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~Editor's Note~

Dear Readers & Contributors,

Welcome to the April 2023 issue of IJELLS. We have begun the 12th -year cycle. This issue presents an interesting and informative combination of articles.

There is a paper on the Gujarati translations of Shakespeare, proving how the great playwright's work reaches out to different cultures and geographical spaces. The article on Mizo literature is a learning experience. Using gaming as part of the ELT process and an actual lesson plan are all part of this issue.

If you have a suggestion for improvement, kindly mail it to dr.mrudulalakkaraju@gmail.com.

International Journal of English: Literature, Language and Skills – IJELLS extends its service into publishing books. We have started the enterprise IJELLS Publishing. This is a platform where we help authors self-publish their work. Check out our webpage at <https://www.ijells.com/ijells-publishing/> to understand more.

Happy Reading and Happy Sharing!

Dr Mrudula Lakkaraju
Chief Editor

~ Chief Editor~

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~English Creative Section~

The Silent Song

Poonam Minocha



A little bird
In a gigantic cage
Doors ajar
Hovers near the threshold
Contemplating
If she should soar
Into the unknown
Explore the limitless blue
Inviting skies....
Still pondering
Hesitating
Procrastinating
Singing a silent song
Till the door shuts
In her mind.

Splintered

Poonam Minocha



Why do I still treasure,
The broken casket
That was once filled with joy.
The coffer that treasured sweet nothings
Dreams and desires overflowing
That it could not contain
Happiness to the brim.
The sunlight that lit my heart
Now scalds it to the core
The sound of gentle raindrops
That caused a joyous flutter
Now drowned in tears.
The rustle of leaves that stirred me within
Now only a deafening silence.
The thought of that smile
That brightened up my day
Seems lost in a grimace.
Cheery strains of music
Now soulful and alone.
The cupful of memories
Trinkets of joy, hues of laughter
The kaleidoscope of moments
Each filled with delight
Suddenly empty, grey, still
Nothing remains
Not even the echoes of silence....

~English Literature~

Mansukhlal Jhaveri: A Gujarati Translator of Shakespeare's Plays

Anjali Ramnani

Abstract

An endeavour to uncover translation history of any text necessitates viewing the translator as an individual whose choices are influenced by his inclinations and external factors as well. Translation history in Gujarat has been pursued in superficial way which is limited to recording dates, names of translations and may be names of the translator in some instances. However, it has gained momentum in the West since the last 30 years or so. There are various theories and frameworks embraced by the scholars in the West that indicate that it is critically important to explore the various facets of translation history such as translator identity, patronage, censorship, support mechanisms and interventions, as well as selection of texts. Translation discourses focus mainly on the text and ironically leave out the translator, the cultural agent who makes translation possible in the first place. Shedding light on the life and the times of the translator can help discover new facts and interpretations pertaining to translation history. The association of Shakespeare's plays with Gujarat goes back to 1852 when the first adaptation of *Taming of the Shrew* was performed at St. Andrews Library, Surat. Since then there have been numerous translations and adaptations of Shakespearean plays but very little is known about the life and work of these translators. Mansukhlal Jhaveri is one such translator of Shakespeare's plays, namely, *Hamlet* (1967), *Othello* (1978) and *King Lear* (1983). While he is famous as a Gujarati language poet, critic and literary historian of the Gandhian era, the contribution as a translator of these plays is almost forgotten. Hence, this paper is an attempt to highlight his contribution to translation history in the context of Shakespeare's plays.

Keywords: Translation studies, translation history, translator studies, Shakespeare in Gujarati

Introduction

Translation is a socio-cultural activity governed by norms. Translation history is the pursuit of understanding the historical context in which translation occurs. It is also an exploration of

the life and times of the translator because he facilitates the transfer of one culture into another by manipulating the norms. The view that translation is not influenced by cultural and political forces has now gotten redundant. The translator rarely or never undertakes a translation out of free will or without being influenced. There are power relations that govern this highly creative act. There's a growing inquisitiveness to decode and analyse the external factors such as patronage, intervention by translation scholars, publishing agencies etc which influence the translation. Hence, it becomes imperative to explore the life and work of translators and try to reconstruct the narrative of the events that led to the translation and the historical context in which it occurred.

It becomes imperative to study the historical context and factors which influenced the translation since there is a history of almost 200 years of colonisation in India. The colonial encounter not only shaped the history of our country or translation history, but it also influences the present, which explains why so many artists try to adapt Western plays or works of art in various Indian languages. Shakespeare's works form the core of any literature syllabi in Indian universities, since the 19th century. His plays were a major source of entertainment for the vernacular masses as well. The timeless works of Shakespeare have been adapted in several Indian languages and his legacy continues to sustain the interest of people. The translator is the connecting link between the two cultures that makes the work of art available to the target culture from the source culture by translating, adapting, or transcreating. Unless we study the life and work of the translator, we won't be able to understand the translation history in its entirety.

