usage based understanding of language learning. In language acquisition input comprises all the comprehensible primary linguistic data that learners are exposed to. Recent studies have pointed out the effect of input variable on language acquisition. Chilean Spanish and Mexican Spanish differ in phonetic realization of plural morphology. In Mexican Spanish, plural is overtly realized as [s] on nouns, adjectives and determiners, while in Chilean Spanish (subject to sociolinguistic variation) this piece of inflectional morphology undergoes a regular process of lenition to aspiration or to nothing. Plural morphology is not completely absent in Chilean Spanish, but it is rendered unreliable as

linguistic evidence, being pronounced about 50% of the time. Both younger and older Mexican children were significantly more accurate than their Chilean counterparts. The paper argues that the more variability/ambiguity in the input there is, the longer it will take the learner to converge on the adult grammar (Miller and Schmitt. 2010).

In case of childhood SLA, the input also comes in the form of instructional settings. Findings with respect to various settings and their outcome are quite informative in this regard. Language learning opportunities in different instructional settings are distinct and thus it is difficult to generalize findings from one setting to another. There are parameters on which the child learner's output depends, like: 1.difference between SL and FL contexts: foreign language setting is a situation where the learners will learn the L2 as a foreign language typically in a classroom and has no access to the same outside the classroom. This is different from L2 as a second language where the access is there. Secondly, differential strategies to address the FL condition, through programs like Content Based Instruction, theme-based language teaching and CLIL. Initially content based teaching mainly involved teaching grammatical categories etc, but over time it included a context through which the language was to be taught. So, based on a topic, the learner was immersed in learning so that their learning is not out of context of real use. This way it is related to theme based learning. *Content and language integrated learning* [CLIL] is now popular worldwide as a tool. It is "an educational approach where curricular content is taught through the medium of a foreign language, typically to students participating in some form of mainstream education at the primary, secondary, or tertiary level". Thirdly, as more schools implement CLIL, research undertaken in this setting has begun to emerge. Some of these demonstrated that the type of interaction the learners engaged in varied according to instructional setting (CLIL vs mainstream): CLIL learners produced fewer negotiation strategies than mainstream learners; CLIL learners used their L1 to a lesser extent than mainstream learners. However, there are contradictory findings as well. Last but not the least, another type of pedagogy making a substantial contribution to child SLA research is immersion. Like CLIL, the objective of immersion programs is proficiency in the L2. However, while CLIL programs are relatively recent, immersion programs are well established (see Lasagabaster& Sierra, 2010). Unlike CLIL, in immersion settings, it is usually a local language that is taught, and the teachers

are often bilingual, while in CLIL settings this is not always the case. In addition, the starting age in immersion settings is usually early than for CLIL. A large amount of research in immersion settings has been concerned with the types of input and feedback that maximize opportunities for L2 development. Their findings showed that these learners developed their metalinguistic awareness and produced more target-like language with post form-focused instruction.

2.3.Emergent property:

Understanding of language as an emergent system proposes that the structures of language emerge from interacting patterns of experience, social interaction, and general cognitive processes. Connectionist models demonstrate that simple learning mechanisms, faced with the complex linguistic input, are capable of learning it. This is demonstrated by artificial neural networks being able to acquire the associations between, for example, two different phonemes in a sequence, or a form and a meaning, along with their respective reliabilities and validities, and then using these associations to produce novel responses by "on-line" generalization.Thus behavior that seems rule-governed, for example children's U-shaped behavior in acquiring the English past tense morphology, can be shown to be based on pattern-noticing, rote-learning and analogy. A number of recent experimental studies show that both infants and adults track co-occurrence patterns and statistical regularities in artificial grammars [Saffran, Aslin, & Newport,1996; Saffran, Johnson, Aslin, & Newport, 1999; Saffran& Wilson, 2003].

3.   Recent developments :

3.1. Language module busted

More and more studies in the recent time have suggested that learning language does not happen in a vacuum. It is part of general purpose learning through the developmental stages of children's growth and is intertwined with the usage of the same by the learner. Cognitive approaches to learning stress that learning is an active, constructive, and goal - oriented process that is dependent upon the mental activities of the learning (a) the role of metacognitive processes such as planning and setting goals and sub-goals; (b) the attempt by learners to organize the material they are learning, even when no obvious bases of organization are present in the materials being learned; (c) The generation or construction of appropriate responses and the use of various learning strategies (Weinstein and Mayer, 1986) . Owing to this theoretical

standpoint, language comprehension can be broken down to a three stage process (Anderson, 2009), namely, perception, parsing and utilization. Research has shown that skilled listeners reported using about twice as many metacognitive strategies as their less-skilled counterparts (See Vandergrift, 2003, 2007; Goh, 2008; Field, 2008; Chang & Read, 2008).

The proof that language functions are not dissociated from other mental functions is already established by researchers from neuroscience, psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology (McGurk and MacDonald 1976; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Anderson et al 2010;Colin et al 2002; McMurray et al 2003; Allopena et al 1998;Spivey et al 2001; Zwaan et al 2004; Pulvermuller et al 2005; Mishra 2015 and so on). The brain areas responding to executive functions have been found to be associated with language related tasks as well. Findings from visual world studies have strongly put forward evidence that language and attentional mechanisms are intrinsically related. Thus human cognition and communication are the domains within which one needs to understand language functions. Another clear proof for the relationship between language and other cognitive mechanisms come from the research on Theory of Mind [ToM] and data of atypical children. In line with findings on deaf children's acquisition of ToM, a recent work suggests that "children who had experienced more conversational turns with adults—independently of SES, IQ, and adult-child utterances alone— exhibited greater left inferior frontal (Broca's area) activation, which significantly explained the relation between children's language exposure and verbal skill' [Romeo et al. 2018]. This is a remarkable finding given that this underlines the importance of self learning as opposed to tutored learning of a language. Two general-purpose learning systems, declarative and procedural memory, have been found to be associated with lexical and grammatical learning in both children L1 learner and adult L2 learner. What all these findings underline is the fact that language is part of general purpose cognitive mechanism and the processing of the same is intertwined with other such faculties. What is true of language processing can also hold for language learning. After all, no learning is possible without processing the information.

Yet another domain of language [outside the brain] is the socio-cultural context within which the same needs to be used. A meaningless sentence may be grammatical but is, well, meaningless and thus defies the very purpose of its use. A successful communication depends on

transfer of information/knowledge etc. Here the crucial aspect of social learning needs to be taken into account. Much research in the last few years have pointed out that depending on the cultural contexts of language use, the processing strategies differ [e.g. Som et al. 2018]. The same is true for language learning context. Along with the cultural framework, the presence of an interlocutor has also been found to be having a strong influence on the participant's language performance (Woumans, 2015).Similarly, data points to the relationship between language, social cognition and cognition, in that "pre-existing cognitive and social class differences from childhood may influence both ToM ability in older age and the likelihood of learning another language" (Cox et al, 2016). Findings such as these abound and they add to the already existing proof that language is not isolated from its usage.

Whereas majority of literature on language pedagogy in the Indian context focus on learning English, it may be noted that bilingualism in two indigenous languages is equally, if not more, common. And, more importantly, this type of bilingualism is often not learnt but rather acquired naturally. Learning strategies in such cases will be markedly different from a classroom learning pattern. The *adaptive control hypothesis* for bilingual speakers says the interactional context in which they find themselves drives an adaptive response. It works in a interactional context-speech pipeline [i.e. conceptual-affective-sensorimotor representation]-control processes in working memory loop to ensure communicative goal. [Green, Abutalebi. 2013].

3.2. Learner's contribution:

Along with the age and input, the other contributing factor in SLA that has garnered interest among sociolinguistics studies is the learner attitude etc. In this light, motivation, attitude, preferences [Jia and Aaronson. 2003]. Feedback, transition from one set of language resource to another, makes the learner restructure, reorganize the resources in a nonlinear, dynamic fashion as they attempt at making meaning in context [Larsen-Freeman, 2008]. Thus meaning-making potential lies with the learner and not with the language system [Canagarajah, 2013]. Gardner, Lambert and Smythe (1979) studied how the learner attitude and motivation influence the learning. According to them an L2 learner has to be *psychologically prepared* in order to learn a new language as this new language comes from outside their ethno-linguistic community. The learner also needs to mix cultural elements from the new language with her

prevailing cultural and social life (Khanna et al, 1994 as cited by Verma, 2008). Language development is not unfolding of a prearranged plan [Tucker & Hirsh-Pasek, 1993]. The interaction between the learner's own contribution and the stimulus results in variability in their development. And this need not be dismissed as 'bad data' or 'noise' but taken as psycholinguistically real language for the learner. [Eskildsen. 2012; Verspoor, Lowie, & van Dijk, 2008]. Recently, Pinter (2014) claimed it necessary for children to be part of research, that they should have a more active role in it, and propose that researchers should consider children as co-researchers. Research in this line uses questionnaires to assess the children's own viewpoint of their learning situation, motivation, change in learning strategies [as they grow older] etc. The general finding from such work is that children are capable of reflecting on their own development.

3.3. Processing/acquiring first and second language: similar or different?

It has long been argued that both first and second language acquisition follow a similar sequence of developmental stages in acquiring the languages. This is noticed more in natural, unplanned settings where the learner is not coaxed into a pattern of learning (Rod Ellis 1984). In such cases, both L1 and L2 learners start with a silent stage, followed by other intermediate stages. This similarity is also observed in learning the grammatical morphemes. Lightbown and Spada (2006) give an insightful review of these processes. Such similarities prompted Krashen (1982) to propose *natural order hypothesis* and claimed that we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order. Hence there are many domains of language learning where L1 and L2 have shown to have similar trajectories. However, there are also reports of inter learner variation on the basis of many factors, such as sex, intelligence, social background, rate of learning, and experience of linguistic interaction. McLaughlin (1987), brought out the influence of L1 on the learning L2, which has till now been proven by many other researchers. Perhaps the statement of Krashen (1982) holds the essence of the primary difference in case of L2 acquisition, which is not so much in terms of languages but in the way we approach the learning itself. He said "there are two ways for an adult to approach a second language: "adults can (1) 'acquire,' which is the way children 'get' their first language, subconsciously, through informal, implicit learning. Once you have acquired something you're not always aware you have done it. It just feels natural; it

feels as if it has always been there. Quite distinct from acquisition is (2) conscious learning. This we know about language; explicit, formal linguistic knowledge of the language" (p.17).We have already seen above, this still remains a fundamental dissociation as proven by data from processing literature as well.

In terms of L1 and L2 processing, differences have been proposed at syntactic level. It has been put forward that L2 learners process sentences differently than L1 sentences. The *shallow structure hypothesis* [Clahsen&Felser, 2006] suggests L2 users use shallow processing depending on lexical knowledge, pragmatic routines, basic argument structures etc. They lack deep syntactic knowledge and hence cannot process intermediate traces, for exemple. However, evidence on the contrary shows that (low-educated, low-reading-span or non-proficient) native speakers also resolve to using semantic-based processing most of the time (Indefrey, 2006). Pliatsikas and Marinis, 2012 examined the processing of two similar groups of Greek-English bilinguals with either naturalistic or classroom exposure to English and found that their naturalistic learners (but not the classroom learners) were indeed processing the intermediate traces [complex syntactic processes] like native speakers.

Similarly, processing differences at lexical level ceases with proficiency level in L2 going higher. While in the low proficient groups of bilinguals, the processing in L2 is dependent on L1 to an extent, this gradually disappears as the learner achieves high proficiency in their L2. Such similarity in processing strategy is also found when the usage pattern of the languages are similar, meaning both languages are salient and high frequent in the learners environment.

3.4. The story so far

To sum up, the research in various domains as mentioned above, points to the bare fact that language cannot and does not function in vacuum. Understanding any facet of language, either process ing or learning needs to take into account a plethora of linguistic and non-linguistic factors. However, the difference in performance in L1 and L2 in grammatical tasks can be diminished in terms of proficiency in L2. Also important is the learning strategy. Similarly, naturalistic learning can lead to better grasp of second language in totality [as opposed to grammar]. There is no static competence or stages of development.

Language, thus is a ***complex dynamic system*** .Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008, p. 41) suggest that modelling of any complex dynamic system begins with identifying all of the different components in play, the timescales and levels of social organisation at which they operate, the relationships between the components, and how the components and their relationships change over time. Language teaching/learning, similarly, needs to be a multidisciplinary endeavour, that needs identifying and encompassing all the important variables stated above.

4. Language pedagogy and SLA research

According to Block (2000) SLA research cannot be called helpful in real situation as it focuses only on the theoretical aspects and not on practical ones. So this view states that SLA research ignores or does not reflect the practical utilization of itself in language teaching or language learning. However, there have been opposite views regarding this. Freeman (1998) considers SLA research as more than some design intended to language teaching. She opines that SLA is indeed *a broad term of inquiry* which covers sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics and that calling SLA only as *'research' for designing material* will not do justice to the field. (Moghadam et. al, 2016, p.235). Nassaji (2012) insists that the relationship between language pedagogy and SLA is not straightforward as SLA experiences various types of research methods, e.g. from high level laboratory to simple classroom settings. He also points out that sometimes these simple research methods may be proved as highly relevant, while those with higher level of experiments may not turn out to be fruitful in real life. (Moghadam et. al, 2016, p.235-236).

The relationship between SLA and language pedagogy are often claimed to be interconnected. However, one cannot define this relationship in an easy way. As Erlam (2008) states, research in SLA have given rise to other pedagogical studies, but the application of the findings of these studies in teaching is not out of controversy. Han (2007) considers that SLA research and practice cannot be linked. According to him, the research done without considering the practical implication is not helpful in real life situations. There is also an opposite viewpoint shared by researchers like Larsen-Freeman (1998) and Pica (2005) which says that SLA research is primarily conducted to improve language teaching. Widdowson (1990), on the other hand, believes that the debate regarding the practical relevance of SLA research should be left for teachers and they should take the final decision. (Talebinejad et. al., 2015, p.2)

Wlliams& Coles (2003) hold the view that a teacher who is also a researcher is capable of delivering *a better quality of teaching*. Borg (2010) supports this by suggesting that language teachers should opt for SLA research, as this *can be considered as a productive form of professional development.* However, he also says that regardless of this, research is not an effective part in the practice of language teachers. This existing gap is a matter of concern for some scholars and they have brought the issue to light (Belcher, 2007), but this matter has not yet been thoroughly investigated (Biesta, 2007; Ellis, 2010; Nassaji, 2012). (Talebinejad et. al.,2015, p.2)

The existing gap between language research and teaching is affected by several factors. According to Labaree (2003) the primary factor is the gap between the cultural orientations of the researchers and language teachers. He suggests that *while researchers are mostly theoretical, intellectual, analytical, and universal, teachers are more experiential, personal, normative, and particular* and this results into *a culture clash and misunderstanding*. Another factor is the lack of *an equal degree of recognition in academia* among researchers and teachers (Stewart, 2006). Freeman & Johnson (1998) believe that teachers do not receive appreciation for their knowledge and hence the gap is there. They also consider that the research findings do not meet the requirement to be utilized in teaching practice. Block (2000) is of a complete different opinion. He says that *researchers and teachers are different people coming from different worlds* and hence the existing gap between the two is inevitable. (Talebinejad et. al.,2015, p.2-3)

In his 2012 book *Language Teaching Research and Language Pedagogy*, Ellis talks about the importance of language teaching research. He discusses his two views on language teaching; namely 'external' and 'internal'. The 'external' view evaluates language teaching with regard to *methods, approaches, materials and techniques*. The 'internal' view, however takes it as a process. Ellis states that this distinction plays an important role in the categorization of the studies he has conducted and discussed in his book. Ellis also drew special attention to two primary research paradigms; normative and interpretive paradigms. The former is prone to test hypotheses and the latter 'seeks to describe and understand some aspect of teaching by identifying key variables and examining how they interrelate' (Ellis 2012, p. x; as cited by Zhang 2012, p.565). According to Zhang (2012) Ellis' (2012) book can serve as a good guide in language teaching research methods as he is successful in bringing 'theory into practice and

practice into theory when all the research is thoroughly critiqued for advancing the field toward a stronger theory research nexus.' (Zhang, 2012, p. 566)

Ellis and Natsuko (2013), *Exploring Language Pedagogy Through Second Language Acquisition Research* addresses the issues in the field of language teaching with regards to prevailing theories and research in second language acquisition. Here also, the two 'external' and 'internal' views have been discussed and appreciated by the authors (Villagomez et al, 2015, p.603). This book defines 'two approaches to the relationship between SLA and L2 pedagogy, namely the direct application of SLA to pedagogy and the exploration of language pedagogy through SLA.' (Berger, 2015, pp. 213).

5. The Indian multilingualism: reports so far.

According to Bayer (1986) *"India is one of the world's oldest multilingual societies"*. India has always been the abode of various ethno linguistic communities and this made the country a 'Linguistic Area' (Emeneau, 1958). Khubchandani (2001) states that Indian multilingualism has three stages (Ancient, Medieval and Modern) which are connected to the history of India. (Saba, 2011, pp.49-50)

India is considered as a country where none of its states is practicing monolingualism. The census reports from 1961 to 1991 indicate that the numbers of bilingual and multilingual people are increasing day by day (Saba, 2011, p.69).
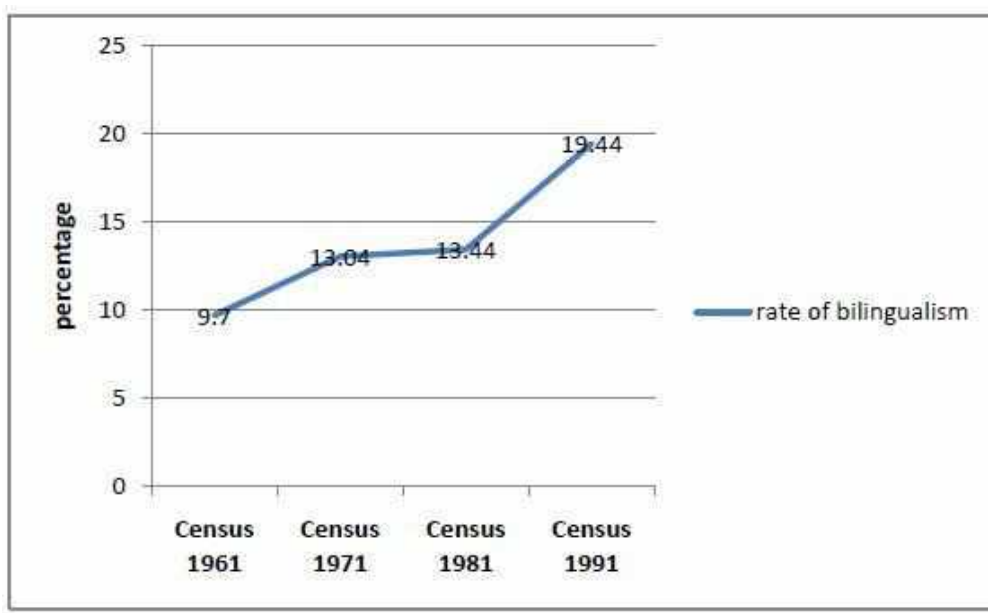
Figure 1: Rate of bilingualism in India (1961-1991) Adapted from Saba, 2011, p. 69

Despite of the fact that bilingualism is increasing, scholars such as Pattanayak and Khubchandani said that in the above report shows that only 9.7% of the Indian population is bilingual and hence the rest 90% is not bilingual i.e. monolingual and this suggests that the interaction rate among different linguistic communities is quite insignificant and this further indicates that "*multilingualism is acting as a barrier in the growth of a nation*" (Mahapatra, 1990) However, another chart about bilingualism and trilingualism presented by Saba (2011) proves that bilingualism in India is quite common. This chart covers the rate of the usage of the schedule languages in India by bilingual and trilingual people. (Saba, 2011, p.70-71).
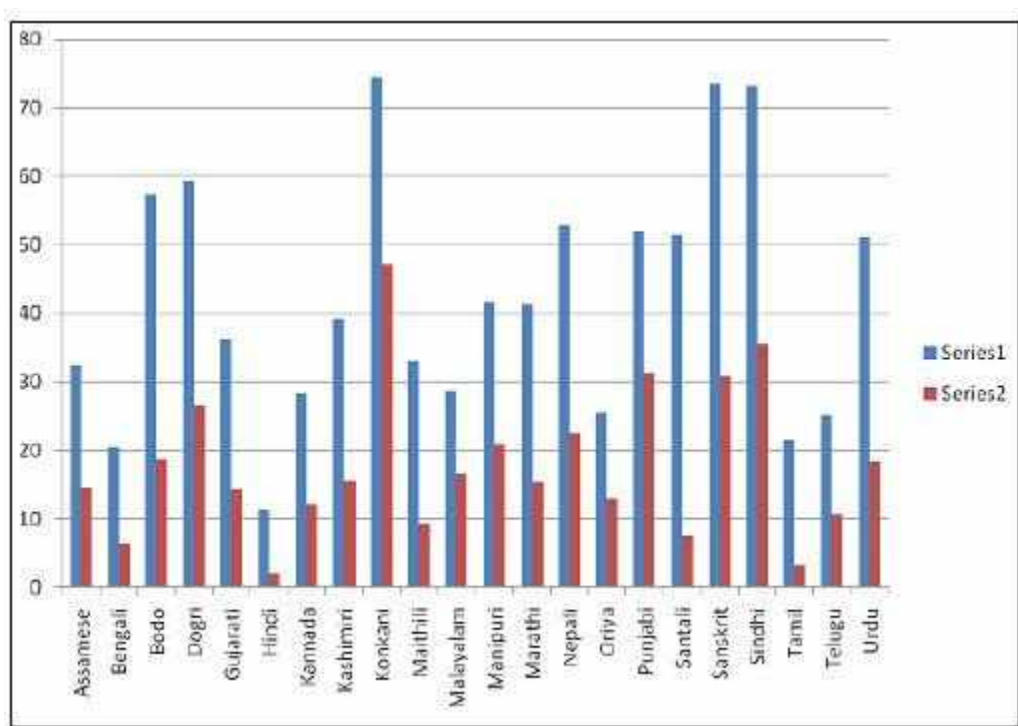

Figure 2: Adapted from Saba, 2011, p.70-71. Rate of schedule language usage by bilingual and trilingual people in India (Series 1- bilingualism, series 2- trilingualism)

Linguistic diversity in India is so vast that it has over 10000 languages which people use as their mother tongues and those belong to five language families. Among those, Indian constitution listed 22 as scheduled languages and *English is recognized as an associate official language* (Mohanty, 2008). Though Indian states have accepted more than one language to use in

official works, there have been incidents when government tried to bring the country under one single language but failed. E.g. Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi tried to create an India where only one language (Hindi) would be spoken but it made the division between Hindi and non-Hindi speaker more prominent. Non-Hindi speakers protested against this and therefore English continued as the official language. After that "*the constitution provides right to the state to adopt Hindi or any language used in its territory as its official*" language/s. This recognition of more than one official language by Indian government indicates the multilingual nature of the country. (Saba, 2011, p.74)

Linguistic diversity in India is so vast that it has over 1500 languages which people use as their mother tongues (Das Gupta, 1970 as cited by Saha, 2017, p.63). Multilingual education was prevailing in India before it got colonized. In ancient times after having the initial education in any language, higher education was available in prestigious languages such as Sanskrit. However, colonization brought English as one of the major languages of instruction and gradually it became the most powerful one. Apart from the education system English was also introduced to the administrative system and people were bound to learn English. English was so deeply rooted in the system that people used to give importance to this language even after independence. Subsequently, people wanted to include regional languages into the education system which could be availed by the minority also. This also contributed to the vast multilingualism of today's India. (Saha, 2017, p.63).

India is such a country where multilingualism or at least bilingualism cannot be avoided. Most of the times a child does not need formal setting to become bilingual. She acquires it from her surroundings and this is also important that she learns different languages. But, as Saha (2017) suggests, the preliminary education should be delivered in a medium which is familiar to the child. Because, nowadays we can see people who are expert in their second or third language but can hardly read or write in their mother tongues. If this continues, it might affect the linguistic diversity in the long run. Multilingual "*education therefore should help retain the multiplicity rather than erasing it*" (Saha, 2017, p.69).

As the above discussion shows, the multilingual reality of India has been addressed by scholars pointing to the need to mother tongue education, retaining the multiplicity of languages and so on. In view of this, we may assume that the sheer diversity in India's linguistic scene is

not a deterrent but a treasure trove of information on how people learn their L2 or L3 in natural environment. This may lead us to the learner strategies, influence of a varied group of first languages on the learning of a number of second or third languages. This knowledge, if curated in a systematic way, has immense potential to finding solution for language teaching methods that are applicable to a social structure like that of India.

6. So, the new set of questions:

When language is understood as a complex, dynamic system, and then focus turns to,

- how language users develop their meaning system

- How does L2 fluency develop?

- How does the cognitive basis of proficiency change over time?

- How do different kinds of practice at different stages of development change overall proficiency and specific skills?

- How is social circumstances related to attaining proficiency?

Cross linguistic studies show different languages foreground different aspects of events. Thus, conceptual patterns derived from L1 create the categories and thinking for speaking in L2. Learning a second or a third language is in effect learning a new construal operation to depict the same experiences. Through the stages of learning, the target system gains more autonomy and independence from the native ones. Form, user, and use are inextricably linked.