Legacy of Shakespeare in Gujarati

Shakespeare's legacy in India began in Gujarat in the year 1852, when the first adaptation of *Nathari Firangiz Thekane Aavi* was performed by a Parsi theatre group at St. Andrews Library in Surat. It was also the first ever adaptation in any modern Indian language. Since then the association only grew stronger with passage of time as several Parsi theatre groups adapted the plays of Shakespeare in myriad ways. They were usually greatly modified to suit the Indian sensibilities but the plot was based on mostly Shakespeare's comedies. This tradition continued until the late nineteenth century. Translations proper did not happen until the end of the nineteenth century when a translator from Bhavnagar, N.P. Dave translated five plays of Shakespeare into Gujarati under 'Shakespeare Mala' series. He translated *Othello*, *Julius Caesar*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet* during

1898 to 1917. As opposed to the Parsi theatres that mostly thrived on Shakespearean comedies, the translators of Shakespeare's plays were inclined towards translating mainly tragedies. Dave's translations were followed by the translations of *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice* by Hansa Mehta in 1942 and 1944 respectively. Jayant Patel, a lecturer in Gujarati at MTB Arts College, Surat, translated four of Shakespeare's plays, namely *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It* during 1963-64. Jashwant Thakar, the renowned theatre artist in Nadiad translated two of Shakespeare's plays into Gujarati namely *Macbeth* and *Richard III* in 1964 and 1969 respectively. Mansukhlal Jhaveri, a renowned figure in the fraternity of Gujarati litterateurs, translated *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *King Lear* in 1967, 1978 and 1983 respectively. Krushnashankar Ambashankar Vyas translated *The Merchant of Venice* in 1975. Mohamed Rupani's translations of Shakespeare's 159 Sonnets and *As You Like It* followed in 1977 and 1979 respectively. Nalin Rawal provided the lone translation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* which was published in 1992.

Mansukhlal Jhaveri: Life and Works

Mansukhlal Jhaveri was born on 3 October 1907 in Jamnagar, Gujarat. He was a Gujarati language poet, critic, translator, and literary historian who belonged to the Gandhian era. He was immensely interested in Sanskrit classical poetry as well. After completing his schooling from Jamnagar, he moved to Bhavnagar where he enrolled in Shamaldas Arts College for his further studies. He completed his B.A. in 1935 and M.A. in 1937, after which he taught at Raiya College in Mumbai for a couple of years. He moved to Rajkot in 1940 and taught at Dharmendrasinhji College until 1945. He relocated to Mumbai, this time for 13 years from 1945 to 1958 and worked at St. Xavier's College during this tenure. He then served as a Principal of Madhwani Arts and Commerce College, Porbandar from 1958 to 1963. He returned to Mumbai in 1966 but very soon he got appointed as the Principal at BEC College in Kolkata. He passed away on 27 August 1981 in Mumbai. He was immensely interested in literary criticism and studied Eastern as well as Western concepts about it. He published various comprising of articles on criticism and reviews including *Thoda Vivechan Lekho* (1944), *Paryeshana* (1952), *Kavyavimarsha* (1962), *Abhigam* (1966), *Govardhanam* (1967), *Nhanalal* (1967), *Kanaiyalal Munshi* (1970), *Umashankar Joshi* (1971), *Gujarati Sahityabhasha* (1972), *Balwantrai Thakor* (1976), *Aapno Kavita Vaibhav vol 1 & 2* (1974, 1975), *Drishtikon* (1978), *Gandhiyug Nu Sahitya* (1978) and *Umashankar Joshi – Nityakar*. He also wrote *History of Gujarati Literature* in English (1978). He co-authored

Gujarati Sahityanu Rekhardarshan, a history of Gujarati Literature (1953) along with other writers. He started writing poetry at a very early age and his collection of poems, *Chandradut* was published in 1929. It is an adaptation of *Meghaduta* by Kalidasa, written in *Mandakranta* meter. Some of his other works of poetry are *Phooldol* (1933), *Aaradhana* (1939), *Abhisar*(1947), *Anubhuti*(1956) and *Doomo Ogalyo*(1975). He translated Kalidasa's *Abhijnashakumtalam* into Gujarati as *Smritibramshaathva Shapit Shakuntala* in 1928. He also translated Shakespeare's plays *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *King Lear* in 1967, 1978 and 1983 respectively. He is a unique instance in translation history and deserves a special place in translation history because he is arguably the only Gujarati translator who translated the plays of Kalidasa and Shakespeare both.

Intervention by Translation Scholars

Translation history should also encompass the contribution of various translation scholars who with their intervention facilitated the translations of Shakespeare's plays into Gujarati. The contribution of Umashankar Joshi is remarkable in this regard because even though he did not translate any Shakespearean play himself, he got various writers and poets to translate them. In this case, Joshi reached out to Jhaveri, and asked him to translate *Othello* for his project *Kavita Sanga: Nisheeth Puraskar Granth Mala – 15*, a series conceptualised by him involving translations of 15 texts. It was published by Gangotri Trust which was established by Umashankar Joshi. All the other texts in this series were poetry from Indian and other languages translated into Gujarati. Among these, Joshi wanted to get Shakespeare's *Othello* translated which is why he reached out to Jhaveri. Joshi and Jhaveri were in touch with each other via letters for many years and the two volumes of Joshi's letters titled *Patro 1 & 2* testify this fact. It becomes imperative to examine why Umashankar Joshi asked Jhaveri and not any other translator to translate first *Othello* and later *King Lear* into Gujarati. Joshi states about Jhaveri in *Isamu Shidaane Anya*:

He was very good at translating. The reason being he studied two great languages –Sanskrit and English since his childhood. Very few translators showed the accuracy and insight that he did. His translation of *Shakuntal* is quite good but I have no qualms in stating that his translations of Shakespeare's plays can be ranked as the best translations of Shakespeare of all times. His translation of *Hamlet* was received quite well. When I read that,

I requested him to translate as many Shakespeare's plays as he could. In his translation of *Othello*, the way Iago misleads Othello- manipulates Othello's thoughts about Desdemona, and that scene - wherein Othello smothers Desdemona-- when we read that in Gujarati prose, in Mansukhlal's prose, we can hear Shakespeare's voice in it!(158)

The above excerpt is from an article titled "Mansukhbhai" in the book *Isamu Shideane Anya*. Jhaveri did not live long enough to see the publication of *King Lear* but he shared with Joshi that "The moments I have spent in translating these two plays (*Othello* and *King Lear*) are the best moments of my life- that is the kind of bliss that I have experienced in these translations" (158). Hence, it was due to the intervention by Umashankar Joshi that these two translations ushered into Gujarati literature. His lifelong fascination with Shakespeare has endowed Gujarati literature with numerous works based on the world-famous playwright.

Translation of Hamlet, Othello, King Lear

The translation of *Hamlet* by Jhaveri was first published in 1967 by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. Although it was the third time that a translator undertook the translation of *Hamlet*, each translation's form was different from the previous one. The first translation done by N.P. Dave was done using *Bhashantar* i.e. literal translation, the second one was done by Hansa Mehta using *Anushtup* metre, i.e. verse form, and the third and the last one was done by Jhaveri in *Anuvad* form, which means he did not translate using word-for-word but focused on conveying the meaning. If we can understand the translator's perception of translation as a process, we can know why he/she resorted to a particular translation strategy. In 1933 at the 11th Gujarati Sahitya Parishad Meet at Lathi, Mansukhlal Jhaveri delivered a discourse on "*Bhashantar Karvani Kala*" ("The Art of Translation"). Regarding the definition of terms, he states:

Bhashantar (literal translation) is not the same as *Anuvad* (Translation Proper). The difference between *Bhashantar* and *Anuvad* is similar to the difference between a photograph and an oil painting. In the former, the outline of the original will be mostly precise, however, the beauty of form and colours cannot be faithfully reflected. In the latter, both can be captured; although the outline may vary a little. The painter of an oil painting will use his creativity in

some way and strive to make it closer to the original, as much as possible.
Skill is required in both these things.” (526)

His perception about translation indicates that he was inclined towards *anuvad*; hence he renders all his translations of Shakespeare’s plays using this form. As mentioned earlier, Jhaveri was deeply interested in the concept of literary criticism. Incidentally, the translation of *Hamlet* carries an excerpt of a work by Professor John Dover Wilson CH, who was a scholar and critic of Renaissance drama, focusing particularly on the work of William Shakespeare. As per the opinion of Professor Wilson, the plays *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* were the finest tragedies that were written by Shakespeare. This might be one of the reasons why Jhaveri undertook the translation of a play that was already translated twice in the past. In the preface to the translation of *Othello*, Umashankar Joshi states that the translation of *Hamlet* by Jhaveri garnered lot of acclamation. He also mentions that the works of a great playwright like Shakespeare should be available in Gujarati language and expresses his gratitude towards Jhaveri for undertaking this translation. This translation was part of a larger project, *Kavita Sangam – Nisheeth Puraskar Granthmala – 15* which involved translations of various other works from different languages into Gujarati. It was after reading the translation of *Hamlet* that Joshi requested Jhaveri to translate as many plays of Shakespeare as he could. The translation of *Othello* also contains an introduction by another Shakespearean scholar Santprasad Bhatt, who dedicatedly studied Shakespeare’s works and motivated others to study them as well.