It is clear from the above discussion that the recent trends on SLA research and theorizing share a strongly cognitive orientation, with a firm focus on identifying the nature and sources of the underlying L2 knowledge system. Though it is understood that SLA takes place in a social context and it can be influenced by that context, both micro and macro, it is also important to recognize that language learning, like any other learning, is ultimately a matter of change in an individual's internal mental state. However, it is important to note here that these labels or schools like psycholinguistic or cognitive or functional approach to SLA is fast becoming blurred. As Nick Ellis' research (2006) points out that 'a fundamental tenet is that we

learn language in much the same way as we learn everything else' with certain cognitive and perceptual determinants. Within this framework language is understood as a complex adaptive system, where language structure, acquisition, processing and usage are not separate but facets of the same complex system. This approach claims that language structure is an emergent property of interrelated patterns of experience, social interaction and cognitive processes. Within Cognitive Linguistic framework, Ellis has tried to bring these factors together through usage based grammar and applying this framework to Second language acquisition. Another dominant theoretical position on second language learning within Cognitive Linguistics framework tries to understand L2 learning through conceptual transfer.

7. The Way Forward

Thus, an important point of departure could be that we incorporate learner corpora in pedagogy, in India. Acorpus in line with CHILDES for Indian languages can be attempted. Investigation of learner strategy in naturalistic setting and incorporating the same in teaching mechanism will go a long way in ensuring success of a paradigm. Testable predictions based on a cognitive theory of language will be the key to successful future L2 explorations.

One important aim of language teaching should be to help the learner 'reduce the arbitrariness' of the L2.Not informing that a particular element belongs to a formal category but not in others for example. Rather one should aim for 'descriptively adequate, intuitively acceptable and easily accessible formulations' as a way towards learning. Cognitive grammar as pedagogical grammar may be a good candidate towards achieving this goal. In this framework, grammar meets conceptualization and well-formedness judgments depend on context not merely on structure. Because structure, in this case depicts a construal, using notions like schema, frame etc. [Langacker, 2010], which basically is one of the many ways of understanding the same event available through a person's many languages.

The authors, thus, would like to stress that language learning mechanisms and the models thereof needs to take into account the strategies adopted by a learner [of L2] in natural set up; which is also the strategy used for leaning the first language. Since pedagogy presupposes tutoring a language, a model closely resembling the natural strategy could be an adaptation of Ronald Langacker's Cognitive Grammar theory, where structure is explained in terms of

construal operations. This theory revolves around centrality of meaning in language and draws its strength also from usage based nature of the same. Since grammatical knowledge does not constitute the absolute core of language, but rather forms one part of the same, one needs to look into a possibility of combining these methods towards creation of a teaching method that would closely mimic the natural learning system, as opposed to teaching of structure.Langacker (2008) puts it succinctly, ordinary people do not speak or listen "for the sheer pleasure of manipulating syntactic form--- their concern is with the meaning expressed" and in this light cognitive grammar is simple more 'natural' a technique to explain why languages are as they are.

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Impact of Teacher Training on Pre-Service Teachers' Belief Formation

K. Padmini Shankar

Abstract

It is an indisputable fact that teaching practice is influenced by the beliefs that teachers hold. Hence is it important to explore how these beliefs are formed, especially with regard to pre-service teachers (PSTs) while they are learning the art and craft of teaching in formal training programmes. This is because these beliefs may have enduring impact on their future careers. Through their long years of study as learners (prior language learning experiences, PLLE), and through apprenticeship of observation (AoO, Lortie 1975), PSTs may have formed a set of beliefs about several aspects of teaching and learning. What are some of these beliefs? Where did they emerge from? Are they sustained during the formal teacher training (theoretical inputs and practicum)? Are any new belies formed? The present paper aims to explore these issues. Around 10 trainee teachers enrolled in the M. A. ELT Programme at The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, participated in the study. Data are gathered through a questionnaire majorly consisting of open-ended questions, the responses to which were in the form of vignettes.Findings reveal that the formal training led to formation of several new beliefs (e.g. learners should be involved in assessment) while some existing beliefs were strengthened (e.g. teachers should adapt to learners' needs). These have implications for teacher educators and PSTs too.

Key words: pre-service teachers, teacher beliefs, teacher training, prior language learning experiences, apprenticeship of observation

Introduction

Despite being a "messy" construct (Pajares 1992), teacher beliefs have always merited research interest. Understanding teacher beliefs is vital to the process of understanding teaching since teacher beliefs impact teacher behaviors – classroom events and decisions. They influence teachers' "consciousness, teaching attitude, teaching methods and teaching policies … and, finally, learners' development" (Altan 2006: 45). It is argued that teachers "'interpret' a teaching

situation in the light of their beliefs … the result of this interpretation is what the teacher plans for and attempts to create in the classroom" (Woods 1996: 69). Therefore it is important to explore how they are formed in order to understand teaching practice. Such understanding of beliefs becomes even more significant in the case of pre-service teachers since they tend to re-examine their existing beliefs in the light of the inputs offered through the formal training programme and the practicum. New beliefs may be formed while some may be strengthened. This paper attempts to explore the existing and newly formed beliefs of pre-service teachers (also referred to as student-teachers).

How are beliefs formed?

Stephens *et al.* (2000:535) state that "there are four ways that individuals fixate beliefs: believing what one wants to believe (tenacity), believing what someone else has said is true (authority), believing what one always has and which seems reasonable (a priori) and believing what one has tested out through investigation (scientific method).". Beliefs act as "a frame of reference" around which many classroom decisions are made and pedagogical practices are decided. They filter out options enabling teachers to choose what they think is the best action under the circumstances. Beliefs may be revised as a result of input from other professionals and activity type interventions (Diaz &Bastias, 2012:248). Farrell and Guz (2019) argue that teachers should "explore the sources of their beliefs and systematically, and regularly, examine their classroom practices through reflective practice in order to monitor their beliefs and classroom practices" (p.1). Through the years of schooling, *teachers as students* observe their teachers teach. These prior language learning experiences (PLLE) are likely to form the basis of teacher beliefs. Further, while learning to teach during a teacher training programme, teachers as *student-teachers* learn to teach from their teacher educators. Such apprenticeship of observation (AoO) may strengthen their existing beliefs or result in formation of new beliefs. In addition, through their experience of teaching in the practicum and observing their peers teach, student teachers learn to cope with the classroom dynamics. Thus beliefs emerge from PLLE, and AoO, and practicum which form a part of formal teacher training.

Aim

This study investigates the beliefs that pre-service teachers hold regarding pertinent aspects of teaching and learning. The aim is to trace the formation of new beliefs as well as explore if the existing beliefs are strengthened in the light of the theoretical inputs they were exposed to and the classroom experience of teaching that was offered to them by way of practicum.

Research Questions

The study addresses the following issues:

1. What beliefs do pre-service teachers hold?
2. What new beliefs are formed?
3. Do the existing beliefs get strengthened?
4. What triggers the formation of new beliefs/fortification existing beliefs?

Hypothesis

The theoretical inputs and the practicum experience together lead to the formation of new beliefs and result in the strengthening of pre-service teachers' existing beliefs about language learning and teaching.

Prior language learning experiences

Prior language learning experiences (PLLE) refer to the early language learning experiences of student-teachers during school, college and university. Studies that have drawn from the practicum teaching journals have vouched for the tenacity of cognition about language learning and teaching developed in early years (pre-college). In fact, novice teachers default into methods and techniques that they themselves experienced rather than what they have been trained to do in the practicum classes that they were teaching (Bailey et al. 1996). Therefore teacher educators should pay attention to the beliefs system of pre-service teachers early in training programs as a means of maximizing the intake of information taught in the courses (Peacock 2001; Lo 2005).

Farrell (2007) underscores the importance of probing the student teacher's "unconscious assumptions about teaching and learning" (p.194). A set of pre-service teachers, in an extensive written post-course explanation, attributed their pre-course beliefs to language learning experience in high school and post-course changes in their beliefs to the SLA course content and experiential activities (Busch 2010). Larenas et al (2015) show that beliefs are rooted in teachers' semantic memory as cognitive and affective constructs that hold different degrees of fixation depending on the professional, academic or personal experiences that shaped them. They contend that beliefs originate from teachers' own learning experiences, their own classroom practices, their fellow colleagues, their school context and most importantly their own students. Since teachers are always engaged in "the act of becoming" (Olsen 2016: 33), it becomes significant to explore their past experiences not just to determine how they "align to present practice", but to examine "the stories that constitute" their identity (Davin et al. 2018:140).

It is thus clear that prior language learning experiences influence beliefs of PSTs and that these beliefs are deep-seated. Therefore it is important to take cognizance of them. The present study carries the earlier research forward by attempting to document how PSTs sustain their pre-course beliefs and what new beliefs are formed after being exposed to the theoretical inputs and the practicum.

Apprenticeship of observation

Apprenticeship of observation refers to the "phenomenon whereby student teachers arrive for their training courses having spent thousands of hours as schoolchildren observing and evaluating professionals in action" (Borg 2004:274). Lortie discusses two models of apprenticeship: traditional apprenticeship (the master coaches the apprentice as he learns to practice the trade e.g. carpentry) and cultural transmission (teachers imitate the practice of their teachers). He states that a student "sees the teacher frontstage and centre like an audience viewing a play". (Lortie 1975:62). These unanalyzed teacher actions provide "ready-made recipes … promising familiar and safe results" (Buchmann 1987:161). Student-teachers are thus equipped with "default options", a set of tried and tested strategies which they can revert to in times of indecision or uncertainty (Tomlinson 1999 cited in Borg 2004:274). Wallace (1991)

discusses three models of teacher education: the craft model or apprenticeship model, the applied science or theory-to-practice model and the reflective model. The cognitive apprenticeship model (Collins et al 1991) assumes that people learn from one another through observation, imitation and modeling. It consists of six teaching methods – modeling, coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection and exploration. This brief review underlines the fact that PSTs frame their references of teaching from apprenticeship of observation.

Teacher Training

Teacher education programmes aim to provide opportunities for student-teachers to observe and practice the instructional techniques enacted by the pedagogical and theoretical concepts that are introduced through coursework (Albaba 2017:143). These programmes should be designed in such a way that they induce changes in PSTs beliefs, values and attitudes so that real and effective change can happen (Peacock 2001).In fact, "there is a need to articulate tacitly held beliefs so that teachers become more aware and have a better understanding of how their beliefs affect classroom practices" (Farrell & Ives 2015: 607). Kelly (2018) contends that a priority for teacher educators is to develop educationally sound and socially just beliefs among PSTs and engage them in critical reflection on their beliefs and how they impact their teaching. It can thus be argued that developing and revising beliefs should be one of the goals of pre-service teacher education. This can be done through urging PSTs to critically examine their beliefs. They can be encouraged to engage in "reflection-in-action" (thinking critically about one's actions in the midst of actions as they occur in order to make changes on the spur of the moment) and "reflection-on-action (thinking about one's actions after they are done in order to learn from them and shape future action) (Schon 1983) . This would enable them to rationalize their decisions as future teachers. As 'active, thinking decision makers' (Borg 2011: 218) they would be empowered to 'theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize' (Kumaravidvelu 2006: 173).

Practicum

Practicumrefers to the teaching experiences within a teacher education programme to help teacher trainees understand the realities of teaching in actual classroom setting as opposed to simulated contexts. It involves peer teaching, supervised school-based teaching, systematic

observation and gaining familiarity with actual teaching contexts. In the context of the present study it involved team teaching and individual teaching of peers. The terms pre-service teachers and student-teachers are used interchangeably in the study.

Methodology

This study explores pre-service teachers' belief formation. Investigating the beliefs that PSTs hold and the beliefs that are formed owing to the formal teacher training forms the scope of the study. It also demonstrates what beliefs are sustained/ strengthened. The study is carried out at The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. Academic programmes at the University offer scope for experimentation and freedom in course content and in assessment procedures and tools. The subjects of the study are ten students – eight female and two male – enrolled in the M. A. ELTProgramme which offers training in language teaching and learning through four semesters (now onwards, the Programme). In the first two semesters, students do three compulsory courses and one elective. In the third semester, they do two compulsory courses and one elective in addition to a full-length *Practicum* course. In the fourth semester, the students do two compulsory courses and one elective along with a mandatory dissertation. (For more details of the Programme see the link provided at the end). The present study was carried out towards the end of the fourth semester. Hence, the student-teachers (eight Indian and two foreign – one from Bangladesh and another from Indonesia) were able to reflect on the impact of the Programme on the formation of their beliefs in a holistic manner. They were both perceptive and articulate in their responses to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) is designed to capture pre-service teachers' existing beliefs and formation of new beliefs. It consisted of three sections: the first section attempted to gather data about the beliefs that student-teachers hold regarding various aspects of teaching and learning. There were ten items in this section. The second section focused on beliefs that were formed due to the participants' exposure to the theoretical inputs and the practicum experience. The third section sought information regarding the beliefs that were sustained or strengthened (despite or because of the inputs and practicum). The clarity of the instructions and the open-

ended nature of the questionnaire contributed to the depth and the breadth of the data gathered (see Appendix 2 for a sample filled-in questionnaire).

Data presentation and interpretation

The data gathered are presented and analyzed in three parts:

    A. Beliefs trainee teachers hold

    B. New beliefs formed

    C. Beliefs that were sustained/ strengthened

Part A: Beliefs trainee teachers hold

The beliefs of PSTs regarding teaching practice are grouped and analyzed in the following five categories: a) beliefs about teachers and teaching b) beliefs about learners and learning c) beliefs about classroom experience/environment d) beliefs about teaching materials and tests and e) beliefs about teacher feedback on student learning.

a) Beliefs about teachers and teaching

According to the PSTs a good teacher has sound subject-matter knowledge "fully committed to making knowledge of any kind available to the students". She is equipped with pedagogic content knowledge with an ability to teach"complex topics in a simple way" and recognizes the need to "allow students to discover their own freedom in learning the subject". She possesses classroom management skills and is empathic, supportive, observant, and open to criticism. A good teacher is an "enabler" who empowers students pushing the limits to bring out the best in them. PSTs are quite clear about what makes a bad teacher too: lack of subject-matter knowledge; lack of pedagogic content knowledge (not hard working, not well prepared and bad presenter); lack of learner friendly personality traits (non-democratic, bossy, biased) etc. PSTs think that effective teaching entails clear presentation of learning input through relatable and interesting content leaving room for discovery learning. Ineffective teaching, on the other hand, comprises teacher domination with irrelevant content not fine tuned to suit student needs leaving not much scope for meaningful learning that is essential for outside classroom life.

b) Beliefs about learners and learning

PSTs consider students who display commitment and a positive attitude to learning as good learners. According to them good learners are curious to learn, willing to take risks, not afraid of making mistakes, look for opportunities to learn even outside the classroom and have intrinsic motivation. They are honest and hardworking, creative, humble, punctual, disciplined, complete the assigned work on time, courteous towards teachers/ fellow students and come to the class with good preparation and expectation. They stay focused on learning and figure out ways to tackle issues in learning. On the other hand, bad learners do not respect teachers, manipulates the teacher's trust through lies and practice unfair means during tests. They learn without understanding, do not cooperate with teacher / students, are impolite and create disturbances in the class. They depend heavily on the book and syllabus. However, one student-teacher comments that a student not interested in learning should not be considered a bad student and that there is nothing as a bad student. According to the PSTs, effective learning entails "going beyond" the textbook, using various resources for learning in addition to the teacher and the textbook, using language in real life communication and so on. Learner agency and autonomy seem to be of paramount importance here. Ineffective learning, on the other hand, is "strictly textbook-based and marks-oriented". What is important is to gain knowledge (alongside good grades) and expanding it beyond the classroom.

c) Beliefs about classroom experience/environment

According to the PSTs, a condusive classroom is where positivity permeates – students are encouraged to experiment in a psychologically safe environment. The physical attributes are also important – colourful walls, well-lit rooms with comfortable seating, uninterrupted power supply, relevant teaching aids etc. which contribute to meaningful and joyful learning. They believe that the onus in creating and sustaining healthy interaction and in enabling student contribution to self and peer learning is primarily on the teacher. A dull, over-populated, ill-equipped classroom with irrelevant content and poor management is not conducive to learning. Hence it is important that student-teachers are taught pedagogic content knowledge.

d) Beliefs about teaching materials and tests

The following are rated as characteristics of good materials by PSTs: meet the demands, needs and goals of learners; authentic and close to real world so that language is presented as it is in real life; include visual or auditory inputs to enhance learning; present even complex content in a clear and simple manner enabling comprehension. Ineffective materials are those that are not guided by learning goals; do not support communicative language use and when students cannot write exams based on them – chaotic and disorganized. Thus it is clear that PSTs are aware of what kind of materials maximize student learning. They stress the importance of authentic materials, supplementary materials and multi-media resources.

According to the PSTs, a good test demonstrates a balanced representation of the syllabus, has predictive validity and has a positive washback leading to self-assessment and better learning. It has clear instruction and is well administered with not too many questions that are time consuming. Application-based questions that do not require students to learn by rote can mirror to teachers as well as to students the degree and depth of assimilation of the learning input offered. Tests are considered ineffective if they require reproduction of content from memory; contain too many/redundant questions not related to what has been taught; show imbalanced representation of syllabus components; have a mismatch between the content/cognitive load of the questions vis a vis the marks allocated and finally when students are not mentally prepared for it.

e) Beliefs about teacher feedback on student learning

According to PSTs learning would be incomplete without feedback. They value teacher feedback since it "instills a sense of accountability". They think that personalized feedback makes students "feel special and motivated" and alters student's perspective about the teacher. According to them teacher feedback helps a) track mistakes and correct them b) consciously correct wrong assumptions c) discover a different way of doing things d) understand their development in learning e) make the next learning process more systematic f) balance out whole studying method. However, it should not be harsh because empty criticism bereft of constructive

suggestions can only be demoralizing. PSTs hold the view that descriptive, detailed and specific feedback enables students to identify mistakes and self-correct.

Discussion

The summary of the data collected about the existing beliefs of the PSTs reveals that PSTs hold strong beliefs about a range of aspects relating to teaching and learning. For instance, according to them, good teachers are those who possess subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, classroom management skills and personality traits that are conducive to student learning (e.g. empathy and patience). Further, it should be noted that PSTs are able to articulate their beliefs in clear terms. These beliefs have majorly emerged from their experience as language learners and their experience as trainees through the three semesters of the MA ELT Programme (as revealed from the data collected from the second section of the first part of the questionnaire). In other words, apprenticeship of observation (AoO) and prior language learning experiences (PLLE) are the major factors that contributed to belief formation (80%). The other significant sources from where these beliefs emerged are: exposure to educationally based principles, institutional culture, home and social context, readings in the field and personality factors (each source marked by 60% of PSTs). It remains to be seen if these beliefs have been sustained/ strengthened in view of the training PSTs received through the Programme which will be discussed in the later sections. Now let us examine the new beliefs that PSTs formed during the Programme.

Part B: New Beliefs

The following are some of the new beliefs that student-teachers formed based on their experiences through the Programme.

New belief 1: A good teacher should leave her personal problems and ego outside the classroom.

Classroom experience: This was the first sentence uttered by a senior professor as she entered into our classroom for the very first time. This stuck with me because it made a lot of sense as I have experienced teachers behaving harshly owing to no fault of ours. This belief was

strengthened when I saw the teacher actually practicing it and encouraging students to question her, correct her and engage in healthy discussions.

New belief 2: There is no end to innovation in teaching methods. My practicum class taught me this.

Classroom experience: My practicum class opened up new avenues when it comes to lesson planning and I implemented one of them during my teaching internship.

New belief 3: it is worthwhile to seek feedback from students; it is equally important to act on it.

Classroom experience: I noticed a difference in the way teaching was planned and executed after one of the teachers collected feedback from us midway through the course. For instance, overenthusiastic peers were monitored and quiet learners were brought into the loop.

New belief 4: learners can be involved in the assessment process

Classroom experience: it was a whole new experience for us when one of the teachers checked with us about the kind of test that can form part of the end of the semester assessment, the syllabus, the mode of exam etc. this definitely made us more responsible as learners.

New belief 5: a classroom is full of surprises which can throw you off balance

Classroom experience: I have noticed some of the teachers deal with unexpected detours from what was planned for the day. They taught the students, rather than the plan as it were! Being prepared for the worst and having a plan B/C/ D can be a face-saving experience for both the teacher and the taught.

new belief 6: teacher alone is not to be blamed if a class does not go well.

Classroom experience: in one of my practicum classes, my students were too exhausted and stayed non-participatory throughout. It is not just the teacher, students too can make or mar a class.

New belief 7: teacher must have abilities to adapt materials provided in the textbook in such a way to meet students' needs and language function and use.

Classroom experience: I formed this belief based on inputs provided in the course *Adapting ELT Materials* (3rd semester)

New belief 8: And There is no such thing called Good Student, it is just a term to motivate the students who do their works with dedication and follow classes with commitment and regularity

Classroom experience: no student is completely good or bad; they have their strengths and limitations. I have noticed that it is important not to label students as lazy/ dull/ incompetent etc. And praise can do miracles, if offered meaningfully and in small doses. Good students can be used to demonstrate examples of expected behavior both academically and classroom dynamics-wise. I know one of my teachers is adept at this.

Discussion

From the descriptions above, it becomes clear that the Programme induced in-depth analysis of classroom experiences by the student-teachers stimulating formation of positive beliefs. This is important because successful student learning is possible when teachers hold constructive views about teaching and learning. As evident from the comments above, the new beliefs encompass a range of pertinent issues – innovation in teaching, student feedback on teaching, student involvement in assessment procedures, teacher preparedness during critical moments, provision for learner agency, teachers as materials designers, and classroom dynamics. Thus we get a sneak peek into the BAK (beliefs, assumptions and knowledge) of these pre-service teachers. These positive belief systems and constructive knowledge structures could decide the contours of their teaching practice leading to assured/enhanced success of their future learners.

Part C. Beliefs sustained/ strengthened

The following existing beliefs of the student-teachers are reinforced and strengthened owing to the classroom experiences through the Programme.

Belief 1: A good teacher is one who is friendly yet strict and knows to control a class

Reason for sustaining: I have retained this belief because of the negative experience that a teacher faced when he was too friendly and a strong believer of humanistic teaching. The

students began to misunderstand the friendly nature and started taking him for granted. Knowing his soft nature, they stopped taking responsibility, turning in assignments on time and even responding to his questions. Thus, being too friendly can often lead students to take teachers and their patience for granted.

Belief 2: A good teacher is one who is patient and understanding

Reason for sustaining it: This belief has been strengthened owing to many experiences where I have personally witnessed the concern teachers have towards individuals with genuine problems. The use of the teachers' freedom to positively influence such individuals by extending deadlines, giving additional assignments (to make up for loss of attendance), changing mode of testing (take home assignment for those who fail to perform well in sit-down exams due to anxiety), etc.

Belief 3: A teacher should be willing to improvise and adapt to the students' preferences after using his or her discretion

Reasons for sustaining it: The needs of the learner will be best known by the learner and a good teacher is one who is willing to set aside her plan and is able to decipher how she can balance the demands made by the students as well as executing her plan.

Belief 4: There is no room for partiality. I don't believe in the idea of teacher's pet.

Reason for sustaining it: One can't be a good teacher if one set of students take away all praise. Praise is a good tool to motivate students but becomes harmful when only a bunch of students get it.

Belief 5: Be innovative

Reason for sustaining it: My practicum class taught me that there is no dearth in innovative ways. It all depends on one's interest in teaching.

Belief 6: At the end of the day whatever it is assessment will be there which creates anxiety and fear in the minds of the students, no matter how comfortable the environment is.

Reason for sustaining it: some of us experienced severe anxiety during tests despite the teacher being empathetic and the classroom atmosphere being non-intimidating. This may be due to the temperamental quality of the learners.

Belief 7: Grammar should be taught in deductive approach

Reason for sustaining it: I have seen people who studied in inductive approach lacking metalinguistic knowledge, which is quite controversial because English as a second language, weighed and tested with the factors of grammar , vocabulary and etc when it comes to a normal job in real life which requires minimum proficiency.

Belief 8: A teacher should be empathetic

Reason for sustaining it: If a teacher isn't empathetic, sometimes we, the students are afraid of approaching them and sharing our ideas and doubts and hence it constraints our learning to a very large extent. This belief I always realize and even more it's strengthening with my everyday classroom and learning experiences.

Belief 9: Effective teaching helps the learners to communicate better in real life situation.

Reason for sustaining it: When we learn something and can't use the learning outcomes in our real, then there's no use of learning it. Since the main purpose of learning is to communicate, it's effective teaching which helps us to communicate better in real life situation

Belief 10: A teacher should never show biases in class because this always leads to some students being insecure about themselves and their learning capability

Reason for sustaining it: I think this aspect is really important because I have seen and experienced how it can really affect other students.

Belief 11: Teacher as a facilitator

Reason for sustaining it: It is important for the learners to get proper guidance. They don't need to be given the right answer. They need to be asked the right questions

Belief 12: Conducive classroom environment

<u>Reason for sustaining it</u>: The energy in the environment plays a vital role in getting the learner spirits up. Hence a better language learning experience

Discussion

The data presented above demonstrate that the Practicum and the theoretical inputs offered through the MA Programme have triggered in-depth analysis and reflection on the part of the pre-service teachers. Some new beliefs are framed and quite a few positive beliefs are reinforced. What is noteworthy is the fact that the Programme has lead to the formation of new beliefs that focus on teacher potential and which are conducive to student learning while highlighting the importance to gear up to the unpredictability that is characteristic of everyday teaching. The vignettes described above also bear testimony to the argument that PSTs can undertake a critical examination of their beliefs vis-à-vis the TE programme if nudged and urged. Thus the current study has succeeded in engaging the student-teachers in the enticing exercise of self-discovery and critical examination. As some of them mentioned in the informal interviews, they have become aware of their beliefs and perceptions and are able to appraise their own personal teaching philosophies.