Jhaveri was translating the text of *King Lear* at the behest of a fellow scholar Umashankar Joshi, which means that he did not have any patron or publisher influencing his literary choices. Unlike Hansa Mehta who was responding to critics or Dave who translated as per the instructions of his patron, Jhaveri did not have any constraints in terms of creativity. Jhaveri also acknowledges the role of Joshi in the preface to his translation of *King Lear* published in 1983. He states:

The true credit for the rare good fortune of ushering in the translation of Shakespeare’s third tragedy into Gujarati is accorded to me, but should go to Umashankar Joshi. After going through my translation of *Hamlet*, if he had not written to me, “Please translate as many of Shakespeare’s plays as you can”, I would not have turned towards *Othello* and *King Lear*. (i)

He provides a prose translation of *King Lear* and focuses on conveying the meaning primarily instead of doing word-for-word translation. He does not even attempt to do a scholarly translation in verse or any other form. Wherever needed, he provides the explanation of culture specific terms in the footnotes. For instance, in Act 1 Scene 1 there is mention of Apollo by Lear and Kent when they are talking. Jhaveri retains the name of Apollo God and explains in the footnote that Apollo was the God of Sun and an impeccable archer. Since the Gujarati readership would not be familiar with the name Apollo, he ensures he explains the context of the word.

Conclusion

Mansukhlal Jhaveri was arguably the only translator who translated the plays of *Kalidasa* and William Shakespeare into Gujarati. He was the first and the only translator to provide a translation of *King Lear* in Gujarati. He was not responding to critics nor had any obligation to translate in a particular way as per the demand of any patron; rather he was doing a favour to a fellow translation scholar by undertaking these translations. It was Umashankar Joshi whose intervention made it possible for these translations to come into existence. Though his translations of Shakespeare's plays were published in later half of the 20th century, do not form a part of translation discourse in Gujarat. His journey and this endeavour to translate deserve a special mention in the translation history of Gujarat.

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A Mindful Look at the Materiality of Human Body: The Buddhist Way

Deepali Bhushan Awasare,

Abstract

The Doomsday Clock stands at 100 seconds to midnight or human caused apocalypse, and this is the closest it has ever been in decades. The climate change, pandemic, wars, nuclear weapons, and environmental degradation are threats that we live with today and our time is running out. The question is how we push the hands of the Doomsday Clock back and away from the impending doom and the answer lies in the change in attitudes of heads of states as well as common citizens. This paper argues the need for imaginative transformation, and we can achieve this by making a resolve to recover our past; re-interpret and re-imagine it, and one way to do this is to apply the Buddhist principles of non-violence, *metraya* and *karuna* (love and compassion), and *paramitasadhana* (practicing perfection) to all entities of the world; both human and more-than-human. This practice of engaged Buddhism will then become a channel for both self-realization and social action. The materiality of the world around is important because we are situated within it and are responsible for its well-being. Hinduism has looked at this material world as *maya* and advocates spiritual detachment from *maya* to attain *moksh*, but this creates a mind/matter divide which is the root cause of environmental problems. Buddhism finds a middle way, which is to look at the present moment in a mindful manner and become conscious of the human body, its thoughts and its attitudes to attain spiritual awakening. Material Ecocriticism theorist and physicist, Karen Barad posits a parallel world view where “everything is mutually articulated” –that it is impossible to separate objects, events, beings, doings and becomings from their intra-actions with each other across space and time. The paper, therefore, intends to explore the parallels between the Material Ecocritical Theory and the tenets of Buddhism because modern theories are important in contemporary applications of the Buddha Dharma as they deal with pressing problems of the twentieth century.

Key words: Buddhism, Material Ecocriticism, Non-Violence, Universal Responsibility, Metraya, Karuna, Paramitasadhana, Environmental Crisis, Species Interdependence

Introduction

The essence of bodhichitta and the essence of mahākaruṇā is a kind of feeling of universal responsibility. Everyone has to look after one's own responsibilities and duties towards others and particularly towards the entire universe.”

-His Eminence Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche

I am insubstantial in the Universe. But in the Universe, there is nothing which is not me.

-Hyegok Chan Buddhist Monk

This paper is inspired by the uniqueness of Buddhist philosophy and the environmentalist potential it has to save the world from a human caused apocalypse. Today the Doomsday Clock stands at 100 seconds to midnight, or a human caused apocalypse, and this is the closest it has ever been in decades. The climate change, pandemic, wars, nuclear weapons, and environmental degradation are threats that we live with today and our time is running out. The question is how do we push the hands of the Doomsday Clock back and away from the impending doom. The biggest threats arise from nuclear confrontations and environmental degradation and the answer lies in the change in attitudes of heads of states as well as common citizens.

This paper argues the need for imaginative transformation and proposes that we can achieve this by making a resolve to recover our past; re-interpret it and re-imagine it to apply the Buddhist principles of non-violence, *metraya* and *karuna* (love and compassion), and *paramitsadhana* (practicing perfection) to all entities of the world, both human and more-than-human. The paper also intends to explore the parallels between the Material Ecocritical Theory and the tenets of Buddhism because the modern theories are important in contemporary applications of the Buddha Dharma as they deal with pressing problems of the twentieth century.

Dharma and the Material Ecocritical Theory

Though the teachings of Buddha far predate the environmental problems of today and modern environmentalism, we can find ways to transform our imagination towards a sustainable and ethical existence in this shared Ecosphere by applying Buddhist concepts of

non-duality, respect for materiality, universal responsibility, and dependent co-arising in our daily lives.

Materiality of the human body leading to non-duality

The root cause of environmental degradation is the disrespect for the material nature of our environment. The idea that the material things around us, both biotic and abiotic, can be exploited for the good of the human being is built into our thought, particularly modern thought. This anthropocentric value system creates a deep divide between human beings and the environment, where human beings are deemed superior because they have a mind! With more value given to the mind over matter, everything that is associated with nature or the environment is given an inferior status, particularly the more-than-human world or the ‘things’ around us.

The Buddha Dharma refuses this duality between the mind/body, mind/matter. It posits that body and mind dependently co-arise. Buddha does not see consciousness aloof from the materiality of the body. In a dialogue with his friend, the Ven. Sariputta explains the relationship between name (*rupa*), form (*kaya*) and consciousness with an example. He says, “It is as if two sheaves of reeds were to stand leaning against one another. In the same way, from name-&-form as a requisite condition comes consciousness, from consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-&-form.” (Thanissaro Bhikkhu) He further adds that “If one were to pull away one of those sheaves of reeds, the other would fall; if one were to pull away the other, the first one would fall. In the same way, from the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of consciousness, from the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-&-form.” (Thanissaro Bhikkhu)

Buddha sees the consciousness and body, or mind and matter, as dependently co-arising so there is no hierarchy of mind over matter. Thus, all life forms and material entities are held in compassion, respect, and reverence. Universal responsibility and environmental justice is built into the metaphysics and ethics of the Buddha Dharma. Material Ecocriticism theorist and quantum physicist, Karen Barad also posits a parallel world view where “everything is mutually articulated –that it is impossible to separate objects, events, beings, doings and becomings from their intra-actions with each other across space and time as phenomena. Individuals and entities cannot be separated through neat boundaries, as they do not exist ontologically as substances. Bodies (including human and more than human bodies) are unbounded quantum entanglements constituted by concepts and material forces, where

the social, the political, the biological, and their observing, measuring, and controlling machines are interwoven and entwined.” (Murriss and Bozalek) Dharma and theory both arrive at a conclusion that identity or self is formed by the physical, cognitive, and affective intra-actions with the world in an ongoing process and the self does not exist independently of it. Thus, the anthropocentric structure of our thought is proved baseless, and the duality of mind/matter is removed.

The Buddhist concept of *karma* and the idea of *agency* in Materialist paradigm

The Buddha not only considers the *kaya* or body as a combination of speech and thought and that it is in constant process of becoming and intra-acting with the world, but he also states that the *kaya* is brought about by the *karman* or actions of our past and the choices that we make. The Hindu and Jain schools of thought have a certain kind of fatalism associated with *karma* where the actions of the past have a bearing on the present and future, and spiritual awakening can be achieved only after the consequences of the *karma* are washed away through penance or self-mortification. Buddha, in contrast, rejects this deterministic view of *karma* and includes all volitional behavior viz. mental, physical, and verbal, in the definition of *karma*. A person’s identity is shaped by the *karma*/action and the choices that the person makes, and with each act a doer and a deed is co-constituted. Buddha tells us that our actions matter, and we can always modify them by choice in the present moment. Here the Buddhist understanding of time as the present moment or now which encompasses the past, present, and future gives us a clear picture of the consequences of our actions. The consequences of past actions can be modified by the present actions of the person where the doer and the deed co-arise to create a new fluid identity. Thus, we can break free from our past due to free will.

The Buddhist concept of ‘now’ or the present moment and the idea of free will to change or alter the consequences of the past can be applied to environmental conservation with great effect. The idea of dependent co-arising can see each entity or being as interbeing which intra-acts with the ‘other’ to co-evolve and mutually define each other. Thus, the gap between the self and the ‘other’ is erased, making them mutually responsible for one another’s existence. When we apply this to our environment, we realize that our existence is dependent on innumerable ‘others’ or more-than-humans and that we need to be mindful of our status as interbeing to survive on this shared Ecosphere.