Findings

The following are the findings of the study.

- Research question 1: What beliefs do pre-service teachers hold?

PSTs hold beliefs about a range of pertinent issues in teaching and learning. For instance, according to them subject-matter knowledge coupled with pedagogic content knowledge and personality traits such as empathy make good teachers. Creating positive classroom environment enabling enhanced learner interaction and contribution is hallmark of effective teaching. These beliefs emerge from their personal experience as learners.

- Research question 2: What new beliefs are formulated?

Several new beliefs are formed during the course of the Programme. For instance, being able to adapt teaching materials to suit learner needs is an important ability for teachers to

possess. The Programme thus led to the formation of positive beliefs which will ensure effective student learning when PSTs embrace their teaching careers.

- Research question 3: Do the existing beliefs get strengthened?

Many beliefs that PSTs held before enrolling in the Programme are reinforced and strengthened during the Programme. For example, according to one PST, her belief that teachers need to find creative and innovative ways in teaching coursebooks is strengthened based on her experience in the Practicum.

- Research question 4: What triggers the formation of new beliefs/fortification of existing beliefs?

The theoretical inputs and the practicum experience offered through the Programme coupled with the ability of the PSTs to reflect and analyze these experiences have triggered the formation of new beliefs. As revealed by the data presented in the earlier sections, PSTs demonstrate a deeper understanding of how teaching and learning are transacted in the classroom.

Limitations

- The study focused on the reinforcement and formation of positive beliefs. The beliefs which are non-conducive to learning could not be garnered through the data.
- The limitations of the Programme, or the suggestions for improvement were not focused in the study.
- The views of the tutors who have offered the different courses in the Programmed were not collected.

Implications

- Critically examining their beliefs and perceptions will help PSTs to make 'informed decisions' in their future careers.

- Teacher educators may encourage PSTs to experiment with teaching techniques hither to unfamiliar to them which may lead to the formation of beliefs congenial to student learning.

- PSTs can be initiated into continuing professional development (CPD) through critical reflection; this will give them a head start in improving their practice when they become teachers.

Further research

- A study can be conducted to gather the views of the tutors of the Programme on the overall contours of the Programme and its efficacy in triggering positive beliefs in the PSTs.
- A longitudinal study investigating the teaching practice of the PSTs can be conducted to ascertain the actual impact of the Programme in realistic terms.
- A study that focuses on the existing beliefs which are rejected by the PSTs owing to the impact of the Programme can offer interesting insights too.

Conclusion

Teacher beliefs are tacit and fluid. Often teachers may not even be aware that they hold a certain belief. However, it is important to critically examine teacher beliefs since they influence teacher actions. The present study underscores the importance of enabling pre-service teachers to gain awareness of their existing beliefs. It also demonstrates the important of helping PSTs analyze the inputs and experiences offered through the training Programme with a view to becoming aware of what new beliefs these are triggering. The goal of all teacher training is to facilitate formation of positive beliefs about teaching as well as to assist PSTs to accommodate new belies into their existing belief structures in such a way that these are aligned well with their emerging personal philosophies of teaching.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire for student-teachers

Dear student-teacher,

This questionnaire is part of a research study undertaken by me. The data obtained will be kept confidential and will be used solely for research purposes. Your cooperation in filling-in this questionnaire is solicited and appreciated.

With thanks and warm regards,

K. Padmini Shankar
Professor, Dept. of ESL Studies
EFL – U, Hyderabad
Questionnaire for student-teachers

General Information

Name:

Educational Qualifications:

Teaching experience, if any:

A. Beliefs about language teaching and learning

We as learners hold certain beliefs about teaching and learning.

What were some of the beliefs that you held **before** you enrolled on the MA ELT programme? For each of the following aspects of teaching and learning, state your beliefs (about 5-8 beliefs). (Use as much space as needed.)

Aspect	Beliefs
About who a good/bad teacher is	
About who a good/bad student is	

About effective/ ineffective language learning	
About effective/ ineffective language teaching	
About a conducive/ not-conducive classroom environment	
About effective/ ineffective teaching materials	
About offering feedback on learning	
About effective/ineffective exams/test	
About teacher learning (how professional teachers seem, how they can improve their teaching)	
. Any other aspect	

How did you form these beliefs? Put 'tick' mark against all those that apply to you.

My beliefs are formed

1. based on my personal experience as a language learner.
2. because this was how I was taught in my school (institutional culture).
3. because of my exposure to educationally based principles.
4. based on my home and social and home context that I grew up in.
5. based on my readings of the literature in the field.
6. because I experimented with a new technique and it worked.
7. based on my understanding of what works for everyone.
8. based on the person that I am (personality factors).

9. because of the influence of my peers.

10. based on the grades/ marks that I received in my exams.

B. New belief formation

Did you frame new beliefs based on the theoretical inputs offered to you across the first two semesters and the practicum experience in the third semester?

State **one** new belief (which you did not hold before enrolling on the MA ELT Programme) that you framed. Narrate the classroom experience that led to the formation of the new belief. (Use as much space as needed.)

New belief	Theoretical inputs/ Classroom experience

C. Beliefs sustained/strengthened

Mention any **two** beliefs that did not change or may have even got strengthened after your exposure to the theoretical inputs and the practicum. What makes you sustain these? (Use as much space as needed.)

Beliefs sustained	Reasons for sustaining/ strengthening
Belief 1	
Belief 2	

Thank you for your thoughtful and detailed responses. God bless!

Appendix 2: Sample filled-in questionnaires

Sample Questionnaire 1

Dear student-teacher,

This questionnaire is part of a research study undertaken by me. The data obtained will be kept confidential and will be used purely for research purposes. Your cooperation in filling-in this questionnaire is solicited and appreciated.

With thanks and warm regards,

K. Padmini Shankar
Professor, Dept. of ESL Studies
EFL – U, Hyderabad

Questionnaire for student-teachers

General Information

Name: xxxxxxxxxx

Educational Qualifications: M.A. ELT (pursuing)

Any teaching experience: No

D. Beliefs about language teaching and learning

We as learners hold certain beliefs about teaching and learning.

What were some of the beliefs that you held **before** you enrolled on the MA ELT programme? For each of the following aspects of teaching and learning, state your beliefs (about 5-8 beliefs).

(Please feel free to use as much space as needed.)

Aspect	Beliefs
About who a good teacher is	One who is friendly yet strict and knows to control a class
	One who is patient and understanding
	One who is fair in terms of assessment
	One who is not very biased
	One who earns respect from students

	One who pushes the limits of the students to bring out the best in them
	One who is not harshly display anger and frustration
About who a bad student is	One who does not respect teachers
	One who manipulates the teacher's trust through lies
	One who practices unfair means during tests
	One who learns without understanding
About effective language learning	Using a lot of examples to learn and understand
	Going beyond the textbook and using worksheets
About ineffective language teaching	Deductive learning
	Activities that have no use or relevance to real life use of the language
About a conducive classroom environment	Friendly
	Colourful (not too much)
About effective teaching materials	Articles from newspapers
	Images or pictures to validate what is taught
	Power point Presentations
About offering feedback on learning	Very important as it instills in students a sense of accountability
	Personalized feedback makes student feel special and motivated
	Personalized feedback alters student's perspective about teacher
	Feedback helps track mistakes and correct them
About ineffective exams/test	No application-based questions
	Require answers verbatim from the text
	Requires a lot of memory
	Lengthy

About teacher learning (how professional teachers seem, how they can improve their teaching, how student feedback can help teachers in their professional development)	The way they present themselves makes a very lasting first impression
	Those who ask students' opinion about their teaching
	Those who are not easily offended by the immaturity students might display owing to age and peer pressure
	Those who know how to grab the attention of students without having to ask for it
. Any other aspect	NA

How did you form these beliefs? Put 'tick' mark against all those that apply to you.

My beliefs are formed

1. based on my personal experience as a language learner. /
2. because this was how Iwas taught in my school (institutional culture). /
3. because of my exposure to educationally based principles.
4. based on my home and social and home context that I grew up in. /
5. based on my readings of the literature in the field.
6. because I experimented with a new technique and it worked.
7. based on my understanding of what works for everyone. /
8. based on the person that I am (personality factors). /
9. because of the influence of my peers.
10. based on the grades/ marks that I received in my exams.

B. **New belief formation**

Did you frame new beliefs based on the theoretical inputs offered to you across the first two semesters and the practicum experience in the third semester?

State **one** new belief (which you did not hold before enrolling on the MA ELT Programme) that you framed. Narrate the classroom experience that lead to the formation of the new belief. (Please feel free to use as much space as needed.)

> New belief
>
> A good teacher is one who is willing to leave her personal problems and ego outside the classroom.
>
> Theoretical inputs/ Classroom experience
>
> This was the first sentence uttered by a senior professor as she entered into our classroom for the very first time. This stuck with me because it made a lot of sense as I have experienced teachers behaving harshly owing to no fault of ours. This belief was strengthened when I saw the teacher actually practicing it in and encouraging students to question her, correct her and engage in healthy discussions.

C. Beliefs sustained/strengthened

Mention any **two** beliefs that did not change or may have even got strengthened after your exposure to the theoretical inputs and the practicum**.** What makes you sustain these? What beliefs got strengthened and why? (Please feel free to use as much space as needed.)

Beliefs sustained	Reasons for sustaining/ strengthening
Belief 1: A good teacher is one who is friendly yet strict and knows to control a class	I have retained this belief because of the negative experience that a teacher faced when he was too friendly and a strong believer of humanistic teaching. The students began to misunderstand the friendly nature and started taking him for granted. Knowing his soft nature, they stopped taking responsibility, turning in assignments on time and even responding to his questions. Thus, being too friendly can often lead students to take teachers and their patience for granted.
Belief 2: A good teacher is one who is patient and understanding	This belief has been strengthened owing to many experiences where I have personally witnessed the concern teachers have towards individuals with genuine problems. The use of the teachers' freedom to positively influence such individuals by extending deadlines, giving additional assignments (to make up for loss of attendance), changing

	mode of testing (take home assignment for those who fail to perform well in sit-down exams due to anxiety), etc.

Thank you for your thoughtful and detailed responses. God bless!

for the MA ELT Programme

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1o8n6TMVuNiVKvcItCOhJB-sMFIQpK-S3zEscAEXoMHE/edit?usp=sharing

Developing Essay Writing Skills of ESL Learners Using Task Based Language Teaching Approach in AP

Sudeepthi Dondapati

Abstract

English is no more a language of the elite people but also of the common man. With the changing winds and shifting sands, the importance of English from the olden days to the present days has also been changed. In today's global world, English occupies a prominent place among all the languages in the world and it is widely spoken across the world. Though English is also used by laypersons in the society, still the students in the regional medium contexts are not able to enjoy the fruits of English as they lack proficiency in all four skills of the language. Writing skill is a power tool for communication through which ideas, thoughts, and reflections can be expressed. Writing is skill is a key factor to academic success. Traditional teaching methods are inadequate to cater to the problems faced by the learners in the second language classes. They do not provide enough exposure to learn the second language instead rote learning is observed in the regional medium context. In such a scenario, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach was thought to be a remedy.

Key words: Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Traditional teaching methods, Task-cycle

Introduction

The objective of this research is to observe the impact of the TBLT approach on the learning of students to improve their essay writing skills. The effectiveness of TBLT in impacting on the writing of ESL learners positively is the primary purpose. There are different philosophies in language teaching focusing on all skills. Communicative activities indeed act as stimulus that can trigger language from students. Second language acquisition can occur by communicative task or an activity Widdowson (1990). It encourages student- centered learning rather than teacher- centered learning. Hence, CLT is an ongoing teaching approach and

continues to be a perennial approach in several foreign countries and is being practiced in major parts of India. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), collaboration among the group includes interaction communication among group members and their interaction for group activities Along with the changing trends and new fashions of teaching methods, the nuances and innovations in English are also going hand-in hand. With shifting sands and changing landscapes in recent teaching trends, an offshoot of communicative language teaching has cropped up.

What is TBLT?

This approach is primarily based on tasks as its main units of planning and instruction. Tasks are considered and proved to be the best of innovations in second language research. Newton (2001), observed in his study that the negotiations happened double the times of the other work when the information was divided than shared among the students. Tasks are the main ingredients to serve the needs of learners by involving and engaging their minds in an activity. They are vehicles through which language is carried to the learners in a free and friendly ambience. Task-based language teaching has tasks as its units rather than linguistic items as its syllabus. Prabhu (1987) worked on a project for five years with a small group of primary and secondary level school learners. There have been many research studies using TBLT approach in different contexts.

It believes in learning by doing so that the learners get hands-on experience through practical learning. The reading and writing materials include the texts which represent learners experience without excluding the real life content materials like literature texts, newspaper cuttings, and etc. Foster and Skehan (1996) with his another study contributed to the results and research of TBLT, saying that information exchange tasks could result better in students' negotiation. It is considered a superior model over traditional methods and is an effective method for developing the interest of learners (Swan, 2005). It is considered a superior model over traditional methods and is an effective method for developing the interest of learners (Swan, 2005).

Essay writing

Essay writing is one of the prominent genres of writing. It plays a crucial role in learning of writing. Hounsell (1984) observes, essay writing as expressing his /her feelings, ideas,

opinions and the content related in an essay form. Essay writing serves two purposes: assessment and learning to write. Students" essay is to be assessed and provided with feedback for further improvement.

Methodology Applied

TBLT framework includes the task cycle or task-based sequences for better implementation. The following model is a model of the task-cycle or task sequence(s), given by Willis (1996, p. 56-57). Research design includes the methodology followed by the researcher to achieve the objectives of the study. The study followed an experimental research design, as the researcher aimed to bring the improvement in essay writing of the learners. The participants in the study are homogeneous, in terms of social, financial and educational backgrounds. The researcher followed both qualitative and quantitative methods in the present study to establish the validity and reliability of the research.

The data of pre-test and post-test was calculated and was shown in a tabular form. The interpreted data was represented through graphs, tables, themes and categories.The number of words produced by the subjects were counted and given scores. The study was conducted in two phases. In phase I, to understand the problems of learners, the researcher gave them a pre-test. No help was given to the students during the pre-test. After assessing their scripts, the researcher came to a conclusion that the students were not able to write a good essay due to the lack of essay writing skills. So, task-based cycle was implemented and the results were obtained using all the research tools like classroom observation, pre-tests, intervention study, post-tests, questionnaires and interviews.

Intervention phase

After getting an overall understanding of the performance of students in pre-test, the researcher planned to develop their essay writing. The researcher intervened with some tasks intervention tasks to teach them through the task-cycle phase. The researcher intervened with the task-cycle for improving their writing. All the brainstorming tasks in the intervention study were taught to the target learners through role plays (orally) and their performance was captured in the written form in their essays. The learners in the study, had interactions based on the

brainstorming tasks and enacted the roles given in the brainstorming tasks orally and shown the improvement in the essays in written form.

Task-cycle

Brainstorming session/pre-task

During this stage, learners in the study would be introduced to a random topic and a task will be assigned to them.

Introductionto topic and task

Teacher helps students to understand the theme and objectives of the task. Example: brainstorming activity. The teacher may give them useful words and phrases during this pre-task.Later, learners will be introduced to the next level. It is the task-cycle phase.

b) **The tak-cycle**

Learners during this stage would do a task and wait for the teacher to supervise their work. Once the task is completed, students get the opportunity to use the language as per their own wish. The teacher monitors and encourages learners in a positive way to achieve the requirements of the task. After this task-cycle stage, learners can get introduced to next phase. It is a planning stage.

c) **Planning**

Students get ready to report on the outcome of the task, draft and rehearse with the report they have to give to the class.

d) **Report**

Students are asked to give the report while other groups are listening to teacher comments on the reports and words/phrases they use but does not give full feedback or overt correction on their performance.

e) **Language focus**

Teacher overtly gives correction and feedback to them and students correct as well as understand and rewrite their essays correctly.

The task-cycle, suggested by Willis was employed in the study and the impact

Discussion of the Results

The study tried to use the *Task-cycle* for developing essay writing skills of ESL learners. *Task-cycle* is a series of activities proposed by Willis (1996, p. 56-57) for improving learners' language. *Task-cycle* is a part of TBLT approach. The study employed the *Task-cycle* alongside a chain of various tasks for improving essay writing skills of vernacular medium learners. The researcher was committed to develop students' essay writing skill using TBLT approach.

Pre-test

The total marks allotted for essay writing were 5 marks. The experimental groups in a pre-test wrote an essay without any proper format introduction, body and conclusion. They were aware of the structure to be used in the essay. They were also not aware of the terms like narration and description. When they were instructed to narrate their experiences "on their first day of the school," they were not able to produce a substantial word. They produced chaotic essays without any organization. The average score of the group was 2.0.
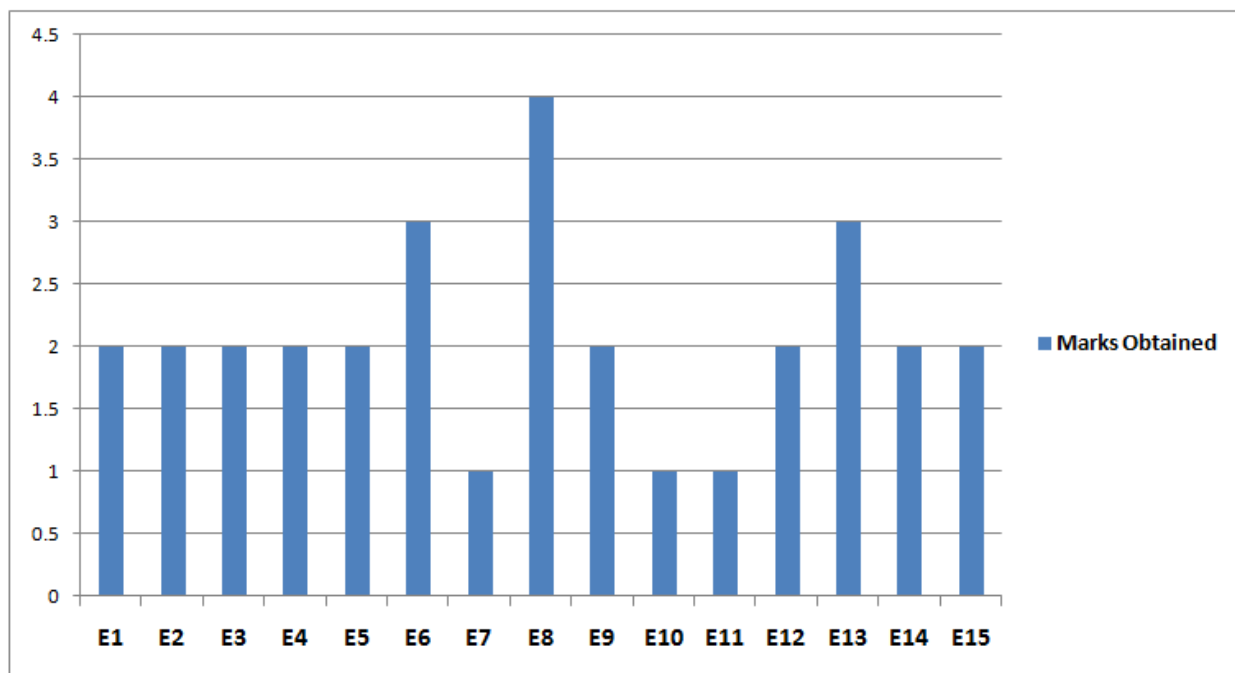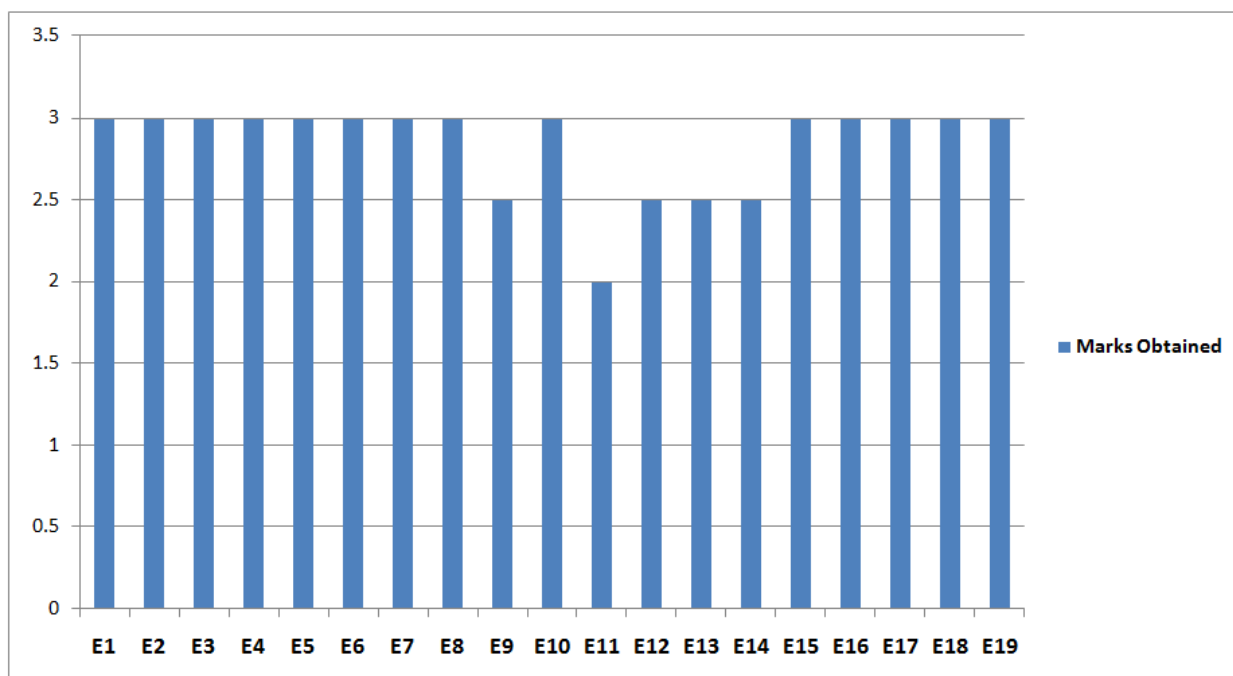

(Table 1.1)

Post-test Results

      The students in experimental groups, in post-test, followed the correct format of essay writing.In comparison with the performance of a control group, the experimental groups could achieve task requirements of essay writing.Post-test graph, clearly indicates a positive change in the performance of experimental groups in post-test. During the pre-test, students could not write an essay with any pattern. Their essays were chaotic and informal but gradually they seemed to have improved with a repeated practice throughout the intervention study.
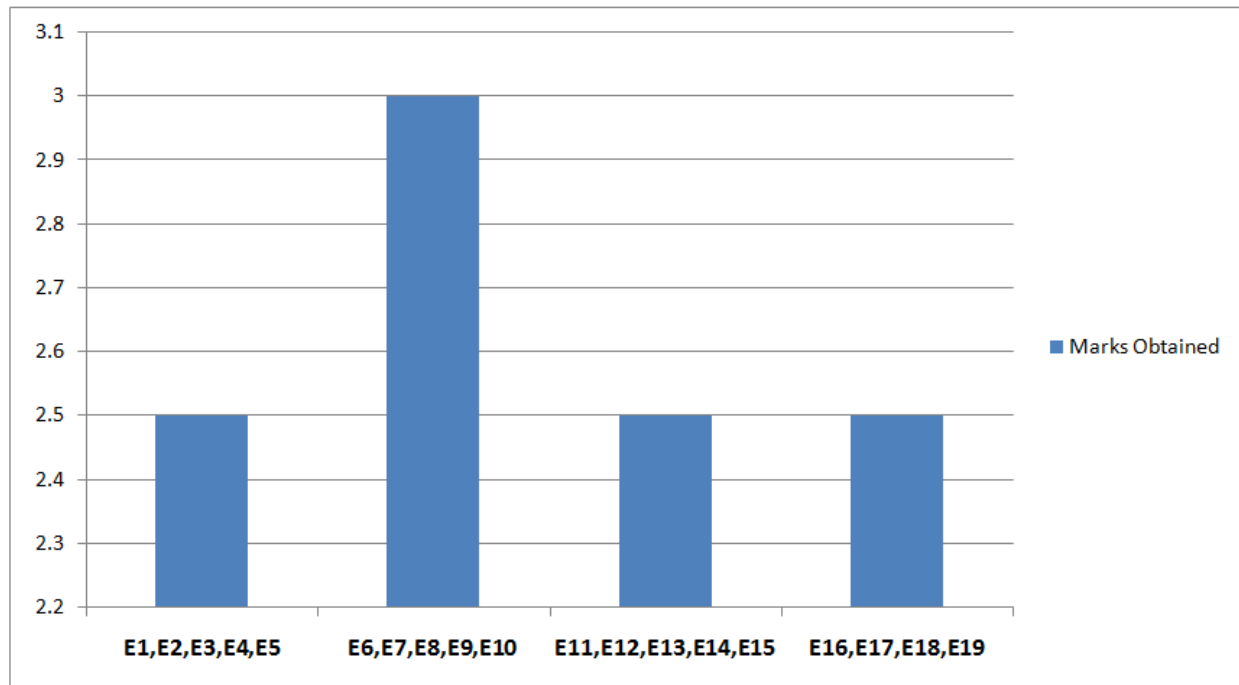
Table 1.2 Post-test (Group test)

Table 1.3 Post-test (Individual Test)

Conclusion

The students of the experimental group had improvement in their essay writing; they could produce clear texts with better logical structure, and write readable essays. It was obvious that the task-cycle had a positive effect on the writing of those students, as the change was evident from their written performance. The target groups achieved from 2 marks to 3 in essay writing after employing the task cycle.

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Teaching on How to Achieve Impersonal Tone in Report Writing by Reducing the Use of Personal Pronouns

Monal Dewle

Abstract

The present paper is a part of the study which focused on teaching genre specific features of report writing to help students to attain elements like formal language, objectivity, impersonal tone and coherence in their writing. The paper discusses only on the teaching of achieving impersonal tone in report writing through the reduction of the use of personal pronouns. The subjects of the study were 23 students (F=10; M=13) of an Engineering college in Hyderabad and they were asked to write reports before and after the teaching of how to reduce the impersonal tone. The analysis of the pre-teaching and post-teaching of the reports showed that there was a decrease in the use of personal pronouns. Further the teaching of impersonal tone was done through different types of worksheets and the analysis of it stated that the students were able to understand regarding how to reduce personal pronouns. This indicates that explicit teaching helped the students to achieve the impersonal tone in the report writing.

Key words: report writing, impersonal tone, explicit teaching

Introduction

In ESL context, especially in a country like India, report writing is often overlooked or considered unimportant by the students, though it is one of the important assessment tasks where their understanding of projects is evaluated through this genre of writing. It is assumed by the students at the time of admission in these courses that they will easily learn how to write reports or if it is taught to them, they will learn it in a few days. However in practice, most students find report writing extremely difficult and they are unclear about what should be included in a report, how ideas need to be organized in a report, coupled with these problems is the poor level of English of these students which makes these reports totally incomprehensible.

Also there is a mismatch between what the students write in the reports and the expectations of the teachers. This mismatch is due to some of the reasons mentioned above along with these, no experience of students in writing reports, no motivation to write reports and unable to relate how report writing will help them in their future career (Cherukuri, 2019).Therefore, to garner interest among the students report writing needs to be taught explicitlyto fulfill the generic expectations both in terms of language and format.Also it should be taught through a format of tasks such as sentence conversion, paragraph conversion and then text-conversion which can be easily understood by the students. If these generic conventions are comprehended by the students effectively, then less cognitive effort is required and would helpin retention of what has been taught for long time (Hinkel, 2013).

So, in the study to garner students' interest on features of report writing explicit teaching was introduced with the help of worksheets. These features were identified with the help of a study done by Elbow (1998) which focused on four integral linguistic features of academic writing which invariably form the features for report writing were mentioned.

These features are:
- maintaining formality of tone,
- expressing ideas in an impersonal manner,
- constructing meaning explicitly, and
- using complex structures

These are explained as follows:

Formality of tone is achieved by using vocabulary like a **mode of operation** within a context rather than concentrating only on its meaning. For instance, a sentence like '**I dropped out of graduate school'** can be changed to'**I interrupted my graduate education'** which lends a formal tone to even a subjective experience. The second feature, impersonal tone is a complex feature and it involves the use of passive voice to eliminate or foreground the writer. Traditionally, students are found to over-use the first and second person pronouns, which decrease the impersonal objective tone. Therefore, it is essential for the students to understand

where and how personal pronouns' use should be reduced to achieve it. The third feature, explicitness, is indicated by using signals to introduce details about a topic. These signals mostly function like a meta-discourse leading the readers through the text in a systematic manner. For instance, use phrases such as 'I plan to explain', 'In the next section we look at' (Shaw & Ting-Kun Liu, 1998). Lastly, use of complex sentences requires frequent use of subordinate clauses.

Though these features form an important part of report writing but in the purview of the present paper, the focus is only on one of the features mentioned above. The feature is expressing ideas in an impersonal tonewith the help of personal pronoun. Although students tend to overuse personal pronouns, through the teaching of this feature, it was intended to help the students to reduce its over-usage and make them understand that objectivity can be achieved in report writing with the learning of the nuances of this feature. It is discussed as follows:

Impersonal tone involves the use of third person pronoun 'it' instead of first person pronoun 'I' or 'we'. Personal pronouns indicate involvement of the writer with the addressee which leads to the colloquial or conversational tone whereas in academic writing, these are avoided (Swales & Feak, 1994 cited in Hinkel, 2004). Impersonal pronouns convey detachment, formality and objectivity in a writer's tone (Hacker, 1994; Leki, 1999). It is always claimed that in formal reports the use of personal pronouns like *I, you, we, us* should be avoided. The use of *it* makes the discourse impersonal and lends an air of objectivity and detachedness to the discourse.Therefore, the focus of the paper was on explicit teaching of this feature to students through different types of worksheets which would create awareness among them to reduce the use of personal pronouns. Further, it also aimed at helping them to achieve objectivity, detachedness in reports and givingthem an idea on how to write reports without sounding too personal about the experimentsthey have conducted or field work they had done.

Research questions

The study aims to find answers to the following research questions:

    a) Do students have awareness about how to reduce impersonal tone in report writing?

b) Does explicit teaching help the students to reduce the use of personal pronouns and write better reports?

Subjects

23 students were selected - 13 male and 10 female – from the first year of Computer Science engineering in Hyderabad and in the age range of 17-19 years.

Steps in the study

The steps followed in the study:

(a) Pre-teaching

(b) Teaching

(c) Post-teaching

In pre-teaching, which was the first step of the study, students were asked to write a report on the topic, "terrorism". The reports written by them showed the over use of personal pronouns, which indicated that they were not aware of the convention that to writeformal reports, personalpronouns had to be avoided. So, the second step was teachingwhich focused on reducing the use of personal pronouns with the help of worksheets.These worksheets included range of exercises centering on information about personal pronouns, reducing the using of personal pronouns through passive voice and text conversion. These exercises will be explained later in detail. The third step was post-teaching where the students had to write a report on another topic, "health tips for office workers: suggestions and recommendations". The topic was different compared to pre-teaching where the topic was focused and information mentioned should not include any personal opinions. This was done to check whether the students had reduced the use of personal pronouns through teaching and able to be objective, detached in their reports.

Results

The scoring of the scripts in the pre-teaching and post-teaching were analysed through ANOVA to compare the use of personal pronouns by the students before and after the teaching. Whereas in case of worksheets, correct answer was given 1 mark and wrong answer was given 0. Then the tabulation of correct answers was calculated through mean and standard deviation. Further, the errors made the students in the worksheets and post-teaching were identified and

grouped in two different categories to understand their process of learning and their ability to apply the knowledge they have learnt when asked to write on a different topic.

I.Analysis of scripts of Pre-teaching and Post-teaching:

As mentioned earlier, the analysis of the pre and post teaching scripts were analysed whether the students were aware of the fact in report writing personal pronouns need to be avoided. Total 46 scripts were analysed and its analysis is discussed as follows.Table 1 gives the mean use of personal pronouns in the pre and post-teaching.

Table 1: Mean score, SD, t value and p value

	Pre test	Post test	Df	T value	P value
Personal Pronouns	2.87 (2.97)	1.35 (1.53)	44	2.18*	0.034

Standard deviation is given in parenthesis

*significant at p<0.05

The post hoc Tukey HSD shows a decrease in the use of personal pronouns in post-teaching compared to pre-teaching. This is due to the increase in the use of passive voice compared to the use of personal pronouns in the post test and has shown clearly in Table 1. The reason being that in the post-teaching, most students had occasions to use impersonal pronouns and passive voice. However, in most cases they still preferred to use personal pronouns like *we, us*. The use of personal pronouns lent the task a personal perspective rather than a universal perspective. For instance, *when we sit in front of computer we get headache-* such occurrence of *we* induces a sense of subjectivity which was prevalent when students spoke of the problems of health in an office set-up. In these circumstances, the use of the impersonal voice seemed to be more difficult for students. Further, the use of personal pronouns is also an evidence of the spoken form of language in students' written form. This indicates that transition from a spoken form to a written form of language would require more focused instruction before it can be remedied.

II. Analysis of the Worksheets

Personal pronouns were taught explicitly so that the students could understand that in report writing personal pronouns should be avoided except *it*. Use of personal pronouns *I, we, us* tends to make language more personal and informal. Formality and impersonality can be achieved by using the passive voice. The worksheets consisted of exercises ranging from fill in the blanks; match the following, paragraph completion, sentence and text conversion. Each exercise was followed by a feedback session where answers to the exercises were discussed and students'doubt was clarified.

The first worksheet drew attention of the students regarding how they could rewrite the sentences eliminating personal pronouns with the use of passive voice. This worksheet was not coded for marking because it focused only on introducing the feature.In the second worksheetstudentshad to read two texts, one in an impersonal style and the other in personalized style. Then they had to identify the information which was common in both the texts and list out the phrases that were different in the texts (**Information** and **Listing**). The total marks for the 1 and 2 worksheet were 10 (5 for each worksheet). In the third worksheet (**Eliminating personal pronoun**) students were asked to convert 5 informal sentences to formal public notices by using passive voice which was also for 5 marks. The fourth worksheet (**Text Conversion**) focused on convertinginformal personalized text to a formal impersonal text which was for 6 marks as it contained 2 texts. The mean and standard of the marks obtained by students is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Performance on the Personal pronoun tasks

Types of exercises	Marks	Mean (N= 23)	SD
Information	5	3.73	1.09
Listing	5	3.21	0.95
Eliminating personal pronoun	5	2.78	1.24
Text conversion	6	3.69	1.45
Total	21	13.43	2.92

It can be seen from Table 2 that students have more difficulty in stating the information given in the task 1(Mean 3.73, SD 1.09) but they had less problems in listing the phrases that are different in the texts (Mean 3.21, SD 0.95). It might be because the studentswere well-versed with such kind of exercises. As listing out phrases is easy but to find common information in a text can be a daunting exercisewhen they had started learning how to avoid personal pronouns to achieve impersonal tone. They had to learn what they have learnt over the years.

III.Personal pronoun errors

The errors found in the student's script in the pre-teaching, post-teaching and worksheets were analysed in the qualitative manner. This analysis is included to see how the student has progressed from the stages of pre-teaching to the post-teaching, how much he/she has acquired within this period through teaching. Also, to check the progress made by the students regarding whether the errors had been minimized and how they had included the rules of personal pronouns taught to them.The categories were identified as:

   a) errors in passive construction
   b) elimination of passive voice

These are explained as follows:

   a) Errors in the construction of passives

   This error was made by the students when they had not paid attention to the rules when auxiliary verbs are used in the passive construction especially in case of modals.

   For instance, in the response below, we find *be* form or the auxiliary verb is omitted from the verb phrase in the passive construction:

   Stimulus sentence:Most people take drug overdoses because they find that it's difficult to sort out their problems clearly. That's why **you** should treat **your** patients carefully.

   Response: Most people take overdoses because the problems are difficult to be sorted out. Patients **should treated** carefully. (P3 in Worksheet)

   b) Elimination of passive voice

   This error was made by the students where the use of passive voice was necessary to make it more objective and the focus is on the action done rather. It might also be made by the students if they had read such types of instructions:

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Stimulus sentence:You are not allowed to dive in the swimming area.

Expected answer: Diving is not allowed in the swimming area

Response: No diving in the swimming area (P1 in Worksheet).

Here only the examples from the worksheets are included because the errors could be easily explained that these were made when the students were not paying attention or were confused about the use of verbs in passive voice. Another reason to include these examples because the responses that werewritten explicitly shows how the learning process of the learners where it indicates the transition phase each student goes through before acquiring any grammatical feature in second language context. Further there were certain caseswhen personal pronouns were mentioned explicitly in the sentences and still the students were unable to convert these sentences to impersonalized form. The reason for this might be due to the fact that they were not proficient enough to make these changes in language without changing the meaning of the passage or unable to detect the nuances of these features. This would require time, effort and paying attention to the usage of this feature in paragraphs/passages rather than in isolated sentences.

Conclusion

Thus it can be concluded from the study that overt teaching of personal pronouns helped in reducing the use of personal pronouns. This could be done by garnering their attention with the help of overt teaching. However, teaching them only for a limited amount of time would not help in the longer duration. Therefore, it is essential for the teachers to focus the students' attention on the rules that govern the usage in one step at a time rather than bombarding them with rules. Taking them a kind of tour through worksheets will help them to focus on the ingraining of these rules and then apply in their writing.

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Language Buddy Scheme' – Bringing Equity in Higher Education to Marginalised Students in Contemporary India

Akshay Kumar

Abstract

One of the major challenges modern Indian Education system facing is the place of English Language Learning and Teaching along with the other Indian languages. It is, thus, relevant to experiment with multilingual models which are inclusive and promote equity and social justice. This paper aims to present the 'Language Buddy Scheme', a peer mentoring model introduced in Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) to facilitate English language learning among 'marginalised' students along with a focus on multilingualism and inclusive language policy. It will also discuss the origin, development and the need of the scheme in conjunction with the similar existing ones. The later part of my paper will investigate how this scheme can enhance quality education within the contexts English Language Education and interdisciplinary learning. The further additional discussion will include how it promotes the vision of social justice, access and equity within a University space by bridging the several existing gaps. The final part of my paper will include suggestions on how it can be a possible sustainable model and solution for English Language Learning in catering to various issues and challenges faced by students in higher educational institutions.

Key words – Peer learning, Mentoring, Sustainable Models, Learner Autonomy

Introduction

According to John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) sociocultural approaches highlight the relationship between social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge. With this vision and other Vygotskian perspective, Language Buddy Scheme (LBS) was launched in June 2017 under the Language Cell operated by 'Centre for English Language Education 'within 'Ambedkar University Delhi''. The scheme emphasizes on promoting English Language learning through peer mentoring where the students are being selected afterwards an interview process, provided with an orientation cum training workshop to work with the junior students

(who are their fellow peers) on improving their linguistic skills. It gives enormous opportunities for students and teachers to come together and reflect upon their beliefs, motivations, and hindrances and to go on a journey to find their language related abilities and eventually importance of 'realities' and 'rights' towards learning English.The respective study based on this scheme, will explore how it is catering to the needs of the marginalised students and empowering them. A series of questionnaire, telephonic interviews, classroom observations of the language sessions are being made possible for the study with the help and kind support of two professors from Ambedkar University Delhi (MonishitaHajraPande and IpshitaHajraSasmal) who are also the prominent coordinators related to the scheme in the university. My own two years of language mentoring classroom-experiences and reflections are also taken into consideration along with interactions with other mentors, to come to the discussed observations in the paper.

1.0 Development of the Scheme

Students are notified about the scheme, its vision and an application form along with the date of submission. The minimum eligibility for a candidate is settled for him/her to be a second-year undergraduate student. Later, they are interviewed by a panel of professors working in the Centre of English Language and Education within the main campus of Ambedkar University, i.e. - Kashmere Gate campus. Then a list of the selected candidates is released for a workshop cum orientation program. The orientation focuses on understanding the participants' beliefs, assumptions and attitudes about learning English. Questions were also raised around language learning and the sensitivities involved in working on English language skills in a country such as India. Activities were conducted to discuss ways to break existing stereotypes about language learning and to celebrate multicultural environment.

The orientation also stressesupon discussions around reading and writing strategies in a workshop mode where students reflected on their own writing assignments to explore and work on their reading and writing skills and tactics. The sessions absorb on grammar, error correction, giving feedback and the use of technology to facilitate independent learning. At the end of each day of the five-day orientation programme, participants fill a 'reflective grid' which generated discussions and ideas for subsequent peer mentoring sessions.

The sessions were planned in a way which demonstrated what the student-mentors are expected to do in their peer mentoring. The following approaches of learning by doing, pair and group work, how to break the ice, and arriving at commonly agreed learning principles are being taken into the practice. Individuals, in collaboration with others, used tools to control the world according to their needs and goals and in this sense, tools become mediators between the subject and the object.

This orientation programme is a team effort and allowsmentors and teacher-mediators to reflect on our own expectations from our students and course objectives.

After the orientation, the activities along with the collaboration of ELE Professors and mentors design several course components and work closely with their mentees throughout the semester on following:

- Work on writing a portfolio, which is an integral part of the EPC (English Proficiency Course) course.
- Discuss reading texts and assignments from other courses.
- Try to inculcate the habit of leisure reading, explain how to learn using smartphones, watch videos and movies together.
- Screen movies and conduct language game sessions to bring students together and make language learning fun.

The mentors and mentee sessions start and goes on over the semester. They also get closely monitored by the ELE Professor assigned to them who works as their mentor.A thorough report and feedback forms are submitted at the end of the semester respectively by the mentors and mentees to analyse the several implications of the scheme along with the positive and negative aspects for further improvisation.

2.0 Need of the Scheme

2.1 To Cater Issues of a Higher Education Classroom

A. Teacher - Student Ratio and Interaction

The teacher student ratio being higher (an average 1:50) in a language classroom highly hinders the interaction and the respective attention the freshly admitted students need. Vygotsky (1978) considered language as a symbolic tool that allows human beings to mediate between their minds and the outside world. This is especially true if the outside world means learning another language.From his words it can be concluded that the mere role of a teacher is not enough to generate learning but to get aware of other dimensions about students.Language Buddy Scheme helps the teacher to divide the students into small groups and assign them their seniors (mentors) to make them learn English & help them in all the activities related to its expanding on their ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development). The teacher also keeps monitoring the mentors-mentees sessions & their development with substantial records and regular meetings for feedback. The teacher also gets to know about the linguistic contexts of the students through the student's reflections which can make the classroom interactions smooth. Both teachers, students (mentees and mentors) develop a bond and create a space where they can learn together giving themselves the required independence and experiences dismissing the autocratic teaching and learning.

B. Process - Writing Approach to Learning

The LBS facilitates the process writing approach through the help of mentors working closely with the mentees. The mentors make the mentees enable to make multiple drafts of their presentations and the given assignments before submission. They provide them detailed feedback and help them work on their mistakes and errors. It also lowers up the teacher's burden to catering so many students in a single classroom. I, as a language mentor used to work on least four drafts with my mentees setting deadlines which helped both of us to learn many things, whether it is valuing or utilizing time, asking for help or discussions with each other, or coming up to the terms of actually enjoying reading and writing.

C. Struggles of Students Across the Curriculum

Most of the Students admitted to the university space seem clueless about the curriculum and the academic necessities required within it. They struggle on several levels. They are expected to know a certain level of English and are required to read skilfully the readings provided in other courses. The mentors under LBS help students to deal with both

issues. Being from the same courses they can understand their positions and facilitate them well than a mentor from anothercourse would have done so.LBS creates a space for regular learning activities sessions including - Language games, movie screenings, seminars and workshops etc. where the mentees learn and furnish things, they're expected to know at higher education level.

D. Contextualizing English inside and outside the Classroom

LBS not only help students to learn English with their mentor who eventually become their buddies, not only inside but outside the classroom too. Students who feel shy to interact with others in the same classroom learns to how to utilize public spaces along with the individuals around to learn and use English. They have their sessions anywhere they want whether it's a cafe, canteen, restaurant, a park or any public space provided they get tasks related to the space too. This much individual attention and care makes them confident and warm towards each other making them learn to not forget of being humanistic in their lives. Even the tasks they do around language development a observes the vision of Fenner (2002:84) as an underlying motif of operation which says 'authentic materials and tasks carry the real- life scenarios from outside the formal education setting into the classrooms. Bringing local knowledge into learner's English language learning context works well since there is a concrete link for them to associate.

2.2 To Promote Multilingualism and Appreciation Towards Cultural Diversity

Students are continuously indulged into the tasks which require them to use their mother tongue or most enabled language to learn English. This teaching method also helps them to make a deeper sense of the concepts they are exploring and understanding. The buddy sessions foster their thinking to think about the concepts in the language they are most comfortable into. It also provides them the opportunities to appreciate, revive and respect each language in the era of English. Since they do tasks and assignments with the language around them, they bring about their rituals, traditions and culture and get to know more about the contexts they are coming from. It also helps them to build up interpersonal and social relationships, a necessary requirement of a happy fulfilling college life. Students coming from different states like – Rajasthan, Assam, Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai etc. eventually makes the classroom rich along with their lives embedding the uniqueness of each culture within them. The National Policy of

Education 2019 has also observed and recommended the usage of multilingualism within the Indian classrooms to bring quality education within India. The following resources can be used within a higher education English language classroom which are made available to each student without any biased of his/her economic and educational background. They consist:

a) Songs from Coke Studio such as – Chaarahikaalighata, Baanware, Maula tera noor etc. and which can also be used to design different sets of activities such as characterization, narrative and its elements, tenses used, metaphors used etc.

The songs chosen here are one of the authentic materials coming from student's own lives. As Mishan (2005:27) argues, 'learners who work on the materials that relate to their personal interests have the same attitude, motivation and affective filter to integratively motivated learners and conveniently integratively motivated learners have greater success than instrumentally motivated ones.' Since the coke studio songs are being recognised by most of the mentors and mentees, implied to Mishan's mechanism, they can bring a great deal of excitement to students in the learning of argumentative writing, which they generally find boring and difficult.

b) To strengthen the vocabulary, we can use these online resources which works effectively for the college students –

1. Not a movie review by Sucharita Tyagi
2. Spil   l the tea by Sneha Menon Desai
3. Movie review by Anupama Chopra
4. Articles by Rahul Desai on the film companion website.

3.0 Catering to Marginalised Students – Empowering Them

"We are conscious of ourselves because we are conscious of others; and in an analogous manner, we are conscious of others because in our relationship to ourselves we are the same as others in their relationship to us. I am aware of myself only to the extent that I am as another for myself." - Lev S. Vygotsky (*Undiscovered Vygotsky: Etudes on the pre-history of cultural-historical psychology*)

Keeping the aboveVygotskianopinion in the mind, students as well as teachers come together to support the marginalised students who face criticism due to their low-income profile, inability to speak and write effective English and in many other ways within the university space.The peer learning lessons operates on Vygotsky's ideas of catering to the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) of the mentees providing the help of the mentors along with them utilising their social cultural contexts within the classroom to learn English. Each trained mentor firmly believes in implying this Vygotsky perspective in language learning which says, 'one has to do with 'props' and 'instruments' that makes it possible for the individual to go beyond his present 'level of development' to achieve higher ground and, eventually, new consciousness', along with his other peer learning ideas .Vygotsky was passionate about the need to eliminate feelings of inferiority by having children participate to the greatest extent possible in conventional cultural activities so as to develop self-esteem.Thus, the tools, techniques and tasks which will be further discussed has evolved through the constant efforts of peer mentors (and mentees) towards not only improving English but to provide students a progressive linguistic environment working on their 'self'.This attention to affect as a central aspect of cognition suggests the importance of inclusive treatment of diverse students within a virtuous language classroom.

Profile of Enrolled Epc Students

Last 5 years data reveals that around 75-80% of the students who opt for English Proficiency Course [EPC] take admission in AUD under reservation policy. 50% of seats in all government institutions are reserved for students from marginalized sections of the society under Schedule Caste [SC], Schedule Tribe [ST], Other Backward Castes [OBC].

In order to understand the student profile in detail, the scheme coordinator and the team administered a questionnaire in October 2018 to one of the class consisting of 30 students. This allowed us to understand their socio- economic and linguistic backgrounds and their beliefs about learning English. This section presents the detailed profile of the recent batch of EPC students [academic year 2018-19].
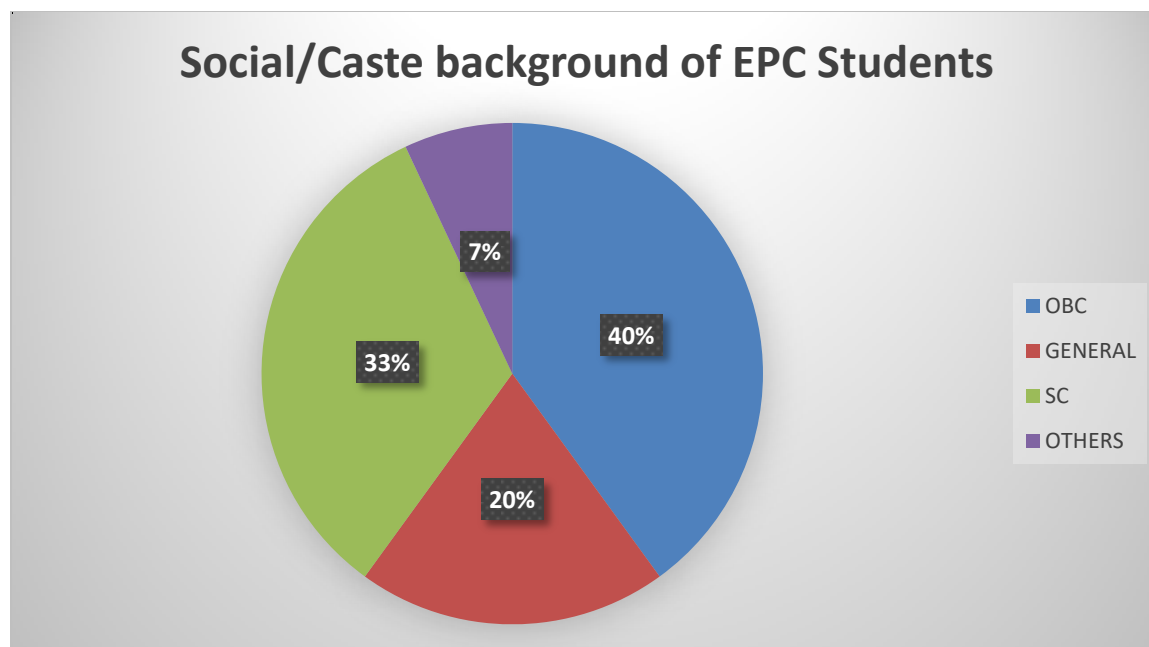
Table no 1.1

The above chart shows the social background of the learners. Their caste identities are instrinsically linked to their marginalization and therefore lack of access to English instruction at the school level. It displays that the majority of the students come from marginalized sections of the society. Out of 30 students 10 are from SC category, 2 are from ST, 12 are from OBC and 6 are from general category.