Moreover, the idea that the consequences of the past actions can be modified by the changes in the present actions gives impetus to environmental conservation activities without

assigning blame and moving forward to identify mutually rewarding assemblages of human and more-than-human entities. The Buddhist ideas of dependent co-arising and the importance of choice in *karma* or actions resonates with the idea of ‘assemblages’ of human and more-than-human ‘actants’ defined by Deleuze-Guattari and Latour. Jane Bennett, in her ‘vibrant materialism’, elaborates the term ‘actant’ derived from Latour as “it is that which has efficacy, can do things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, alter the course of events” (Bennett viii). Thus, agency is distributed across all actants in an assemblage and it is our hands to choose assemblages which are beneficial to all actants. Here Bennett moves towards ethical responsibility which decides the actions and responses of all actants or participants of the assemblage, and the human endeavor is the “striving” which is “an enactment towards nobler ends” (38). She asks a very pertinent question, “Perhaps the ethical responsibility of an individual human now resides in one's response to the assemblages in which one finds oneself participating: Do I attempt to extricate myself from assemblages whose trajectory is likely to do harm? (37).

These deliberations on one's own actions, choosing to act through ethics and responsibility, and mindfulness about the rights of all entities in the assemblage are inherent in the principles of non-violence, *metraya* and *karuna* (love and compassion), and *paramitsadhana* (practicing perfection) to all entities of the world, both human and more-than-human.

Storytelling to change attitudes - *Jataka* tales of the Dharma and *Storied Matter*

Today, despite scientific data which proves that the levels of pollution and contamination are rising due to the ubiquitous and long-term human actions, we go on with the ‘business as usual’ attitude hiding behind the balance of the nature paradigm where we perceive the environment as a self-regulating and self-sustaining entity. Ecocritic Laurence Buell rightly says that, “environment conservation hasn't just happened through scientific expertise or litigation alone, it also takes a transformation of broader public values and commitments to which end the arts and imagination are indispensable.....only if nature is brought into people's every day images and into the stories they tell, can its beauty and its suffering be seen and the success of all environmental initiatives finally hinges on not some highly developed technology but on a state of mind that's bound to be shaped as much or more by the power of images.” (Buell)

Material Ecocriticism, as a Literary and Cultural theoretical framework, asks us to rethink the idea that only human beings are capable of telling stories. It posits that matter has agency and can produce meaning in all its forms. According to the idea of ‘storied matter’ given by Oppermann and Iovino, the Material Ecocritical perspective reflects on “the many ways earthly forces and beings can speak [which] compels us to rethink our coexistence and co-evolution in the story of the earth itself. “(Oppermann)

The Buddha Dharma too is replete with a vast body of mythological literature with stories revolving around the life of Buddha in his many incarnations. The Jatakas, the folk tales and legends in both oral tradition and written texts are an important aspect of Buddha’s teachings. Animals and more-than-human entities feature prominently in these stories, and it is important to note that the tenets of *ahimsa* /nonviolence, compassion and love, and universal responsibility are in-built in these tales. Thus, it becomes important to examine the role of mythology and storytelling in the Buddha Dharma with respect to the modern context of environmental conservation.

Stories can become excellent tools to mesh together the objective reality around us in the form of trees, mountains, oceans, animals, insects, soil, garbage, electricity et al with the ‘constructed’ reality of our minds through the language we use. The *Jataka* tales and other legends in the Buddhist Dharma are certainly a part of our collective conscience with reference to ethical and moral behavior in human beings but they also relay important information about history, culture and the life and voice of ‘other’ creatures which share our ecosphere. Here, the diversity of these voices is an important aspect because they underline the co-existence and co-dependence of all beings. These stories become windows which show multiple perspectives which can then be used to find parallels and contrasts with our own imaginations, belief systems and attitudes. The *Jataka* tales illustrate the teachings of the Buddha in his many lives and many stories depict him in the form of human, animal, and other entities.

An important factor in these stories is that many times the Buddha is not the central character of the story, and a few stories also narrate the mistakes committed by the Buddha in the past and their *karmic* retributions too are illustrated. The Materialist paradigm too insists on removal of the human being from the central position and moves away from the traditional subject centered thought which gives importance and power to the intentions and agency of human beings over ‘others’ in the environment.

Dharma makes us pay attention to a world which is nonlinear, non-hierarchical, co-dependent and manifests the good and the bad results of actions or *karma*. This democratic

idea of the world invites us to re-imagine the concepts of ‘self’ and ‘self-interest’ where the “re-imagined human ‘self’ which is bounded by a porous skin, is material, is a compound body made up of foreign swarms of various microbial biomes, and the action of this self is always an intra-action with the more-than-human” (Awasare 142) and the ‘self-interest’ is dependent on the health of all entities of this assemblage of swarm!

The stories from the Dharma can also be conduits to examine the nature of language and its role in the ethical progress of human beings. They can be used “to devise new procedures, technologies, and regimes of perception that enable us to consult nonhumans more closely, or to listen and respond more carefully to their outbreaks, objections, testimonies, and propositions. For these offerings are profoundly important to the health of the political ecologies to which we belong.” (Bennett 108).