The university provides fee waiver and other financial aid to needy students. The following chart shows the percentage of students for Student Welfare Fund [SWF].
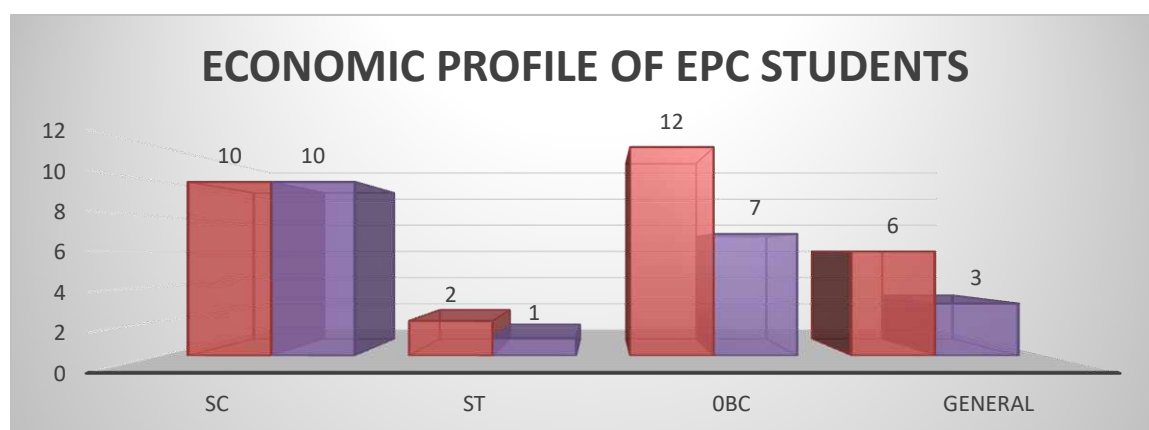

Table no 1.2

The above chart shows that out of 30 students 21 students are part of SWF initiative which supports economically weaker sections of the student population. More than 50% of these students come under economically weak segment of the population. Their parents' professions vary from daily waged labourer, local shop keepers to clerks in government offices.

The chart below depicts that majority of students have had Hindi as a medium of instruction in their scchool. 8 students have gone to English medium schools but these schools serve the needs of students who belong to the lower to middle class families. Although they are English medium schools , the quality of English that the students get exposed to is questionable. Therefore, despite of 12 years of English medium instruction, the students' proficiency fail to develop to an adequate level to pursue higher education.

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOL

■ ENGLISH MEDIUM   ■ HINDI MEDIUM   ■ OTHER MEDIUM
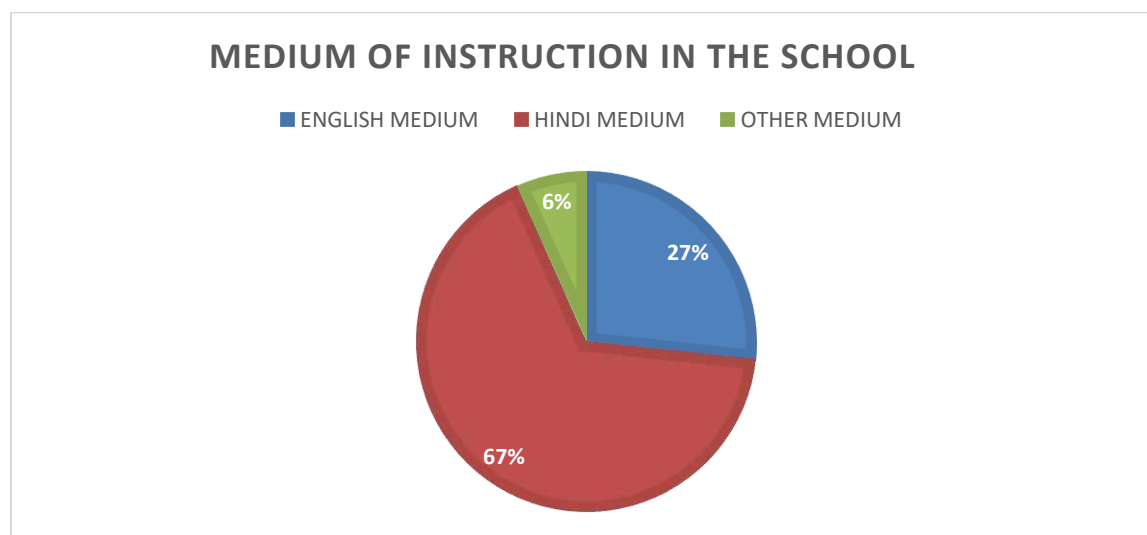
6%

27%

67%

Table no 1.3

Majority of students speak Hindi at home. However, a number of other languages were point out as students' mother tongue/ home language.Consodering the students' linguistic profile is diverse the university classroom needs toacknowledge the presence of multiple languages in the learners' repertoire and explore waysin which such resources can be used beneficially to facilitate learning.
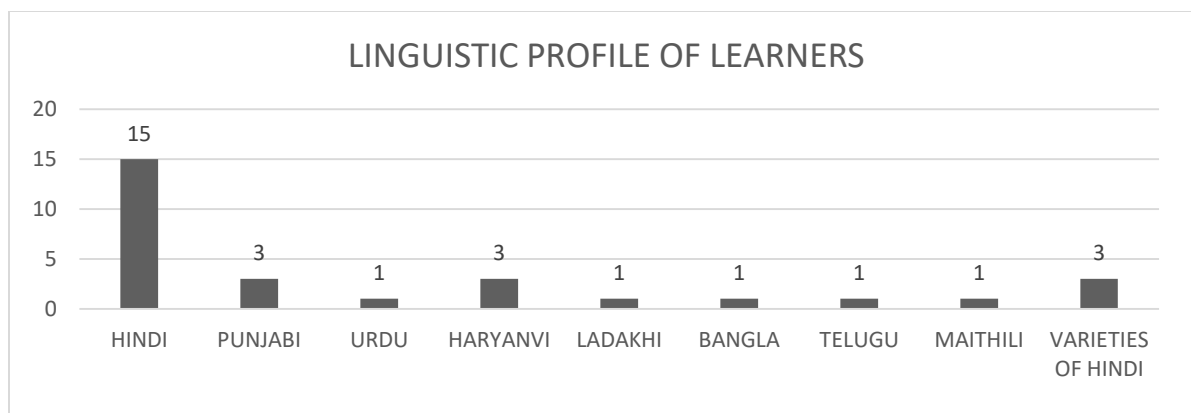
178

LINGUISTIC PROFILE OF LEARNERS

Language	Count
HINDI	15
PUNJABI	3
URDU	1
HARYANVI	3
LADAKHI	1
BANGLA	1
TELUGU	1
MAITHILI	1
VARIETIES OF HINDI	3

Table no 1.4

4.0 Bringing Social Equity and Justice

Since the medium of instruction is English, most of the students feel disadvantaged in other courses which hinder their class participation. They can inculcate those ideas within the class with the help of Language Buddy sessions. Everyone works with a lot of harmony and peace bonding well with each other helping them realizing and accessing their rights towards Elite English irrespective of caste, colour, gender and their socio-economic backgrounds etc. By deliberately taking the perspective of other people who exhibit points of difference that have real ramifications in their lives, students could begin to engage empathically with each other.The whole LBS process straight from the starting interviewing phase to the monitoring phase creates a liberal space for each individual to flourish.

4.1 Challenging Power hierarchy of Knowledge

The peer-mentoring model promotes a bilateral exchange of ideas and learning and is not one-sided in nature. The more-enabled peer (or mentor) has more English language proficiency but the peer learning space throws up opportunities for exchange of knowledge and ideas supporting a bilingual/multilingual atmosphere. Language learning happens as part of this exchange. The name "Language Buddy Scheme" reflects this idea that it aims at promoting bilateral exchange and learning by breaking hierarchies and power relations. The scheme also challenges the stereotypical notions of autocratic teaching and the ways of getting knowledge. The constant focus on discourse and knowledge structures from several paradigms

is catered towards bringing language equity within the students. The following figure represents several magnitudes how power along with in interaction with ZPD operates within the realm of language learning discourse
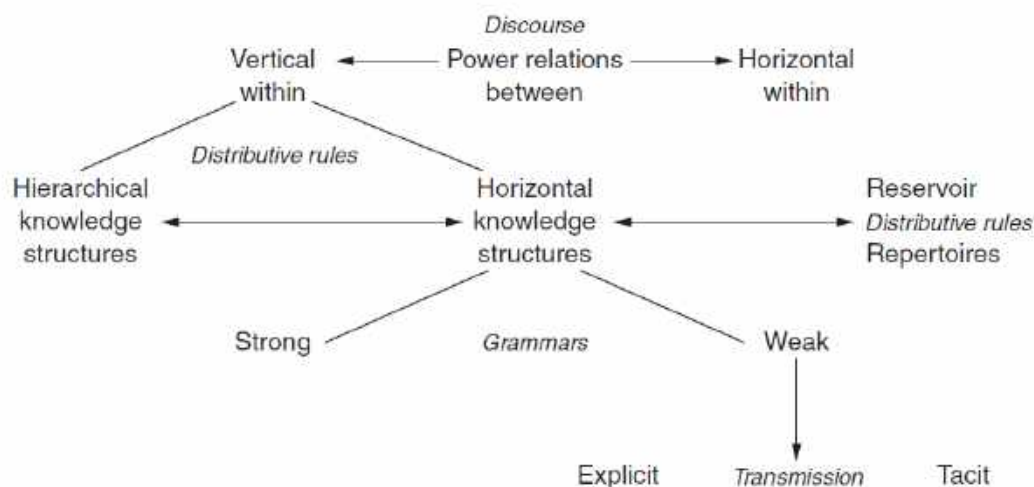

Figure 1.2 Discourse and knowledge structures.

Image courtesy – *Vygotsky and Research by*Harry Daniels

4.2 'Local' is also Knowledge

The scheme highly emphasizes on using the resources which revolves around the mentees and their linguistic contexts. From collecting their older member's experiences in their native language to showing them videos and giving them texts, which promote their folklore, the scheme empowers them with on several levels. It suggests that to you can indeed learn from your local resources (both material and human) and can be respectful towards which is not English knowing its worth through its help to learn English. It will also enable to preserve their folklore and come up with innovative research ideas later.

4.3 What enrolled students have to say:

A small level survey cum formal and unformal discussionswere conducted with about 40 students using conversational tools and questionnaire and these are the points which came up,

which are not only the reflection of them getting marginalized by English language but the socio-political factors that comes along too. Their responses include:

a) Most of them felt very demotivated and hesitant to talk to people when they joined the university due to lack of fluency.

b) More thanapprox. seventy percent of students accepted they needed help with writing and speaking of English since no one has really taught them by providing proper training.

c) Most of students felt happy to get connect to students from different courses and finally be able to bond well and socialise by getting an healthy socio-linguistic environment.

d) They felt confident in connecting knowledge gained in the sessions to other courses and their content both inside and outside the class.

e) They got the affective support from their mentors which was missing in their lives earlier majorly due to poor family conditions or general lack of emotional support and other factors such as demotivation, amotivation, lack of opportunities etc.

f) They enjoyed the attractive and innovative methods of teaching and accepted the improvement within their learning outcomes along with the improved willingness to communicate.

g) More than half of students accepted being victim of biasedness on several levels due to them belonging to marginalized categories.

h) Most of them felt empowered, highly motivatedand are still connected to their mentors for academic support even if their session has terminated after a semester.

4.4 Some of the Findings from the study

1. Focussed writing - Students through the usage of above suggested tools and approaches got to observe everything they do.Most of the them have come up with the responses such as - they never saw cinema and songs in such light linking it to critical thinking and language skills. Most of the things they listen to or watch they have started thinking about it critically, which was absent earlier.

2. The length of the writing samples saw gradual increase/ growth with a clear picture of what they think and trying to prove. Length in the writing should not be seen as anything but a non-fearful attempt of students to tell their viewpoints which they were earlier scared of or uncertain of expressing.

3. The clear attempt of writing about their personal thoughts and viewpoints or which aspects they are inclined towards is more visible within their writing samples.

4. The 'introduction' part along with the 'body' has seen immense growth/ improvisation since they are observing to possible details and thinking in multiple directions while writing articles and essays.

5. We could clearly observe the fact of making less grammatical mistakes since they are getting to learn closely with the 'context' of the words.

6. They still have to work upon the 'linkages' of Introduction, Body and Conclusion within their essays to make it more impressive and rather form strong connections between them.

7. The aspect of divergent thinking is much visible since whenever they interact, they do come up with several responses related to various dimensions of a concept now, as per the mentors and their professors.

8. Suggestive checking (giving indirect suggestions) of their drafts saw more progress than correcting them directly.

5.0 How This Initiative Can Be A Sustainable Solution For Indian Universities

5.1 Low cost no cost model

The scheme fully works with the initiatives of the ELE Professors and the mentors and hence no cost of payment is required since everyone is motivated to bring the change around them and in the surroundings. The materials used in the Orientation along with refreshments are the only costs it requires for implementing. Mentees don't have to pay any extra fee to enrol into the sessions, they're rather welcomed with warmth and love by the mentors and the Professors.

5.2 Social development and opportunities

LBS helps in tapping into the strengths of students coming from different backgrounds. Sharing of cultural aspects becomes an integral part along with the development of interpersonal skills which remains for a long term along with the bonds created within the sessions.Students coming from government schools are not able to go to Stephens or any elite named college, but

AUD (Ambedkar University Delhi) provides them the same quality education and prepare them for wherever they want to through this scheme.

5.3 Challenging Socio - Economic Barriers

Having the low-cost requirements, the scheme challenges the socio- economic barriers since students are not expected to buy books, get prints or anything like that which requires money. The focus is more on learning with the help of each other irrespective of caste, gender, colour, socio-economic backgrounds etc. The mentors and the concerned professors try their best to use easily accessible resources within the classrooms to make learning more effective and students do not feel lack of resources due to any kind of socio-economical barrier.

5.4 Elitist English through Multilingualism

Mentees and mentors can create a space where they can learn the elitist English through each other and facilitation of the ELE Professors with the fact of 'local' being knowledgeable too. Multilingualism seems to be the future of the coming generation to learn English rather than the direct method or grammar translation method. This model initiates a talk around local knowledge, multilingualism and thus developing proficiency and linguistic skills in Englishutilising them. The students are given tasks around using their own contexts and learning English through the L1and L2 interaction.

Conclusion

Language Buddy Schemecan be a necessary initiative for most of the higher education institutions to not only promote peer mentoring or learning, but also to provide independent space to learnersfor breaking the hierarchical knowledge sharing path. Due to its bilateral knowledge exchange, everyone who becomes a part gets to learn something about English Language from others or surely from himself/ herself embarking on a journey. It helps the marginalized students a lot in terms of not only making them confident individuals but also bringing elitist knowledge to them so that they can also get equity amongst all the students to flourish without any hinderances. This scheme attempts to shape individuals who can bring major changes in our society through this educational support.

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Self-assessment at the University Level: An Experiment

Mahananda Pathak

Abstract

Assessment practices in Indian educational contexts, even at universities, are still confined to routinised ways of evaluation, namely sit-down closed-book examinations, presentations, seminars, and assignments. However, in some contexts, open book examinations and portfolio assessments are beginning to feature. But, the self-assessment as a form of assessment is rarely used in Indian ESL contexts. The attempt made in this paper is to report a classroom experiment where self-assessment was used as part of internal assessment with Post-graduate students of English Language Teaching (ELT) in The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India. They were asked to score their own answers with proper justifications after reading the expected answers provided by the teachers. This was followed by a comprehensive check by the teacher focusing whether the students' assigned scores were justified or not. The analysis of the justifications by the students revealed their understanding of the various aspects (content, language, presentation) of responding to questions in examination situation. Also, the concerned teacher's self-reflections in this learning-oriented assessment, demonstrated his significant growth as an assessor.

(**Key words**: Assessment practices, Self-assessment, Indian ESL contexts, Learning-oriented assessment, Assessor)

Introduction

Self-assessment as a form of formative assessment is essentially reflective in nature. In such ssessment, learners can take active part in the whole process of testing. They can actually assess their own knowledge, learning and capabilities. Self-assessment has various advantages: it has the potential to bring changes in the learners' learning experiences in the classroom. It also makes them reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses, which eventually enables them to monitor their own progress and set learning goals for themselves (Andrade, 2010; Durairajan, 2015).

A critical analysis of university assessment practices in Indian ESL contexts reveals the dominance of routinised ways of evaluation, namely sit down closed-book examinations, presentations, seminars, and assignments. However, in some classroom contexts, various forms of alternative assessment such as open book tests/examinations, projects and portfolios are beginning to feature (Pathak, 2014). But, the self-assessment as a form of formative assessment is rarely used in such contexts. Therefore, this paper reports a study where self-assessment was used within the scheme of internal assessment with twenty post-graduate students.

Research on Self-assessment: A Brief Overview

A significant volume of research on self-assessment has focused on assessing writing and mathematics. Studies of writing have found a positive relationship between self-assessment and quality of writing (Andrade & Boulay, 2003; Andrade, Du, & Wang, 2008; Ross, Rolheiser, &Hogaboam-Gray, 1999 cited in Andrade, 2010). The improvements in students' writing include more effective handling of aspects such as ideas and content, organization, and writers' voice apart from mechanics of writing. In line with these research in the Western contexts, Kadam (2017), however, in Indian context, in his study on the effects of self-assessment in students' writing calls for creating opportunities for learners to reflect on their writing capabilities. These learners were 40 undergraduate women from backward classes studying English in a Telangana State Government Residential College. As part of the experiment, they were given a narrative writing task. They were first asked to score their own writing with a written justification for their scoring. A week after the self-assessment, a parallel writing task was administered. A detailed analysis of the students' written responses (to task one and two) and their justification for self-scoring was done to determine the influence of these justifications on their second writing task. The findings indicated that some issues discussed by the students in their justification related to the aspects of writing such as content and organisation were resolved in their second writing task.

Andrade and Valtcheva (2009) in their study based on *Albany*, the capital of the U.S. state of New York introduced criteria-referenced self-assessment to promote learning and achievement. They argued that self-assessment must be a formative type of assessment rather than a summative type. It should be done on 'learners' drafts of works in progress' than on end

of the term products such as written assignments, oral presentations. They also pointed out that the ultimate goal of self-assessment is to figure out areas of strength and weakness in learners' work so as to make improvements and promote learning.

Context of the Study

As mentioned earlier, the post graduate students, the subjects of this study were registered for a newly launched programme 'MA ELT' at The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India. As part of their internal assessment for a 5 credit core course in Semester I, they were given a sit-down closed book test (for a total of 20 marks). Contrary to the normal practice of correcting the students' answer by the concern teacher, they were asked to score their own answers with proper justifications after reading the expected answers/prompts or model answers (see *Appendix 2*) provided to them (Evaluation round 1 by the students). Considering the lack of exposure for such kind of assessment practice in their undergraduate level, the students had a 'briefing session' on how much marks to deduct for not mentioning examples while explaining, for exceeding word limit while answering, etc. This helped the teacher to maintain transparency and interrater reliability in students' marking (in line with Mukhopadhyay and Maheswari, 2014). This was followed by a comprehensive check by the teacher focusing whether the students' assigned scores were justified or not (Evaluation round 2 by the teacher).

Data Collection

Test items: Questions I and II

A critical look at the test items (see *Appendix 1*) reveals that the Question I focused on terms/concepts associated with the discipline called English Language Teaching. Students were asked to define those within a word limit. Hence, these items are more of concept clarification tasks to build students' scholarships in the field. However, its memory based.

Question II (see *Appendix 1*) was giving comments on key principle of syllabus organization and underlying principles of language learning and teaching by looking at a content page from a course book to teach English. This is more of an application oriented question where little bit of analysis is involved. Students were required to apply their theoretical understanding

of 'primary' and 'secondary' organising principles in syllabus. They were also required to reflect on the structural view, functional view, and interactional view of language.

Students' justifications in the form of Comments in the answer scripts

As stated earlier, students provided their justifications for the marks they themselves awarded. These justifications were in the form of comments in their answer scripts (see *Appendix 3*). Selections of such comments for both Questions I and II are presented in unedited form for discussion.

I. Define the following terms:

1. No examples were given for most of the answers.

2. I didn't give sufficient examples.

3. I have given sufficient examples. So, full marks given.

4. My definitions were read like plain sentences. I mean didn't use appropriate language to define concepts.

5. Has an idea about the concepts, but not conveyed properly.

6. Lack of content, particularly incoherent. I missed some points in every answer.

7. I know certain concepts, but failed to put it in words.

8. ½ mark not given for using 'limited' instead of 'specific' as it changes the meaning. (Syllabus is time limited, e.g. syllabus for 9th standard, syllabus for midterms).

9. I have not used proper technical terms in my answer.

10. Another ½ mark cut for exceeding the word limit.

II. Comment on a content page from a course book

1. Age-appropriate themes and objectives, the main focus of the model answer provided by the teacher, not mentioned in my answer.

2. I failed to understand the meaning of the 'Underlying principles of language learning and teaching', which is part of the instruction. So, couldn't answer it, as it was supposed to be answered.

3. I had failed to understand the last question, i.e. Question II (what I was supposed to write).

Analysis: 'Small Gains' and Reflections

The analysis of the justifications by the students reveals their understanding of the various aspects (content, language, presentation) of responding to questions in examination situation. Regarding **Question I: Define the following terms**, the comments 1, 2 and 3 highlight the importance/role of examples in writing definition in academic contexts. Similarly, comment 4 is regarding the language of writing definition, e.g. X can be defined as…; X means…; X refers to…; X is/are…, etc. Comments 5 and 6 underline how to convey content in a coherent manner. Comments 7, 8 and 9 emphasise the importance of appropriate vocabulary, discipline-specific words in writing. Likewise, comment 10 put forward how to express the intended ideas within a fixed word limit in time-bound examination situation. The comment 1 for **Question II: Comment on a content page from a course book** brings to light some of the students' attempt to look for an 'exact replication' of model answer. Comments 2 and 3 also stress the importance of writing simple and clear instructions for examination questions.

Also, the concerned teacher's self-reflections (for the nature of the test, nature of the questions) in this learning-oriented assessment, demonstrate his significant growth as an assessor. Based on the post self-assessment round 1 informal talk with the students, it was felt that the 'briefing session' on how to do self-assessment was inadequate for the semester I students. Considering their very limited exposure in such practices, a proper training session with the detail procedures of self-assessment could have minimized students' struggle and maximize students' performance. Hence, it was felt that self-assessment could work better with experienced students (semester II, III, or IV). Regarding Question II, which require students to comment on the key principle of syllabus organization and underlying principles of language learning and teaching by looking at a content page from an English course book, it was realised that the question instructions need explanations/clarity. These could have included the nature of the key principles of syllabus organization (primary, secondary, integrated, etc) and what

constitutes the underlying principle of language learning and teaching (structural view, functional view, interactional view, learning experiences provided,etc.). In the evaluation round 2 by the teacher, it was noticed that students very rarely look for an 'exact replication' of model answers. In fact, the model answers were NOT rigidly applied. Teacher made sure that justice being done where students were given credit for answering creatively.

Conclusion

This small classroom based research highlights the significance of self-assessment in Indian ESL classroom contexts. It establishes the fact that unlike self-evaluation, self-assessment is not merely assigning grades or scores. It requires students to go beyond grades/scores to reflect on their performance and judge their capabilities against the given criteria such as the use of examples to explain/define, the language of definition, the role of discipline-specific words in writing, coherence. In an ESL classroom, this process of reflection and assessment against the given criteria raises students' awareness about their own progress significantly. It also helps them understand the features of their on-going language development activities. Therefore, teachers should provide students enough opportunities to reflect on their still-developing knowledge and skills; to monitor and improve their own learning (in line with Tharu, 2017).

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Appendices(1-10)

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(To be fastened before the last page of the main answer book)

Additional Answer Book

I

1)

(c) Situational syllabus is a type of syllabus that is organised based on the situation. It has a phrase book approach towards language teaching, hence it has a behaviouralistic approach, to language teaching. Such syllabuses actually tells the learners about the kind of language and attitude they should use / possesses in a specific situation. One of the disadvantages of this type of approach is that it is difficult to actually say what all situations we may have to face in a particular situation [for example a book which tells about how to behave in a bank might not tell you how to behave in the bank when a bank robbery takes place]. Another disadvantage of this syllabus method is that it does not teach us about grammar. Situational syllabus also does not tell us does not enable us to how do respond to the same situation in a different context.

Competency

(f) Competence refers to the skills, attitudes and the knowledge possessed by a person syllabuses that deal with the enhancing of competence is known as a competence syllabus. A comp The speciality of competence is that once you become competent in any task or activity, you will be able to perform that task in any situation. For example, if you learn how to read a date, then you will be able to read the date in any situation [eg in a hospital bill, in a letter, the expiry date on a bottle of juice etc]. Swiss Linguist, Noam Chomsky distinguished between competence and performance. According to him competence refers to the knowledge that you have about things and performance is about how far you are able to use that knowledge efficiently.

(b) We say that a person has ~~become gre gre~~ is grammatically competent when he/she has a good knowledge about grammar and is able to use this grammar in real-life situations as well. While a grammar syllabus helps you to develop a theoretical understanding of grammar ~~its rules when~~, it is only through practice that we will be able to use it in real life. So, having a grammatical competence does not necessarily ensure that the person will be able to use the grammar in ~~the~~ real-life situations as well.

Not true

contradicting statement

1/2

(a) 'Task' is a term that is used to refer to goal oriented activities. ~~They~~ The syllabus that places task at the centre is referred to as Task-based syllabus. The proponents of task based syllabus believe that if you learn a language ~~using tasks~~ through tasks, you will be able to perform better in real life situations. Since ~~tasks are~~ task-based learning is a more fun ~~of~~ way of learning things, ~~and~~ learners will be more interested in learning things through the help of tasks. ~~The~~ Different types of tasks can be given to the students to help them learn: (i) Discussion-based tasks (ii) Information gap tasks (iii) Jigsaw tasks (iv) Opinion-Exchange tasks (v) Problem-solving tasks. While choosing a task, the teachers should ensure that there is a relation between the task and the content that is being taught.

2

II

(a) ~~The~~ Based on the information available in the contents page, I feel that ~~the~~ 'New Gem's English Reader: A Complete Graded Course in English' (Third Revised Edition, 2016) is a book that is developed based on an integrated syllabus. The speciality of integrated syllabus is that it includes almost all aspects/features of a language. ~~See the cont~~ By looking at the contents page, it is easy to ~~determine that the text~~ 'discover' that the text is including almost

all the important aspects of language learning ~~this the~~ It is ~~so~~ quite easy to ascertain that the syllabus on which this text is based it an integrated syllabus, it contains features of ~~some~~ Topic/content based syllabus, text based syllabus, lexical syllabus & grammatical syllabus, skill based syllabus, functional syllabus. Thus we can say that the syllabus used for designing the content page (and the text book) has an <u>wholistic approach to language learning and teaching.</u>

(b) ~~The book, which includes almost all aspects of a th~~
The designers of this book have an wholistic approach to language learning and teaching, this is clearly visible in the way in which the creators of this text have included almost each & and every aspect of ~~the~~ language which is important. The designers of this book are of the opinion that ~~it~~ learning (esp of language) ~~becomes more efficient~~ ~~when it is~~ (especially of a language) becomes more effective when it includes the different aspects of a language. This is the reason why the syllabus includes grammar, vocabulary, skills etc. They believe that ~~th &~~ concepts/ideas can be learnt faster if it is learned in relation to one another. ~~They have also included tasks to make~~

The advantage of this kind of syllabus is that since it includes components of other syllabuses as well, it can iron out the disadvantages of each of the constituting syllabuses at least to a less degree. The advantages of each of the syllabus can also be added up to a certain degree. ~~Most of the texts develop~~

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(To be fastened before the last page of the main answer book)

Additional Answer Book

1. a.) <u>Syllabus</u> Inventory: It is a collection of all the content that needs to be taught. The contents of syllabus Inventory are not organized or arranged in any particular, teachable order.

b) <u>Syllabus</u>: Syllabus is a set of contents arranged in the order in which a teacher teaches it. It takes into consideration the tasks, teaching practices, exercises, questioning and evaluation process.

2½

Specific

½ mark not given for using limited instead of specific as it changes the meaning

syllabus is time limited. eg. syllabus for 4th std, syllabus for mid terms.

d) Tasks: They are goal oriented activities. The evaluation is based on the success of the outcome.

eg: Assembling a toy by reading instructions. Jigsaw tasks, problem solving etc.

3

- defⁿ
- Examples
- Types.

Tasks are divided into 2 types:

o Pedagogical Tasks: Used while teaching.
  eg: Info gap, jigsaw, problem solving.

• Real-world Tasks: Used in the real world context.

b) Grammatical Competency:

- It refers to expertise in the language based solely on grammar.

- Knowing the grammatical rules & structures of a language.

- This grammatical competence is given a great deal of importance in the type of syllabus called Grammatical/ Structural/Formal Syllabus.

- As Newmark says," Grammatical syllabus makes the learner only grammatically competent but not linguistically or communicatively competent.

- Grammatical competency is given importance in grammatical syllabus assuming that the learner will be able to communicate if he/she knows the structure of language but often that is not true.

c) Situational Syllabus

→ Unit of Organization: Different situations.

→ Situation: Setting where specific conversations occur.
e.g: In the flight, at train stations etc.

→ Used in ESP (English for specific purposes) programmes.

→ Used in travel guides.

→ Types of situations:

- Limbo: Setting not specified. e.g: self introduction.

- Concrete: Specific settings. e.g: ordering at a restaurant.

- Mythical: Fictional situations. e.g: imagine you are Harry potter. etc.

Types of tasks/implementation

- Dialogues
- Roleplay
- Dispatriot: Asking learners to come up with dialogues for a particular situations. Write or speak them

→ Advantages:
- Encourages using language in real life situations.
- Focuses on communication more than grammar.

→ Criticism / Disadvantages:
- Since the learner learns only specific conversations & grammar related to that particular discourse, there might be gaps in the grammatical knowledge.
- Situations are chosen based on intuition as to which situations might be faced by the learner. But situations are unexpected and cannot be planned always.
- Leads to phrase-book approach: translating certain conversations directly.
  * Not teaching how to form new sentences.
  * Leads to rote-learning.
- Situations differ. One example of a situation may not fit all.

Too long!

II

9) The syllabus is an integrated one including types of syllabuses such as grammatical, skill based & functional.

→ Grammatical: Grammar & Vocabulary is an important aspect of every chapter. In vocabulary the focus is identification & understanding.

→ Skill-based: Since the tasks given are categorised into different skills. [LSW]

→ Functional syllabus: The use of functions is also a part of this syllabus under the 'speaking' skill which includes Discussion, explaining, asking, requesting, expressing etc.
  4
- Type of syllabus
- Sub syllabus types & where they are used

when there is both i.e the content and the other language skills.

→ So, when is a lesson/syllabus is formed for the language classroom, it should also focus on all the aspects of language.

→ The theme of the lesson is also stated for the better understanding of the emotion in the content.

→ The usage of integrated syllabus makes it possible to improve the students understanding on the topic and text provided in a variety of perspectives and allows the teaching & learning process better.

(2)

→ The items that are provided for evaluation in the comprehension column will let the teacher know the effectiveness of their own teaching.

→ Teacher must make sure that the language is learnt effectively. Not only few but all the students in the classroom.

- I failed to understand the meaning of the "Underlying principles" so couldn't answer it as it is supposed to be answered.
- Didn't give sufficient examples.

be found in the syllabus inventory.

So. syllabus is more general in nature while syllabus inventory is specific. X

b) Gramatical competence:

→ It can be considered as the level of fluency any one has in particular with the grammer or structure of the sentence.

→ A teacher ~~and~~ can ~~imp~~ help students to improve their gramatical competence by ~~adjusting~~ transacting their lessons using gramatical / structural syllabus.

→ Gramatical competence only speaks about the structure of a sentence but not the more extended discourse or ~~m~~ its meaning.

(2½)

II. a) The syllabus in the given text is organised taking the fact into consideration that the content and language need not be taught separately. While teaching a lesson in a classroom period, all the skills of language i.e listening, speaking, reading, Writing, Grammer and Vocabulary are also taken care of. ~~This can~~

→ This can be considered as the integrated syllabus as it focuses on skills, concepts, tests and grammers at the same time i.e in one ~~to~~ lesson.

3½

b) Learning a language doesn't only include to learn the content or grammer A language ~~can~~ learning can happen only

Additional Answer Book
for students

d) <u>Tasks</u>: Tasks are the activities, designed by the teacher to make teaching-learning process more interesting and interactive. They can be individual or group.

- Tasks help students to think <u>more about</u> the <u>particular concept and come up with new and variety of perspectives</u>

- While designing the <u>task</u> teacher will take few aspects <u>into consideration</u> like the ease of <u>understanding</u>, the <u>mode of instruction and relavance to the topic</u>. So, tasks make learning easy and interesting.

e) Situational Syllabus:

→ A syllabus that is designed to teach the students dealing with any particular situation that may arise in their day to day life is situational syllabus.

→ This syllabus is communicatively competent and is pragmatic in nature.

→ Examples: Attending an interview, Talking to the plumber

a) Syllabus:

→ A detailed and Organized form of the content for any course that helps both teaching and learning easier is syllabus

Syllabus inventory:

→ The description of the skills and sub skills that any part of the syllabus focuses on will

b) To know the underlying principles of language learning, one must read and analyse a pre-existing syllabus. From analysing "New Gem's English Reader: A complete Graded Course in English", I can infer that to teach & learn a language effectively it is important to integrate all the aspects of the language which includes the skills (LSRW) and its elements (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation).

Language cannot be learnt as a subject or a skill. It cannot entirely based on content because to create content you need to master knowledge of the language as a whole. It also cannot be learnt like mathematics by simply learning rules because the major aim of ~~knowledge~~ language is communication and to communicate, one needs to practice.

The syllabus designed by Francis & Dorothy Fanthone includes a lot of these aspects such as the skills mainly listening, speaking & writing and elements like grammar & vocabulary which also includes pronunciation. The syllabus also includes some tasks that promote practice of language. It is an integrated & multi-layered syllabus as language is a multi-layered thing to learn.

2

Emerging Trends in Defining and Assessing Fluency in Second Language Speaking

Dr Tannistha Dasgupta

Abstract

The concept of 'fluency' has been defined and debated by researchers over several decades, and assessment of fluency has also evolved alongside. Although mainstream L2 fluency assessment practices have not involved the aspect processing efficiency, recent research claim that inclusion of markers of processing efficiency may widen the scope of the assessment criteria since indices of efficient cognitive processing serve as benchmarks for L2 development. Current research psycholinguistic perspective has been instrumental in bringing considerable advancement in conceptualizing the complex nature and shaping way towards more objective assessment of L2 fluency. Segalowitz's (2010) definition of cognitive fluency, utterance fluency, and perceived fluency has helped to examine fluency from a psycholinguistic perspective following which researchers have attempted to operationalize the underlying processing skill in terms of speed and efficiency. This paper discusses the new perspective that has been adopted in defining and assessing the construct of fluency in L2 speaking.

Keywords: L2 fluency, fluency assessment, processing efficiency, psycholinguistic perspective, cognitive fluency, utterance fluency, perceived fluency

1.0 Introduction

Fluency in second language (L2 fluency) is a complex construct in the assessment of speaking; it is an aspect of performance that is highly challenging to define and measure uniformly across various tasks and conditions (Wright &Tavakoli, 2016). Often, fluency is considered to represent an individual's overall L2 proficiency (Bosker, Pinget, Quen'e, Sanders, & De Jong, 2013; Chambers, 1997; Lennon, 1990; McCarthy, 1998) and listeners make judgments about the speaker's intelligence based on their impressions of how effortlessly the speaker delivers speech (Olkkonen, 2017). Thus, fluency in speech gives an impression to the listener that "the psycholinguistic processes of speech planning and speech production are functioning easily and efficiently" (Lennon, 1990, p. 391). Although, the efficiency of

psycholinguistic processes involved in speaking is "persistently underrepresented" and "rarely explicitly assessed" in mainstream L2 speaking tests (Van Moere, 2012, p. 325). In addition, most of the research on measures of speaking fluency have often focused on listener's perceptions of fluency (Bosker et al., 2013; Freed, 1995; Kormos&D'enes, 2004; Lennon, 1990; Prefontaine, 2010; Riggenbach, 1991; Rossiter, 2009).

Researchers have debated on the construct of fluency in L2 assessment and how it might be enriched by insights from research from different perspectives. Recent research on fluency from psycholinguistic perspective has brought significant advancement in conceptualizing its complex nature and paving way towards more objective assessment (De Jong, Steinel, Florijn, Schoonen, &Hulstijn, 2013; Kahng, 2014;Leonard, 2015; Segalowitz, 2010). According to the psycholinguistic perspective, processing efficiency measured in terms of aspects like response time, rate of delivery, absence of pauses etc. is an indicator of linguistic proficiency (Van Moere, 2012). A few studies have examined and attempted to measure the complex processing efficiency or the underlying mechanism involved in speaking. With the above in mind, this paper reviews the emerging approach in defining the construct and measuring L2 fluency.

1.1 Defining L2 Fluency

In spite of fluency being an important aspect of language acquisition, there is continuing debate on the definition of fluency as researchers have defined spoken fluency in different ways over time. For instance, the term 'fluency' is used to refer to overall proficiency, the ability to express an idea in L2, speak with minimum accent, using an extensive vocabulary, and making few grammatical errors. According to De Jong (2016), "fluency or the skill to efficiently use L2 linguistic knowledge is among the most important aspects of speech that makes an L2 speaking performance successful" (p. 207). On the other hand Kaponen and Riggenbach (2000) state that a conceptual metaphor of "language in motion" (p. 7) underlies the concept of fluency. This metaphor focuses on those aspects of speech that are associated with movement-like features or fluidity of speech. Hence, it is apparent that the term 'fluency' has been interpreted in various ways and as a result, a plethora of definitions and measures of 'fluency' exist in literature.

Lennon (1990) conceptualization of fluency has been significant in research. He divided 'fluency' into two senses, "the broad sense", and "the narrow sense" (p. 389). Fluency in the

broad sense refers to overall L2 proficiency which according to Fulcher (2003) and Kormos (2006) is problematic since it is not precise rather it is vague, thus making it is difficult to operationalize fluency in the general sense. However, fluency in the narrow sense is considered as "one, presumably isolatable, component of oral proficiency" (Lennon, 1990, p. 389), which is often used as one of the criteria while assessing candidates' oral language skills (Kormos, 2006). Furthermore, Lennon (1990) defines fluency as a "performance phenomenon" which imparts "an impression on the listener's part that the psycholinguistic processes of speech planning and speech production is functioning easily and efficiently" (p. 391). Schmidt (1992) extends Lennon's (1990) definition by claiming that fluency in speech production is an "automatic procedural skill" and fluent speech "is automatic, not requiring much attention or effort" (p. 358). A recent study by Lennon (2000), combines earlier definitions and proposes that fluency is the "rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid, and efficient translation of thought or communicative intention into language under the temporal constraints of on-line processing" (p. 26).

From the above discussion on how researchers have conceptualized fluency over the years, it is clear that the term 'fluency' is perceived differently by different researchers. However, most of the definitions of the term 'fluency', especially in an L2 context, refer to fluidity or ease of speech (Guillot, 1999; Kahng, 2014; Kormos, 2006; Riggenbach, 2000; Schmidt, 1992; Segalowitz, 2010). The fluidity aspect of speech is the predominant underlying feature in research on L2 fluency.

Referring to the fluidity aspect of fluency, Goldman-Eisler (1968) states that "the complete speech act is a dynamic process, demanding the mobilization in proper sequence of a series of complex procedures and is the temporal integration of serial phenomena" (as cited in Segalowtiz, 2013, p. 241). Referring to this statement, Segalowitz (ibid) concludes that a cognitive process is responsible for generating an utterance with its particular fluency features. In other words, in speech, the temporal features of fluency are a manifestation of the underlying cognitive processes involved in speech production. Thus, taking a cue from Goldman-Eisler (1968), Segalowitz (2010, p. 47) proposes a working definition of L2 fluency which is as follows:

L2 fluency refers to the features of L2 oral performance that serve as reliable indicators of how efficiently the speaker is able to mobilize and temporally integrate, in a nearly simultaneous way, the underlying processes of planning and assembling an utterance in order to perform a communicatively acceptable speech act.

In the above definition, Segalowitz (2010) makes a distinction between two sets of temporal phenomena. The first set refers to the observable features of oral performance which he terms as 'Utterance Fluency', and the second set refers to the underlying processes responsible for the production of an utterance, which he terms as 'Cognitive Fluency'. In addition to utterance fluency and cognitive fluency, he discusses another concept of fluency which he terms as 'Perceived fluency' which reflects listener's perception of fluency. In his seminal book Segalowitz (2010) introduces the three senses of fluency-'Cognitive Fluency, 'Utterance Fluency', and 'Perceived Fluency' (p. 48).

1.1.1 Cognitive Fluency

Segalowitz (2010) defines cognitive fluency as the "speaker's ability to efficiently mobilise and integrate the underlying processes responsible for producing utterances" (p. 48). He further explains that cognitive fluency is the efficiency of the underlying mechanism responsible for the production of utterances. Features of cognitive fluency include "processing speed, stability, and flexibility in the planning, assembly, and execution of utterances in terms of lexical access, and the use of linguistic resources" (ibid p. 164).

On a similar line, De Jong et al. (2013) states that cognitive fluency characterizes a speaker and it deals with speaker's ability to efficiently plan and execute utterances. Speaker's efficiency in planning and executing speech is dependent on the coordination of the underlying processes. In an L2, for efficient coordination of the underlying processes or efficient processing skill, learner needs to possess a higher level of L2 linguistic knowledge as L2 linguistic knowledge and processing skill underline cognitive fluency (De Jong et al., 2013). In their study, Baker-Smemoe et al. (2014) found that "L2 speakers at higher L2 proficiency levels will exhibit greater L2 cognitive fluency than speakers at lower L2 proficiency levels" (p. 722). For example, one of the aspects of cognitive fluency is the efficiency in linking words to meanings (Segalowitz, 2010). Thus, cognitive fluency can be defined as the fluency that characterises a

speaker and has to do with the linguistic knowledge and ease and efficiency of linguistic processes.

1.1.2 Utterance Fluency

Segalowitz (2010) draws on the word "fluidity" to define utterance fluency; he states "This fluidity is a property of the actual speech, and is reflected in its temporal characteristics (speech rate, patterns of hesitations, etc.)" (p. 163). Similarly, De Jong et al. (2013) characterize utterance fluency as "the fluency that can be measured in a sample of speech", and "One can define utterance fluency objectively by measuring (temporal) aspects of the speech sample" (p. 894). Features of utterance fluency include rate of speech, pausing, and hesitation phenomenon. Thus, utterance fluency is the actual features or properties of an utterance; not the impression of the rater or the listener. Segalowitz (2010) further claims that oral features of utterances reflect the operation of the underlying cognitive processes involved in speech production. In other words, certain aspects of utterances or utterance fluency could be indicators of cognitive fluency.

1.1.3 Perceived Fluency

Perceived fluency is "the inferences listeners make about speakers' cognitive fluency based on their perceptions of utterance fluency" (Segalowitz, 2010, p. 48). Perceived fluency refers to the personal impression that listeners draw of speakers' fluency from their speech sample. Since is the subjective impression of speech, different listeners can have different perception of the same speech. Research has shown that both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects may constitute this impression. Linguistic aspects of perceived fluency include temporal variables (speech rate, pause duration) and other features like grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Derwing, Rossiter, Munro, & Thomson, 2004; Rossiter, 2009). Non-linguistic aspects may include aspects of personal speaking style (De Jong et al., 2013).

2.0 Measuring L2 Fluency

Measuring oral fluency has been challenging due to intricacies involved in collecting and analyzing speech samples. In addition, there are complexities like presence of ongoing debate on the construct of fluency and identifying an operational definition of fluency. Thus, the list of challenges is long, and in different contexts researchers and teachers have tackled these issues by

exercising a range of differentprocedures. However, latest developments in technology have aided attempts to effectively measure fluency in language test, and large scale data collection and analysis of speech samples to examine the granular aspects of fluency has become less problematic for researchers.

2.1 Measuring Cognitive Fluency

Studies suggest that skilled performance is based on collaboration of automatic and controlled processes (Schmidt, 1992; Segalowitz, 2000, 2003, 2010). Segalowitz (2010, p. 74) claims that automatic and attention-based processing "may be considered as components of cognitive fluency" and these two aspects are interrelated. On a similar line, Olkkonen (2017, p. 12) states that "Cognitive fluency may be seen as a reflection of the balance of these two, and therefore, by measuring these we may be able to tap into the efficiency of cognitive operations". There could be other important aspects in L2 cognitive processing; however, researchers have mostly dealt with these two elements in different studies (Schmidt, 1992; Segalowitz&Segalowitz, 1993; Segalowitz, 1997, 2000, 2003; Segalowitz&Hulstijn, 2005). To tap these two processing skills, various computer-based testing with the help of specially designed software have been used in research.

2.1.1 Defining Automaticity

Hulstijn, Gelderen, and Schoonen (2009) claim that the most essential aspect of skilled behaviour is automaticity. Wilson and Keil (2001) state that "automaticity is a characteristic of cognitive processing in which practiced consistent component behaviours are performed rapidly, with minimal effort or with automatic allocation of attention to the processing of the stimulus" (p. 63). In other words, automaticity is the ability to perform without consciously thinking about them. It is a fast and an effortless process, not under direct control, requires minimum attention, and allows other cognitive processes to take place simultaneously. Automaticity is the result of learning, consistent practice, and repetition. In his review of the characteristics of automaticity, Segalowitz (2003). He defines automaticity as a fast, ballistic (unstoppable), load-independent, effortless, and unconscious process. However, Segalowitz (ibid) clarifies that "automaticity should not be used merely as a synonym for fast processing"; it should rather be used for

conditions where "the change is of significant consequence, such as restructuring of underlying process" (p. 387).

Operationalizing Automaticity

To measure ballistic processing, speed and efficiency of automatic processing are taken into account. Speed of processing a task is operationalized by reaction time (RT) and efficiency of processing is operationalized by the coefficient of variation (CV) of RT. Response/reaction time is a key measure of the speed of processing; faster responses are considered as evidence for greater proficiency (De Jong et al., 2013; Harrington, 2007; Segalowitz&Segalowitz, 1993; Segalowitz& Wood, 1998; Segalowitz, 2010).

Segalowitz and Segalowitz (1993) distinguish between simple speed-up and restructuring of the underlying processes. Automaticity is measured through reaction time tasks (tasks that measure the time taken to respond to stimuli). Responses in these tasks are measured in terms of reaction time (RT) (measured in milliseconds), standard deviation (SD) of reaction time (i.e., of RT), and co-efficient of variation (CV) of RT. CV of RT is the SD of RT divided by mean RT, i.e., $CV=SD/Mean\ RT$. CV is the measure of intra-individual processing stability (Segalowitz&Segalowitz, 1993). CV decreases in case of automatization; however, CV remains same or unchanged for speed-up. Researchers claim that CV is related to the automatization of the underlying processes (Ankerstein, 2014; Harrington, 2007; Hulstijn et al., 2009; Segalowitz&Segalowitz, 1993; Segalowitz, 2010).

2.1.2 Defining Attention

Segalowitz (2010) defines attention as ".… the emergent property of the cognitive system that allows it to successfully process some sources of information to the exclusion of others, in the service of achieving some goals to the exclusion of others" (p. 91). Research on attention primarily deals with the mechanisms that are responsible for thefollowing a) distributing cognitive resources in order to continue processing of a particular target (staying on a task), b) in focusing and concentrating on a particular target (selective attention) in spite of possible distractions, c) in supervising the distribution of resources in conditions where more than one task is done (task sharing), d) in focusing and refocusing from one task to another (task switching), and e) in preparing for a forthcoming task. To summerize, the main characteristics of

attention that this processing system has the capacity to deal with only a small part of information, requires effort, selective allocation of resources, and deals with the control of information and action (ibid p. 92). Segalowitz and Frenkiel-Fishman (2005) state that five processes underlie the performance of attention tasks and they occur in various combinations in different types of attention seeking situations. The five processes are as holding attention in slow-changing situations in which vigilance is required, concentrating attention during fast and highly demanding activities, sharing attention when different cognitive activities need to be executed at the same time, controlling attention when irrelevant action schemata gets activated, and shifting attention when a complex activity frequently needs changes.

Operationalizing Attention

In recent years, cognitive psychologists have devised various ways to measure attention shifting ability. Attention is operationalized as reaction time (RT) and processing stability in terms of coefficient of variation (CV). In studies on the attention-directed aspect of language, control of attention was operationalized in terms of an individual's flexibility of attention-based processing (Segalowitz& Freed, 2004; Segalowitz&Frenkiel-Fishman, 2005; Segalowitz, 2007, 2010; Taube-Schiff &Segalowitz, 2005). According to Segalowitz (2010), flexibility in processing is a more important feature of cognitive fluency than processing speed. In the study by Segalowitz and Frenkiel-Fishman (2005), attention control is assessed as an aspect underlying L2 proficiency; it was measured by studying the relationship between a bilingual's L2 proficiency and the ability to shift attention.

In studies examining cognitive fluency, researchers employed knowledge tests to measure L2 linguistic knowledge and computer-based tests to measure processing skills to gauge automaticity and attention (Dasgupta, 2017; De Jong et al., 2013; Segalowitz& Freed, 2004). Tests like L2 knowledge test, lexical decision task (automaticity), and attention shifting task (attention-based mechanism) were administered to tap linguistic knowledge and processing skills. Linguistic knowledge was measured in terms of scores obtained in the test. Processing skills are measured in terms of speed; operationalized as reaction time (RT) and calculated in milliseconds (ms), and efficiency; operationalized as co-efficient of variation (CV) of RT.