When the views of entities across large domains are heard, it extends our sense of belonging in a larger community and their connections within it. This ‘listening’ to the stories of both human and ‘mute’ more-than-human matter is important when bodies in assemblages are harmed because then it opens up avenues to allow the harmed bodies to come together and resist the damage and regroup into assemblages which are not harmful. This applies to finding alternate solutions to environmental disasters as well as unjust and unethical behaviors around us. The stories make us aware of the sufferings of the ‘mute’ elements whose suffering is unseen. Thus, the language, through fiction goes beyond mere representation but becomes part of the articulation of the assemblage itself!

Conclusion

Buddhism finds a middle way, which is to look at the present moment or ‘now’ in a mindful manner and become conscious of the material nature of the human body, its thoughts and its attitudes to attain spiritual awakening. When we look at the world from a Buddhist perspective, we do not see the separation of body and spirit, or matter and mind, but we see a combination of the body, mind and an identity which is based on the inter-relationship of species. The thought that the human being is a nonviolent interbeing propels a person to become aware of the connections between environmental health and human health and acknowledge and respect the vibrancy of matter which is of utmost importance to the survival and happiness of all the species in this world.

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Sudha Murthy's *Gently Falls the Bakula*: A Journey from Selfless Devotion to Self Discovery

Madhulika Panda

Abstract:

Sudha Murthy is one of the finest contemporary Indian writers who write both in English and Kannada. *Gently Falls the Bakula* is a wonderful saga of an Indian love marriage in which ambition and selfish interest make the husband–wife relationship stand at crossroads. Written nearly thirty years ago, Murthy's first novel remains startlingly relevant in its scrutiny of modern values and work ethics. The present paper attempts to analyse the female protagonist, Shrimati's journey from being a dedicated beloved and wife to a self-reliant woman who, after a severe psychological struggle, sets out to realise her long cherished dream.

Key words: Identity, Self discovery, Psychological, Conjugal relationship, Selfless devotion

Introduction

Sudha Murthy is a prolific writer in English and Kannada. She has authored novels, travelogues, non-fiction pieces, collections of short stories and technical books, She was the recipient of the prestigious R.K. Narayan Award for literature and the Padma Shri in 2006. Her novels are thoughtfully crafted and well articulated set of literary works which have gained wide acclamation at different national and international platforms.

Her novels are usually concerned about the realistic problems that Indian women have to face during their married lives and how they deal with such situations. Her female protagonists are strong, determined and intelligent who are also devoted to their marriage and make desperate attempts to save their crumbling conjugal relationships. They are real women, facing real problems of the contemporary corporate world. *Gently Falls the Bakula* is one of the most popular of Murthy's novels that delineates Shrimati's journey from being a selfless and sacrificing lover and wife to an independent woman.

Discussion

Murthy describes Shrimati as “a slim, tall girl, with a wheatish complexion and good clear features. She always wears a string of Bakula flowers in her hair. Shrimati was one of the brightest students in her class”(4). Shrikant is Shrimati’s rival in the class. “He was a tall, fair and handsome young man, he was known for his strong determination to be the best” (5). Without realizing, Shrikant comes to associate the Bakula flower with Shrimati. “The Bakula was now, for him, a symbol of Shrimati, a personification of her” (34). Though they rarely talk, there is a strange attraction between the two. Shrimati chooses to read History, but the highly ambitious Shrikant qualifies the IIT entrance examination by dint of his perseverance and will power. The attraction between them grows with age and their courtship culminates in marriage in spite of estranged relations between their families.

Shrimati, an epitome of sacrifice, rejects Dr Collins’ offer of pursuing a Doctorate Degree in America, gives up a flourishing academic career, and chooses marriage above all. She decisively says, “Sir, I do love history but I love Shrikant as well. I believe that it is not necessary to have a doctorate to gain knowledge. For me, degrees do not matter” (49). Her selfless love is reflected in her words and actions. She claims that the foundation of her happiness does not depend on the digits that Shrikant earns, but the digits of his love, affection and companionship. So she can live with him even in a forest or a desert.

She starts her married life in a very tiny apartment in Bombay, taking care of Shrikant in every possible way. She even postpones her plan of pursuing research and does not hesitate to take up a job in a small company to repay the loan that Shrikant’s mother had taken for his education. “When you are mine, your loan is also mine. It comes as a package. I cannot say I want only my husband. His joys and difficulties are also acceptable to me”(77). When she is ardent about registering for PhD, Shrikant has to move to Delhi. So Shrimati again compromises her passion and moves with Shrikant. She plays a wonderful personal secretary to her husband, taking care of his documents and entertaining his guests at the corporate parties. “It was the obedient, understanding and helpful nature of Shrmati that had made Shrikant hand over such grave responsibilities to her” (100). In spite of her disinterest in such things, she never complains. But Shrikant very often fails to realise Shrimati’s contribution to his success. Murthy says, “Shrikant had taken her for granted. He had a rare diamond in his hand but he was searching for a worthless glass of achievement” (108).