2.2 Measuring Utterance Fluency

Utterance fluency involves measurable aspects of fluency (measured in terms of pause, flow and repair in speech) that can be objectively measured in speech sample. The three components of utterance fluency that have been examined in the previous studies are breakdown fluency, speed fluency, and repair fluency (Dasgupta, 2017; De Jong, 2016; De Jong et al., 2013; Lahmann et al., 2015; Pinget, 2011; Skehan, 2003, Tavakoli&Skehan, 2005). Previous studies captured utterance fluency with the help of speaking tasks (Bosker et al., 2013; Dasgupta, 2017; De Jong, et al., 2013; Pinget, 2011), and spontaneous speech (Kahng, 2014).

Speed Fluency: Speed Fluency pertains to the speed with which speech is delivered. Recent studies measured speed in terms of mean duration of syllables (Bosker et al., 2013; De Jong et al., 2013; Kahng, 2014; Lahmann et al., 2015; Pinget, 2011).

Breakdown fluency: It involves the interruptions in the flow of speech (Bosker et al., 2013), measured by counting the number and length of filled and unfilled pauses (De Jong et al., 2013, Baker-Smemoe et al., 2014). Breakdown fluency is operationalized as number of silent pauses, mean duration of silent pauses, and number of filled pauses.

Repair fluency: Repair fluency is use of false starts, corrections, or repetitions (number of rephrases/corrections and repetitions) in utterances (Baker-Smemoe et al., 2014; Bosker et al., 2013; De Jong et al., 2013; Kahng, 2014; Pinget, 2011; Witton-Davies, 2010). It operationalized as number of corrections, and number of repetitions.

2.3 Measuring Perceived Fluency

Perceived fluency depends on the instructions given in the assessing criteria the raters receive, and on the definitions and perceptions the listeners or raters already have of the notion of fluency. For instance, if raters are instructed to focus on speech rate and pausing, it is highly probable that the fluency ratings will be related to the measures of speech rate and pausing. On the other hand, raters may apply their own definition of the notion of fluency to rate the speaking samples when instructions are not given prior to the rating (De Jong et al., 2013). Often, to examine perceived fluency, an assessment criterion is used to judge participants' speech samples.

One of the assessment criteria that is used in CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) schools in India is developed as part of a project called ASL (Assessment of Speaking and Listening Skills). ASL is an initiative taken by CBSE in collaboration with Trinity College, London to assess class IX and XI students' listening and speaking skill. ASL has been in use since the year 2012 in CBSE-affiliated schools.

3.0 Conclusion

The concept of 'fluency' has always been challenging to define and operationalize in assessing speaking. Fluency has observable elements that define the construct and make fluency measurable. The psycholinguistic perspective aspire to describe the observable elements of L2 fluency in a more objective manner. With the introduction of the concept of 'Cognitive Fluency' by Segalowitz (2010), recent research has attempted to capture the psycholinguistic processes involved in speech planning and production (Dasgupta, 2017; De Jong et al., 2013; Segalowitz& Freed, 2004; Kahng, 2014;Leonard, 2015). Although the tools used in measuring cognitive fluency has been varied across studies, automaticity and attention shifting efficiency (the components of cognitive fluency) have been measured in all the studies in terms of RT and CV with the help of different software.

Thus, technology is required for capturing speech sample so that aspects of fluency can be recognized and measured. In current times, assessment of L2 speaking has evolved as the use of technology has become more prevalent and instrumental both in the delivery and scoring of speaking assessments (Hoffman, 2019; Lim, 2018). In considering what L2 speaking assessment would shape in the future, it would be a slack to disregard the influence that speech technologies could have, given their increasing presence in several aspects of everyday life. Therefore, it can be concluded that the notion about the nature of speaking skill and practices in language assessment have metamorphosed over the years. Early practices that tested pronunciation, dictation, and reading aloud have been replaced by new communicative approach-oriented assessment practices. In speaking tests, assessment criteria used in judging L2 fluency presently have more objectively defined construct and empirically validated descriptors.

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Book Review

By AnandMahanand
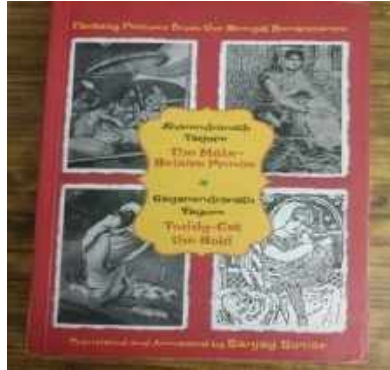
***Fantasy Fictions from the Bengal Renaissance* bySanjay Sircar:**

Magic Folktale, 'Artifial Re-working' and Comic Genre-Parody

Oxford University Press, 2018, Rs.995

As a person who evinces a lot of interest in folklore, I personally gained a great deal of intellectual stimulation--- and enjoyment --- from thisbook. It presents scrupulous annotated translations of two important Bengali texts --- *KheererPutul* 1896, a whole folktale as newly treated by visual artist and folklorist Abanindranath Tagore, and the so-far untranslated*Bhondaṛ Bahadur*, c. 1926,by his brother, artist Gaganendranath Tagore, an original narrative largely though not exclusively based on folktale materials. And it places thesenarratives at the heart of much impressive and useful scholarly discussion and analysis of folktale and otherfolk material, modern fantasy fiction, children's literature, generic and literary interrelation, cultural history, aesthetics, and translation itself.

This is the bulk of a volumewhich is no 'mere translation', which elegantly addresses problems of international comprehension with a combination of transliteration for South Asians and translation for others --- so in the main text, the term *tal-betal-siddha lathi* and its

immediately comprehensible connotation across India is retained for us and a direct translation is given for the West. Similarly, in both narratives, full metrical forms of all the relevant folk nursery rhymes are placed in a different font just before the sections in which fragments from them appear, to show how they underpin and interact with the narratives themselves. However, the volume is properly characterized asa reservoir of materials (in bibliographies, appendices etc.) aimed at multiple audiences: to non-Bengali Indian and international scholars and professionals in related areas and to all Anglophone children themselves.

Peter Hunt, Professor Emeritus of Cardiff University, U.K., a renowned scholar in children's literature, provides a lucidForeword detailing the connections between his field and the others, since children love folktales, drawn to them by a love of fantasy. Thus, a segment of children's literature has an intimate relationship and a great 'affinity with traditional tales', translating them, retelling and rewriting them, using them as pedagogic tools, incorporating them, playing with them, affectionately mocking them --- all in the service of broadening the imagination and the spirit.

This volume could well have done with another Foreword or Afterword by a professional folklorist. However, the introductory matter itself discusses folktale collection in Bengal, its historical part as an imperial mechanism to know and control subject peoples, and its correspondingopposite role in building a nascent nationalist cultural pride(s) in 'our own, ancient, authentic, indigenous, soil-rooted, non-elite'collective material. If one may generalize broadly, there have probably always been two-way interactions between folk and non-folk, the oral (flowing) and the written ('frozen'),communal participation in 'performance'/recounting and private reading, the local and foreign, stability and mutation/alteration,maintenance and innovation, remembering and forgetting, scholarly engagement and aesthetic pleasure and so on --- even if these interactionswere and are very probably never equally balanced.

Historically, folkloristics has placed historical emphases on orality and the socially less privileged(though these emphases are no longer universal, as definitions of both 'folk transmission' and 'folk' have broadened), and as such, folkloristics has had an uneasy relationship with written texts (which it has nevertheless always looked to for analogues and sometimes source material), with elite appropriation of folk material (writers playing with/adding

to it; scholars polishing, tidying, sanitizing, bowdlerizing, standardizing it); and with folktales presented to and 'retold for' (literate, urban, particularly elite?)children. So, though 'the folk' and 'children' are both constructs denoting non-prestigious groups, and though 'folklore' and 'children's literature' are both 'Little Traditions', folklorists have not on the whole been interested in 'artificial re-workings' of already transcribed material (folklorist Walter Anderson's phrase)modified into '(written) suitability for (contemporaneous) children'. Thus scholars in one Little Tradition often regard another as irrelevant or trivial, rather thanworthy of consideration as a means of folktale transmission and mutation.

The 'Bengal Renaissance' (a-contested term), may be for convenience dated from 1800 and the introduction of the printing press, to 1947 and Indian independence. Particularly in its later part, from the 1880s onwards, on the one hand folklore collection flourished, and much of the Tagore clan was involved in it, headed by Rabindranath, and the master-collector/transcriber in Bengal was Dakshinaranjan Mitra-Majumdar in his 1907 collection *ThakurmarJhuli*(*Grandmother's Bag*). On the other hand a simultaneous movement occurred beyond pedagogically-focussed material for children, a movement which brought into being an efflorescence of non-traditional, recreational/imaginative 'children's literature'.At least in their initial stages in Bengal (and pan-India?), both folktale collection/transcription and children's literature were influenced by European thinking. And in Bengal, whatever the social distinctions which operated, contemporaneous urban elite did not seem to make any great distinction between high literatures, transcribed folk literature and children's literature --- certainly not in the case of Dakshinaranjan, and probably not in the earlier case of Abanindranath. Both Abanindranath's*Putul* and Gaganendranath's*Bhondaṛ*were written at a point at which folk-culture was documented, both drew upon it and played with it in original work for children, and today both are 'canonised'meritorious 'Literature' in Bengali, and simultaneously still read by the general public, young and less young, as 'classic works of fantasy fiction'. Hence the rationale and justification for this 'critical edition' and translation: the need for them to reach wider potentially appreciative audiences.Bengal has a rich treasure of collected folktale and tradition of children's literature, which the world deserves to know more of.

Abanindranath's 'artificial re-working' and its interest to folklore studies

As Sircar traces the sources of these textswe learn that *Putul* is a literary elaborated rendering of a narrative within the 'Ordinary Folktale' (Märchen) sub-genre of the 'magic tale' (the Zaubermärchen, *rupkathā* in Bengali), a narrative classified as folktale types Aarne-Thompson/Aarne-Thompson-Uther (AT/ATU) 459 (named after the sequence of folklorists who classified them), a folktale type named 'The Make-Believe Son (Daughter)'. Since there are difficulties in accurately and meaningfully translating Abanindranath's own title, Sircar underlines folktale underpinnings of the narrative with his retiled translation, *The Make-Believe Prince*, which appropriately sums up the entire theme.

Putul has not so far been listed with the other examples of its folktale type, instances of which are found from North India to Palestine. Mrinalini Devi (Rabindranath's wife) copied it down, Abanindranath read it in her exercise book and rewrote and illustrated it for children.Sircar's 'motif summary' of components found over many folktales isolates the narrative core in motifs 'K1923.3: Barren woman pretends to bear child'; 'T677: Substitute for a child'; and 'F343.13: Fairy gives mortals a child'.

We also learn that this tale has a substratum in *women's* folklore, the *brata-kathā*ritual tales recited as part of domestic worship of various deities, folk and mainstream, in the genre of genre of 'folk myth' which has semi-scriptural gravitas and carries religious injunctions and calls to religious duty. The folk 'goddess of children; Shashthi has at least twelve forms, one for each month, and a form when a child is born. Her main worship is as Aranya('Forest')-Shasthi in May-June, and the main Aranya-Shasthibratakathā-tale (of at least three) is the basis of the rupkathā-tale ATU 459 and *Putul*(just as another Aranya-Shashthibratakathā-tale is even more clearly a form of AT/ATU tale types 460A, 460B, 461). Bengal folklorist Asutosh Bhattacharya (Ashutosh Bhattacharyya) had said *Putul* was basically a bratakathā-tale, but did not specify which; a later scholar suggested the similar Loton('Round Water-Container')-Shashthi tale, but the bratakathā underpinning of *Putul*is probably the main AranyaShashthi tale.

Thus --- as is not unusual in folktale --- much the same narrative material moves between a semi-scriptural serious folktale genre to the 'ordinary' 'magic folktale', a genre always presented as fiction, where it is told with humorous overtones. It is then turned by Abanindranath into an 'artificial re-working' for children and moves into 'children's literature' with his

elaborations and additions (notably a long climax which incorporates and weaves together images and lines from folk nursery rhymes into the prose, an unusual though bpthvratakathā- and rupkathā-folktales often include their own rhyming portions). But folklorists note: though the bratakathāform was earlier rendered into the higher form of *mangalkāvya* 'beneficial' (*mangal*) narrative poem (*kavya*)praising a deity --- and thus written down --- there does not seem to be any previous record of rupkathā form ATU 459 before *Putul*; it might be the first public transcription, and as such worth hailing (the bibliographies detail all this, as well as editions and translations of *Putul* itself).

Mother-goddesses can be ambivalent figures. Shashthi, possibly a personification of the Six Krittikas, the Pleiades who nurtured the god Skanda/Kartik/Murugan, is --- or by association can be thought of as --- one of the fearsome (Skanda-)*Mātri*/*Mātrikā*-s, 'Mothers', and (Skanda)-*Graha*-s, 'Seizers' (Takers), both part of a general category of powerful, ambivalent supernatural female beings including the *dākini* and *shākini* and so on (who still survive in Indic folklore/folktale) and the *yogini*, *rupini*, *bhagini* and so on (who might not). These *Matri*/*Matrika*-s and *Graha*-seizers are potentially dangerous forces that afflict children with sickness or death if these goddesses are insulted, ignored or do not receive offerings. But if these goddesses do receive worship-offerings, they are instead simultaneously --- or they *become* --- potentially life-giving and life-preserving forces instead (that is, they provide children and provide for their safety).

Both the dangerous, offended bratakathāShashthi*and* the fallible hungry Shashthi of the rupkathāare 'displaced' child-seizers/eaters. The bratakathaShashthi is a child-eater via her carnivorous cat, who, insulted by a lie that it has stolen an offering, steals a newborn child in its mouth and leaves a trail of blood behind it. The rupkathaShashthiis directly herself a child-eater, though she only eats an edible doll-child. In effect, both Shashthis*themselves* take a real child or child-image in lieu of an offering that has *not* been made to them. Then, accosted, *both*Shashthis restore/replace the dead child or the image of the child with living children, one in forgiveness of an offence to her, the othershamed and blackmailed into act of face-saving by a folktale trickster.

The displacements of Shashthi-to-cat in one story and child-to-edible-doll in the other together constitute what was once thought to be one of the valuable potentials of studying

'folklore, when that folklore wasseen --- inter alia ---as a repository of traces of earlier custom and belief which survived into later times. Though it is almost taboo today to talk of folklore and 'survivals', both the relevant cautionary Shashthibratakathāand the humorous Shashthirupkathā(and Abanindranath's 'artificial re-working' of it for children in *Putul*) seem indeed to retain such survivals of an earlier 'folk' view of the mother-goddess as powerful, wild, destructive child-seizer, and a cultural movement to a view of her as purely benevolent child provider (provider of a child and protector for it). A similar process is seen in Buddhist tales of the conversion of hostile supernatural beingsinto benign ones. Thus, while the tale of the Shashthi-like 'Northern Buddhist' (Mahayana) angry, child-stealing/eating demoness Hariti into benevolent child-protecting goddess Hariti*tells* of just this sort of conversion (the Buddha kidnaps and hides her favourite son to show her what it feels like, and makes arrangements for offerings to her to eat in place of children); the two Shashthi tales placed side by side *show* something very like this conversion/movement within (folk?) culture.

Since the meagre handful Indic collected/transcribed examples of AT/ATU 459 listed so far are restricted to North India (Kashmir to Bengal), it appears to be one of the folktales which folklorist Stith Thompson called 'of limited area' or 'of limited distribution'. From a European perspective, India was once thought to be the fount of Indo-European folktales, then more modestly as a great repository of these --- both fortunately, because this perception underpinned collection and study of Indic tales. But Indic tales without European equivalents were (and are?) not of as great interest to Europe and America. It remains for South Asia to trace as study any unlisted transcriptions of these in South Asian languages (as Sircar has for one Bengali telling of AT/ATU 459), mindful that 'limited distribution' sometimes expands. Until at least 1961, only India was listed as an area for AT/ATU 459, so until it was found and transcribed in Iran and Palestine, its 'Indian dress' would have been thought to be its only one. Would there be/has been any equivalent in Afghanistan along the way and will it appear in Africa?

Then again, since the plots of various tellings of AT/ATU 459 vary quite greatly, within India and from the Middle Eastern ones, do the various similar plots constitute tale *subtypes*? Though folktale types and motifs are still used as conceptual tools, since the 1960s attention shifted away from the search for any original 'Ur-'/'Grund-' form/type of a tale, and from the

direction(s), mechanisms and time(s) of its dissemination. Nevertheless, the relation between the Indic and Middle Eastern forms (including 'literary' ones) of AT/ATU 459 --- and ofAT/ATU type 703*, 'The Snow Maiden'/'The Artificial Child' who comes to life, recorded from Palestine, Qatar, Algeria --- might again raise such matters as origin/ur-form, trajectory of dissemination, main form, normal form, subtype, local type (oikotype/ecotype), just what the relation between AT/ATU 459 Indic forms and Middle Eastern ones is, and whether the now unused term 'ethnotype' for related local forms common to large areas could again be useful (given the large area and number of languages between Bengal and Kashmir).

Unstudied ATU 459 and *Putul* also raisethe matter of affinities between distinct tale types (some of which Sircar details) and questions about boundaries of a tale type, that is, what makes it hang together as a distinct whole, despite variations. Are all the instances listed under AT 459, even the few examples that we have, within and outside India, actually in a real sense the 'same' tale?What other bratakatha/rupkatha crossovers have gone unnoticed, what other 'artificially reworkings' of folktale in India for children might surprise us?

Gaganendranath's comic genre-parody of folktaleand its interest to folklore studies

Sircar directly translates Gaganendranath's*Bhondaṛ Bahadur* as *Toddy-Cat The Bold*, relates it to Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books in its use of framing 'dream convention' though the social world of new Bengal is different and so 'unlike Carroll's, Gaganendranath's wonderland reflects the real world co-existence of separate ethnicities and regional linguistic and religious communities in India'. Let us here set aside such features of *Bhondaṛ* as the initial worship of the demon-slaying goddess Durga and her myth and the appearance of a benevolent goddess-like figure at the end, echoes of various goddesses and a top-Knotted folk 'bogeywoman' in the middle; allusions to the Bengal folktale based on folktale motif 'K1951.3.2: Tiger intimidated by boasting of the sham-warrior', and AT/ATU type 1655 (of an animal, in India usually a fox, 'trading up' in exchanges); the variation of one folk nursery rhyme (which Abanindranath had already used) as the animals' 'national anthem'; the allusions to and echoes of the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Arabian Nights, and Gaganendranath's model in Lewis Carroll, all of which Sircar explores. For, as the above should indicate, *Bhondaṛ*is in general a 'mock-heroic' work, and it contains a large component of humorous 'genre parody' of the various folktale types that could

be said to tell of an unpromising folktale hero's rescue quest, no one folktale type in particular, but instead as a stringing together of folktale motifs found over many folktale types and treating them tongue-in-cheek. So (from folklorist Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*) let us consider these(**since there is no motif summary for *Bhondaṛ*in the volume, and the following material was sent to me by Sircar upon request.** OMIT EITHER OR BOTH PARTS OF THIS STATEMENT IF YOU LIKE).

The plot outline of *Bhondaṛ*is:in a magical world --- after a hostile demonic abduction --- an unpromising male hero (or pair?) --- with faithful companions --- undertakes aperilous quest-journey   ---   to a faraway realm ---to rescue the abducted one---and finds helpers to become obstacles along the way--- until the demon is overcome --- with a kingdom as a reward. We cantry to avoid forcing folktale motifs onto this story(particularly motifs not found in India, like motif'F411.1: Demon travels in whirlwind' which is in Gaganendranath, but is not listed for Indic folktale itself).Here is what we find if we only consider folktale motifs whose *listed* range includes India (all themotifs below, where 'India only' means the motif is only *listed* for India, and is prominent there, but might also appear elsewhere).

For Gaganendranath'ssupernatural villain, the Two-Headed Rakshasa of the Chutupalu Forest who disguises himself as cat, lizard and lion, the equivalent folktale motifs are 'G361.1: Many-headed ogre' (India) and 'D102.1: Transformation: demon to animal' (India only). The disguised rakshasa's foiled abduction of a human baby and successful abduction of Bhondaṛ'ssonNichuacorrespond to the general and very wide-ranging motif categories 'G440: Ogre abducts person' and 'R11: Abduction by monster (ogre)', more specifically 'R11.2.2: Abduction by demon' (India, largely), and even 'R14: Deity (demigod) abducts person', then 'R24: Abductor in disguise' (in India,but not by monster), 'R13.4: Abduction by reptile' (general motif, in India as 'snake').However, motifs 'G442: Child-stealing demon' and 'R10.3: Children abducted' are not listed as Indic.

To rescue Nichua, when the old animal Bhondaṛ takes with him the old manI-narrator (who is transformed into a little boy), one or the other is certainly a form of the motif'H1242.1: Unpromising hero [who] succeeds in quest' (India only). Their quest certainly fits within the general folktale motif category 'H1385: Quest for lost persons'. ThoughBhondaṛ and the boy-

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narratorare 'brothers' by affection, the narrator is more like Bhondaṛ's son (and so like Nichua's 'brother'), thus to that extent his part in the quest recalls the general motif category 'G551: Rescue from ogre by relative' and the specific motifs 'H1385.8: Quest for lost brother(s)' and 'G551.4: One brother rescues another from ogre'. Since Bhondaṛ is at least minor royalty, the quest to rescue Nichua accords with motif 'H1385.10: Quest for lost prince (king)' (Indiaonly).

Bhondaṛ is equipped with the magic object 'D1254: Magic staff' and this quest includes the stock motif category 'H1236: Perilous path traversed on quest'.On that path, searching for the Rakshasa and Nichua's whereabouts, the questers are sent for information by the Old Apothecary to his grand-daughter, the Top-Knotted Old Mother, and on the way they are helped to reach her by a Fox. This combination of events corresponds first to the general motif category 'H1233: Helpers on quest' (the listing emphasises India), with the very widespread motif 'H1235: Succession of helpers on quest. One helper sends to another, who sends to another, etc.'.

The Old Apothecary is 'H1233.1.2: Old man [who] helps on quest' and recalls 'H1233.3: Holy man as helper on quest', 'H1233.3.1: Ascetic gives directions to hero on quest','H1233.3.2: Fakir as helper on quest' (all India only). The Apothecary's gift of an apotropaic magic potion is motif 'D1241: Magic medicine (= charm)'. When the Fox tells the questers how to remove a magic obstacle to reaching the Top-Knotted Old Mother, he fits the general motif categories 'B300: Helpful animal' (see the entire set of motifs B300-349),and B500 'Magic power from animals', and the specific motif 'H1233.6: Animals help hero on quest'. However, motif 'G552: Rescue [of hero?] from ogre by helpful animals'is not listed for India. The Top-Knotted Old Mother is motif 'N825.3: Old woman helper' (with a large geographical range including India) and when she appears, she is very like 'H1233.5.1: Goddess as helper on quest' (India only). Finally,like all folktale quests, *Bhondaṛ* concludes with the general motif category 'H1230: Accomplishment of quests', and specificallywithNichua receiving the Chutupalu Jungle as his kingdom, as motif 'Q112.0.1: Kingdom as reward'.

So far, so folktale-like: now to folktale genre-parody/subversion. However, though either an old animal or an old man transformed into a boy is certainly an unpromising hero, these figures are not usual ones in folktale. Hero-quest folktales are not usually I-narratives, told either by hero or by eye-witness (though Munchausen-like tall tales can be). The more usual demon-

slaying pair of young heroes are the sons (Nichua and the son of the Parrot-Sahib helper) who were abducted in the first place, whom we never see, and who together overcome the Rakshasa, but do not rescue each other. One 'brother', the I-narrator.does not rescue another, Nichua. Who, indeed, is the hero? Bhondaṛ'sMagic Staff disappears early in the story, and plays no part in the actual quest. The perils of the path include such unusual features as missed trains, pickpockets, vehicle crashes, etc.

Of the three helpers, only one sends on the questers to another (the Apothecary to the Top-Knotted Old Woman)' the questers are not sent to the Fox. The old Apothecary is not quite a holy man, ascetic or fakir. Though the 'helping animals' in Bhondaṛ's quest include his friends and officials, as well as the Fox and the Parrot, the folktale motifs of animal-helpers seems to assume a human hero (while the boy I-narrator takes no initiative), and a young one (which Bhondaṛ is not). The Top-Knotted Old Mother is not old when we see her, nor explicitly a goddess, and there is no need for any helping directions from her to the Rakshasa, who is dead. Nichua's Kingdom as reward is not made by a grateful King (father or father-in-law) to the hero he sends on a quest. Bhondaṛ's joint quest with boy-narrator is pointless: the abducted sons rescue themselves.

Now if we look at the general motif category 'H1385: Quest for lost persons' from H1385.1 to the end in H1385.12 (where only one motif,'H1385.9' with 'lost family', not listed for India), we find quests for 'stolen princess', 'vanished daughter', 'vanished wife (mistress)', 'vanished husband', 'vanished lover', 'lost sister', 'lost father', 'lost brothers', 'lost prince (king)', 'lost uncles' and 'prime minister who has left…in anger'. There is*no father's quest* for a *lost son*. Thus old animal-fatherBhondaṛ'squest for Nichuaand kill his Rakshasa-abductor is am age-related, relationship-related, and gender-related parody of the 'usual' quest of a prince for a princess starting with the very wide-ranging folktale motifs 'R11.1: Princess (maiden) abducted by monster (ogre)',continuing with such motifs as 'B543.0.1: Animal helps on quest for vanished wife' (India only) in the middle,and ending with such motifs as'R161.1: Lover rescues his lady from abductor', 'R111.1.1: Rescue of princess from ogre. See references to R11.1' and 'R111.1.4: Rescue of princess (maiden) from giant (monster)'.

What other modern folktale 'genre parodies' in South Asian languages(for whatever audiences), have gone unnoticed, and might surprise and intrigue folklorists?

In summary, for a diverse set of potential audiences, Sircar's scholarly, informative and enjoyable book stands at the intersections of study of folktale and children's literature (particularly 'fantasy' and 'multicultural' children's literature) within South Asian subcultures and internationally, and the sort of Indology focussed on the modern period or nineteenth-century vernacular culture.

Whatever factors define a 'culture area' and a 'subculture', language is one of them, and whether Assam and Orissa (and eastern Bihar?) constitute a unified subculture or a set of related subcultures with closely related languages, this Bengal-related volume in English makes accessible materials which are particularly relevant and interesting to folklorists in these adjacent linguistic areas. As such, this volume indicates the ongoing utility of English as the link language within India which it was intended to be (and which Hindi has not served), and well as a means of communication with the West. Perhaps, as in other urban, middle-class sphere, thisfunctional mutually intelligible Indian English operates--- within at least the Indian academic world --- not so much as the new Sanskrit as a new equivalent of either literary Prakrit or one of the diverse lower-level ones?

Book Review
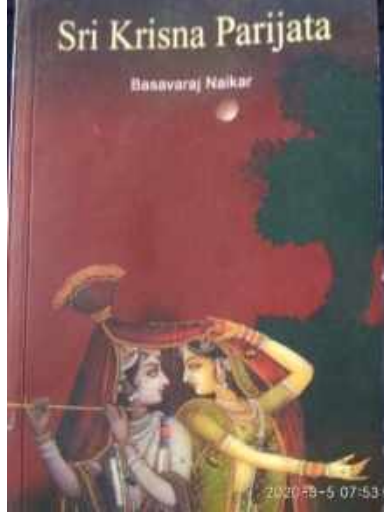
Srikrisna Parijata

Written by Basavraj Naikar

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Srikrisna Parijata is a famous story in the Harivamsa and the Mahabharata about the captivating of Parijata flower from the garden of Indra by Srirkrishna for his queen Satyabhama. This story has a pan- Indian appeal and has been found in oral, written, performed and visual form. Its accessibility in Kavya and Purana is well known, but the same story has been modified by the local poets appropriate to their cultural context added to local imagination. For instance Srikrishna in the disguise of a Kuruvanji – a fortune-teller woman appeared before Satyabhame to test her devotion is not found in other regional versions, as though disguise of Srikrishna to reach Sriradha is a common motif in many Krishna Kavya. The characters like Duti - a consort of Satyabhama, Gollati(milkmaid) and Gopala(milkman) The episode by the Kuruvanji – a tribal community of Dharwad and adjacent areas is a matter of great interest. Involvement of the tribal, Gollati (milkmaid, with the Sanskrit speaking Brahmin in the traditional sannata(

small play) of the Parijata Harana is the beauty of the performance. The folk costumes, folk verbatim, village humour, the style of presentation, the pattern of folk speech to portray the folk characters with the divine characters together has made this drama embedded with mani-pravala style.

Naikar mentioned that It is Dr MM Kulburgi, who discovered two manuscripts from the community and studied it. Naikar has discussed the trend of Krisna devotion travelled from Andhra influences the performance and it was known as kirtan Kavya eulogising the glory of Srikrishna.

The current traditional sannata (short play) was written and performed by Tammanna from Aparala village of Raichur district is a well known traditional play performed in northern Karnataka. As though it is a devotional drama, it has full of the folklore of different caste groups and tribal characters. The common people are the protagonists in a dialogue with the divine characters. The language of the characters is appropriate to their culture. When the language and mind of the Gollati or Duti or Bhagavata are folksy, the language of Satyabhame and Srikrishna is majestic. Narada, who is supposed to a Brahmarshi, has abused the gatekeeper of Srikrishna on asking his identity. He said, 'You Widows son , I am Narada.' This type of gramya or desi language has made this play close to the rural life of the locality.

The dialogues of Bhagavata, Gollati, Duti and even the dialogue of Narada are not used in any classic drama, but here, the characters have openly used the dialogue with double meaning, or even teasing of Bhagavata to Ganesha. In a scene, Gajanana has been tried to explain Madi Bhagavata in many ways, which is equally eulogy and also shlesha with double meaning. This signifies the beauty of folk drama.

In one place in the presence of Satyabhame and Srikrishna, Duti is asking Satyabhame if she had any other person in her mind. This frank and direct narration reveals the openness of the society wherein a village life, there is no secrecy. When the content of the folk drama is full of such dialogue enjoying to the rural audience, the community wisdom, nature of human being, character of a man or a woman is unhesitatingly narrate din the stage. In this scenes, most of the dialogue has a tremendous sense of humour, insult, the hierarchy of high and low, and the nature

of caste occupation and the sense of a social attitude towards a person are quite discernible from the dialogue and context.

The nature of folk drama in Indian traditional theatre is universal across the regions despite linguistic diversity. The structure and nature of folk drama emerged from chhanda natya, and heavy kavya to dhrusya kavya has sincerely maintained in the small play of Parijata Harana. The performance formula that Naikar has classified in this book is t a pan Indian performance form where the protagonist identifies himself singing a song. It means if Duti is coming to the stage, then she will say that 'I am duti, a consort to Satyabhama.' Srikrishna or Satyabhame or Narada all have to sing their song identifying themselves narrating their nature, dress, and glory of their characters. They sing their song and the co singers follow the songs in a chorus to give pause and action to the performers. Use of Sanskrit sloka while coming to the stage, use of Raga and tala and use of local language with the kavya language by the divine and royal characters are some of the components found across the country. In Karnataka, the same art form is prevalent, and it reveals from Naikar's short play that, the languages of north and south or the east or the west may be different and not intelligible, but the culture is one and all.

The theme of the Parijata Harana is almost the same across India, and it is ended with the love between Srikrishna and Satyabhama. Indra has not been hostile in this epic drama, but in the Sarala Mahabharata of Odisha, there was a terrible batter between Indra and Srikrishna for the act of latter stealing the Parijata tree forcibly from the Nandanvana. Narada is a universal character injecting both the parties and create issues and resolve it, thereby get pleasure. In this review, there is no much scope to analyse the multidimensional aspects of the play, its linguistic resources, dialogues and its intended meaning since this need more intensive study. However, some examples would be sufficient to know how the folk poets are witty, humorous, crafty and even folksy in composing the dialogue.

In prastavana, when Gajanana appears in the state Bhagavata – the main singer with Mari Bhagavata – junior singer appear there. Mari Bhagavata appears to be a little foolish and innocent, but the question he asks portrays the nature of his type of character. Mari Bhagavata looking at Gajanana with a human body having a head of an elephant asked his guru Bhagavata –

Mari Bhagavata- What is this, Sir, who is the person who has come here?

Bhagavata – you do not recognise him? Mari Bhagavata I could not sir, this person has the face of an elephant and the body of a human being. He looks very strange.

Bhagavata_Fool, It is not like that he is called Vighneshwara, the Wander of All Obstacles,

Mari Bhagavata- What is this, the obstacle started the moment he come here.

Bhagavata- Fool, it is not like that. This Lord wards off all the obstacles

Mari Bhagavata – How far does he ward off the obstacles, Sir?

Bhagavata-He wards them off as far as thirty to forty miles.

Mari Bhagavata -Why should not he ward them off for another thirty to forty miles?

Consider the beauty of the dialogue as well as the gesture of ignorance of Madi Bhagavata in which the poet has tried to explain the audience the meaning of Vighneshawra, and these dialogues go on.

Though the story is related to Srikrishna, the divine and human characters have played the role of village folk, and the entire play is full of folk wisdom, folk metaphor and meaning which is highly contextual. Such folk imagination is understood when somebody has understood the folk language and its stylistics with its situated meaning. There are hundreds of such phrases in this play displaying the linguistic repertoire of Northern rural Karnataka in their everyday communication between the villagers.

Prof Naiker has translated the short play into a lucid manner, in English, which is quite intelligible despite the fact that the text and its dialogues are context-specific elated to many folk metaphor and euphemism. The play reminds us of the folk in the collective use of the community and how the meaning of such phrases was embedded with deep meaning and context.

Since this is a play and full of humour and love, more closely to traditional poetics of the community in a given linguistic society, the language is full of inner meaning with lots of love, wit, humour, jealousy, and infatuation. The final truth of the story is to manage two wives and maintain family harmony is the essence of the epic drama. The Sannata- a Small play as it is told has a big cultural component of Karnataka to enjoy the human sensibility in creativity.

The book portrays the vast folk elements embedded in the dramatic language of medieval Karnataka Bhakti literature through which the socio-cultural life of the common people are explored, and the divine characters aver also played their role in a village setting forgetting their divinity to enjoy the human experience.

As a successful essayist, critic and a professor of English language Prof Naikar have taken much labour to explore the folklore of Karnataka. He also finished the unfinished of Prof MM Kalburgi. S a dramatist, Prof.Naikars translation of the medieval Kirtana Kavya would attract many scholars across the globe to enjoy the Karnataka folk performance Tradition as well as the ethnography of language of an ancient play. This book will be helpful to the international readers to understand the rubrics of Kannada folk performance.

Mahendra Kumar Mishra

INTERVIEW

Professor Mohan Ramanan answers questions posed to him by Dr. Sindhu Menon,
(Assistant Professor, English Department, University of Hyderabad)who had been his student
and colleague. She tragically passed away in March 2020 a few weeks after she had done this
Interview. **Professor Ramanan retired in 2014 after being in the profession four decades.**

**1)As an old student and Research Scholar of yours, I like many, many others feel that you
were born to be an English Literature teacher and scholar. But you have often claimed that
you entered this discipline as an 'accidental teacher', which is really hard to believe. Could
you elaborate on this paradox?**

Thank you, Sindhu, for the nice things your question implies and I am sure I don't
deserve it. But the fact is that I am perpetually surprised that I seemed to have made a mark and
that many students feel that I have touched their lives. It is like my going in to bat and never
expecting to stay the course but actually finding myself scoring well. I never was confident in
cricket but I ended up being part of some champion teams and doing my bit for them. Likewise,
every class is a crisis and I went in expecting to be a disaster and then came out actually

successful in delivering a substantial lecture. I think it was some lack of courage and a sinking feeling that my fundamentals were not strong(one reason why I repeatedly go back to basic lessons in my reading and teaching – Introduction to Literature courses, for example) and then attempting to get down to basics and then doing reasonably well. This crisis was a constant condition of my being and it seemed to be a sufficient and necessary condition for succeeding in class. Of course I had my bad days and I have regretted classes which were a disaster. So, under these conditions how could I be a born teacher?I think I had teachership thrust on me and perhaps I achieved teachership. Of course I drifted into English quite by chance as I have explained indetail elsewhere. I did not plan to do English at all but a concatenation of circumstances lead me to English at Loyola College where I had hoped to do a B. Com degree leading to my becoming a Chartered Accountant. That was not to be and I have remained in English and I see it as Providence's intervention in my life.

2) You have published and mentored scholars in several areas, all of them successfully. Personally, I am most interested in your work on what we have christened Indo-British Literary and Cultural Transactions. What aroused your interest in this field and was it to some extent a result of the 'Indian slant' you have often mentioned as important to you?

You are right. I read and talked English literature pretty much all my life but I always had this feeling that I should have been reading and talking Sanskrit or Tamil literature, something closer home and that this being in English was creating some kind of schizophrenia. I wrote about this in the *London Magazine*in 1985 or so and titled the essay "Macaulay's Children". On the one hand was the professional compulsion to teach English. I could not change that. I could certainly have been a comparativist, but I had no inside knowledge of the Indian literatures.I think you need to know the language and that translated materials are notthe real thing . It is a question of discovering an essential way of seeing, knowing and expressing one's Indianness. Doing it through English translations leads to some kind of inauthenticity. I called myself Macaulay's child as a consequence and I both resented this existential state and tried to come to terms with it by accepting it as a given. Where to go from there? I was certain that the trend to infiltrate English departments with non- English areas, which we now witness majorly, was not what I wanted. Could one stick to English literature and work from there? I realized that focusing

on the Indian element in reading a text or reading Indian English writers was one way of satisfying this Indian need. I,therefore, read extensively the Indian writers in English and saw this as a part of English literature. But I also discovered as I went along that English writers were dealing with India in one way or the other. These are what we call Anglo Indian writers – Englishwriters who use India as a localeand a setting and who represent India. That this interest would burgeon after I offered a successful course on the Indo British literary and Cultural Encounter in such a wayas to prompt me to supervise Doctoral candidates only, in what PramodNayar calls "Indo Brit", is of course true. I have published in the areas of Modern Poetry, American Literature and Indian Writing in English and I have taught courses in Eighteenth Century English Literature, Romantic Literature, American Literature and most of the courses offered by the department, but when it came to PhD research it was mainly Indo- Brit. I see Indo-Brit as a natural progression of my focus on English literature and my seeking an Indian dimension in it. Indo- Brit, when I taught it, was relatively concentrated on literary study but it has now got linked with Orientalism and Postcolonial criticism and I have encouraged my scholars to utilize insights from these intellectual trends in the study of British writers on India. I should mention Sharada, my first Doctoral student, who worked on Philip Meadows Taylor, whose persistence inspired me to get into this area with greater zeal.She came to work with me just when Indo- Brit was getting popular in the Department.

3)One of the aspects your students, scholars and even faculty attending Refresher Courses regularly take away and recall with pleasure is your oratorical skill. Your ability to quote at length, dramatically and passionately, once heard is impossible to forget. The other is your sense of humour which enlivened the dullest texts. You were truly a 'performer' in the classroom. Could you comment on your use of these skills and the necessity for them for all teachers?

A classroom is a theatre for performance. If you sit on a chair you are less effective. if you walk about too much you distract, but if you are more or less static, use the board well, and have eye contact, your class is likely to be lively and you can hold your audience. You must smile and be sympathetic, not distant and forbidding. Your love of literature must be transmitted. How better to do this than to quote extensively? I have learnt this art from my MA days and from some of my teachers.Unforgettable was the legendary Fr Jerome D' Sousa who lectured on Milton with ample quotes .In my MA examinations, particularly in my special paper on

Wordsworth and the Romantic Age, I quoted profusely. I made it a point to memorize passages and this has stood me in good stead. In University classes and Refresher Courses my examples are from Milton, Shakespeare, Pope, Johnson, Wordsworth, Keats, Coleridge and Shelley who I find serviceable in all sorts of lectures. I have been profoundly influenced by Matthew Arnold's essay "The Study of Poetry "where he quotes from a range of European and English poetry. I memorized most of those examples and use them in my lectures. A good lecture is the result of broad human sympathy and has nothing to do with cruel wit which is akin to cynicism. I think a love of one's students and of the subject are a good recipe for humour. Humour is not forced and it is as natural as breathing or as leaves to a tree.Teachers must cultivate this broad sympathy. I learnt much from my teachers in college like Ramamurthy, Fr Pinto,Fr Murphy, Rajani, Bennet Albert , GK Mathew and Venkataramanan who were not only humorous themselves but the cause of humour in others .

4)   Apart from the obvious access to resources, do you consider the 'foreign returned' tag as useful or merely fashionable?

In India we have not quite got over our colonial mentality and we think that if someone is white s\he is superior and if a person has gone abroad s\he must have acquired something which ordinary mortals have not. I faced this kind of prejudice very often in my early years and I confess I got intimidated. If you had a degree from the West that made you the cat's whiskers but a degree from India-- that was not good enough. I determined over the years to take a balanced view of this foreign business.I believe that stints abroad and travel expand your mind and that is always an investment in a world of petty insularity and narrow domestic walls.At the same time, I believe we should be proudof where we came from, and our nation, though we should guard against Xenophobia and fundamentalist passion. To the extent that they open up your perspective, foreign visits are good and even essential , particularly in English Studies.But there is an Indian dimension even in English Studies and I would not make the mistake of merely ignoring things which are native. Of course, in the name of nativism we have abandoned English in English Departments.This is an extreme I don't approve of, but having said that we must, as CDNarasimhaiah would say, look for the Indian dimension in English literature or to adapt Emily Dickinson, see things "Indianly".This can be in the way of applying Indian aesthetic theory to English done in subtle ways by scholars like Krishna Rayan or CDN himself or it can be by focusing on the representations of India in an English work-- even in its absence---as I

suddenly realized with what we call Anglo Indian novels which use India as a pretext and actually empty themselves of solid Indian characters. Many of these novels are about what it feels like to be an Englishman or Englishwoman in India and that, of course, in its sophisticated avatar is a branch of Orientalism.But it should be possible to insert an Indian value system into an English work and ask, for example,if Shakespeare who wrote tragedies would pass the Indian test of drama which poets likeKalidasa perfected by transcending the tragic and seeing the noumenal. Indian drama is criticized for not having a tragic sense but that is based on an ignorance of the Indian or Hindu word view which does not accept tragedy as the ending end of life. By asserting our Dharmic values we would be firmly Indian in what we do and that way English Studies would become relevant for us.

5)The publication of your volume of poems was a pleasant surprise; you had kept your secret well! Did it feel different from ''academic writing" and can we expect more in the future? Is a novel, by any chance in the offing? You certainly have had enough and more experience of 'men and manners' to provide you with the raw material!

I published*Grills and Other Poems,* which embodied three decades of writing, including much from my green and salad days. I hesitated to publish those poems, but I said to myself after seeing so many people publish why I should not do so as well.The volume was well received and though not many reviews appeared I had many people in private chats and correspondence saying good things about the poems. I myself think that there is an uneven quality about the poems and that good and not so good poems coexist in the volume,but I published anyway.My second volume is in the offing and it is titled *My Son's Father Confessor*.[It has been subsequently published but Corona has prevented its release]. It is deeply autobiographical but then all writing is confessional. But surely some are more confessional than others and this volume draws on deeply personal and subjective things while *Grills* was more objective and concerned itself with the world around a bit more. I began scribbling anovel and who knows I might even complete it if my energy levels do not dip. Yes, you might say that I have experienced much and I have encountered characters who could do with a Dickensian representation. But I am no Dickens.Let us see. Creative writing is freer than scholarly writing but it has its own compulsions and discipline.Dylan Thomas used to revise his lines scores of times before finalizing a poem but does it show in the exuberance of the final version of the

work?I wish I had that discipline. I tend to write spontaneously and then revise only a little.One must write every day but I don't. I need to do much more to produce better poems.

6)You have constantly upheld the validity of the canon and your contribution was one of the important reasons why the UoH English department, despite diversifications, still retains at least in the M.A programme, sufficient courses to ensure the students leave with a reasonable knowledge to grasp and teach the canon. One may specialize in Bhojpuri folk songs, but it is hardly likely that at the job level whether at colleges or Universities, this will suffice, unless one is able to also teach the Romantics or Renaissance drama or even 21st century fiction. Are you gratified by the fact that you stuck to your guns and helped ensure the basic need for the canon? What do you foresee for the future – will we be able to balance the canon and new developments or will the English Department, like many others, become a catch-all bag for everything but English Literature?

I think you are far too generous in mentioning my contribution but it was team work. I added my voice but it was one among many and that is what I liked about the department during my times. There was undoubtedly a balance between the traditional and the new. But I cannot say what will happen in future. It is upto you and your colleagues to preserve that balance. But the wave of Cultural Studies, while it has its strong points, threatens to overcome traditional literary study. Most departments of English in our country have been affected by this wave and I can't imagine our Department fighting it for long. But I am hoping for the kind of negotiation I pleaded for in a paper I read at Kalyani where I surveyed the move from work to text, from literature to culture, and argued that these need not be seen as binary oppositions. On the other hand, they have a symbiotic relationship and literary study will be enriched by what the theorists say and cultural Studies will enrich itself by including literature as its primary concern in an English Department.That way, we can be more inclusive and accommodating and this is in the finest traditions of literary study and the Humanities.But to go back to your query I am satisfied that I did the best for the Department and the discipline, sometimes incurring the wrath of colleagues.

7)The advantages that "theory" has brought to our reading practices is undeniable. But is there in your opinion, still a place for the Liberal Humanist tradition, where we first interact with the text and only then proceed to 'theorize' it? Are we in danger of losing the text within the 'Theories'?

For convenience let me use the traditional word work instead of text. Text has far too many other significations. Yes, I would like to read a work as a work of art and see what is beautiful in it even if it not agreeable, a distinction Coleridge made. But I do recognize that a work has a context and that it can be read with reference to those contexts – ideological, political and, yes, religious. But even if I hate Yeats' politics or Eliot's social views, my admiration for their fine evocative poetry remains. And we must teach our students to appreciate this. Yeats is conservative in his representation of women but can you find a finer poem that "Prayer for my Daughter" or anything more pathos ridden than Eliot's paean to modern civilization in *The Wasteland?* In this craze for Theory we not only find unreadable writing, theses which are chloroform in print (Isaac Sequeira's'sfavouritephrase)and a destruction of the simple pieties of literary criticism. I am for a return to criticism with Theory lending a hand so to speak in interpreting the work.

8)Apart from your teaching position, you have also held several Administrative posts like Head of the Department, Dean of the School etc. How was the experience of juggling the roles? Did the administrative positions create complications? And did they have any significant impact on your primary role as teacher and mentor?

I enjoyed my stint as Administrator because I was able to get funds, provide infrastructure, introduce new academic programmes, besides using my position a Dean of Humanities to institute the Humanities Oration, the Humanities Lecture series and organize interdisciplinary seminars like the ones on Humanities in Our Time and Sanskrit in the Future. I published steadily even as Head and as Dean, going to conferences and giving lectures just as I did as an ordinary teacher. I was efficient under the pressure and learnt to prioritize and manage time. Becoming Dean was useful in giving me a perspective on the Humanities which transcended narrow disciplinary walls.I had my run-ins with the Administration and sharp differences with colleagues but at the end of the day I feel vindicated by the affection I have enjoyed across the board.

9)Your students and research scholars will vouch for the fact that you interacted with them as individuals and not just as professional entities. And this in no way affected your professional commitment and stringency. How would you react to the rising demands today that relations with students are to be kept entirely at the official/professional level and that taking a personal interest and concern in them is practically a transgression?

I had a scientist colleague of mine in the University complaining to my wife that I was seen too much with studentsand asserting that they should not be asked home.My wife and I said nothing but looked on in amusement and continued doing what we have always done--invite students home for tea or a chat or simply be hospitable when they came. No one took advantage of this by trying to manipulate or influence my academic decisions. The scientist and people like him are suspicious of students which I am not. I am, of course, cautious and there are students and students and I know some may have felt hurt that they could not manipulate me. But on the whole being with students energizes me and has been good for me. The idea that a teacher should not be found with students is absurd and based on a poor opinion of teacher and taught.My research students came home regularly and they had to face probably a harsher and more rigorous regimen from me than they might have if they were not close to me. They did not resent it because they knew that I was fair. How can a teacher abdicate what is fundamental to the profession -- a concern for the well-being of the student? And how can you show that concern by remaining aloof and reserved and forbidding?

10)You have mentioned in a recent article that being in service makes it obligatory to mind your words and opinions. But after retirement you are free to speak openly even on contentious issues. Could you please elaborate on this?

One must take care even after retirement about what one says in public or private. That comes with the ethics of our profession and I think this has to do with gentlemanly behaviour. In service there are more constraints and one is likely to compromise for the greater good. In superannuation one is less constrained and perhaps compromises are not necessary but there is no general rule that one should be restrained while in service and unrestrained outside it. I am more prone to be politically incorrect these days than I was when I served the University. Now I am more open about my religious upbringing and try to see nationhood, identity, culture, literary study as all connected and admitting of a spiritual dimension.The secular birds are not likely to approve.

11) Spirituality has always or nearly always been one of the cornerstones of your existence. Could you give us some insight into how this has sustained you through personal and professional crises and difficult times of which there must have been many?

You are right about my spiritual moorings and I did not hesitate to wear it on my sleeves so to speak though I am more direct in my expression of these things in retirement. "Lord I believe, help Thou my Unbelief" has been a Christian prayer I am obsessed with and I think it nicely captures the conflict of Faith and Doubt, both of which I have. But in my darkest hours and in the University where I went through some trying times, my faith gave me strength.Personal disappointments, illness in the family, differences with friends are normal but faith allows you an anchor. Some may not want it but they are rare, but most people need it and I have never hesitated to bless my students or utter the name of God in class.

12)Finally, when you look back on your long and illustrious career, are there any regrets? And what would be your fondest memories?

As I look back, I feel that much of life, and that includes University life, is vanity as Bishop Bloughram would say. I even feel that I might have been more useful in society if I had turned musician, which at one time was a real possibility. I am concerned with the religious life and I feel that much of my disciplinary activity was secular and at odds with my spirituality .But I have tried to reconcile the two. My regrets are many. I think I have hurt many people with my carelessness or insensitivity or exhibition of ego. Now I ask forgiveness of those who regard me with disgust, anger or sadness. My fondest memories are those moments when I read something which shook me up, like Raja Rao's *Serpent and the Rope* or *Parva* by Byrappa, or *Veyipadagalu* by Viswanatha Satyanarayana. I was not myself for a while after reading these books and these memories make me want to read more so that I can experience this thrill again. The other fond memory is of students like you dropping in or calling or writing, some, many years after they left the University. The love of one's students is a teacher's greatest reward.

I am grateful to Anand Mahanand, who himself is a student of mine, for sponsoring this Interview and hope it has not been an ego trip.