After the industrialization, we have achieved technological progress and scientific advancement, financial independence and all other facilities but what we lost in this progress

is the foundation stone of our life, our family (Nisha and Manju, 2017). This is what happened to Shrikant and Shrimati's marriage. With Shrikant's increasing success, increases Shrimati's loneliness and her longing for motherhood increases too.

When she pleads before her husband to adopt a child, he advises her to use her energy in more constructive work. Gradually she starts feeling a vacuum within herself. She realizes that she is not enjoying the work she is doing. She has got so used to doing whatever she is told that being obedient has become a habit. She is exhausted- mentally and physically. Describing Shrimati's helplessness, Murthy writes, "For him she had undergone so much of opposition, criticism and nastiness from her in-laws. She had even given up her career, only because she loved him. But Shrikant was not the same person she knew before marriage. This Shrikant Deshpande was only interested in name, fame, position and status. He had forgotten his dear wife. He appeared a stranger to her" (118).

Shrimati tries to persuade Shrikant about leaving Bombay and moving back to Hubli. But Shrikant scoffs at her opinion and advises her to think practically. She gets gradually disillusioned and starts realizing that she is leading a futile life. She becomes annoyed, heated, dissatisfied as every time her requests are bluntly turned down. She cannot take it anymore and bursts out, "Shri, you always think of yourself. You are so selfish that you think only of your position, your company and your mother. You never think of me as a human being or what hurts me or what makes me happy. You treat me like a machine"(148). She realizes that a house is made up of just four walls, but a home is where there is love, affection and a meaningful relationship. When these are not there, it is a house and the best thing to do is to get out of it. Shrikant's callousness, her own passion for history, her discontentment as a businessman's spouse, her childlessness, all these compel her to take a drastic decision.

She decides to go to the US to pursue Doctorate in History and fulfill her long cherished dream. The decision is not easy for her. For a moment she feels guilty as Shrikant is completely dependent on her and her departure will leave him shattered. But then she realises that she cannot become Bhamati who sacrificed her entire life for her husband. She realises that there is a limit to which one can remain obedient and subservient. But once that limit is crossed, the individual's happiness becomes more important. She says, "Shri, I loved you and I loved history. In fact, once upon a time, I loved you more than history. But when you lost your finer sentiments, chasing your success in the world of business, I was left with nothing other than history" (161). As Norah Helmer in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, she says to Shrikant "Shri, I am leaving and I don't have any plans to return, I am handing all the responsibilities of the house to you". (160) Consequent upon, Shrikant feels that she has

taken his spirit away with her and thinks his loving flower Bakula, gently falls from his life (Revathi, 2015).

The novel ends with Shrikant looking back at his domineering self and regretting his attitude towards Shrimati. His wife had always been selflessly devoted to him, but he has never realized her importance nor has he appreciated her contribution to his success. But it is too late as Shrimati has already left for a new world where she can lead life on her own terms and fulfill her dream.

Conclusion

Sudha Murthy has wonderfully depicted the character of Shrimati who starts the journey of her life as a devoted lover only to become a devoted wife, sacrificing her flourishing career. But when she realizes that Shrikant is solely concerned about his ambition and selfish interest and does not appreciate her importance in his life, she decides to follow her dream and give a direction to her passion for history by pursuing a PhD in the US. Shrikant sadly realizes that the Bakula which he had come to associate with Shrimati had sadly fallen from his life.

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Interweaving Narrative and Mizo Ethnicity in Saiawi's Fictions

Hmingsangzuali & Margaret L. Pachuau

Abstract

The cultural identity of Mizo as an ethnic distinction evokes a plethora of discussions among scholars and historians. The paper will focus on the ethnic and cultural concern of Mizo from the narrative of a renowned Mizo author Lalhmingliana Saiawi. The prolific Mizo author Saiawi offers powerful insights through his social, political, and historical nuances that shape the modern Mizo cultural disposition in the novels *Lungrang Laiawrha* (1993) and *Lungrang Hmangaihna* (1995). He creates numerous characters to portray different aspects of Mizo society to give his texts a comprehensive overview of the cultural changes in Mizo society. His craft at storytelling fuses context to historical events signifying the background, their effects, and implications. In effect, his texts move beyond the individual story to reflect the Mizo people's experience. This article studies Saiawi's narrative on cultural identity concerning the cultural ethos of Mizo's past and narrative of the kind has direct import and significance on the flow of Mizo's identity construction. It highlights the unique circumstances faced by a society that fraught its cultural identity with both external and internal influences imperative for the understanding of 'Mizo' as signified by the author in his texts.

Keywords: Mizo, Narrative, Trauma, Ethnic and Cultural Identity.

Introduction

The art of narrative in Mizo culture evolved from oral tradition to the written form as a legacy of the Christian missionaries during the colonization of Mizoram by the end of the 19th Century. The transition to literature saw the production of books primarily focused on translation of the Bible and other Christian writings. The eventual literary production of fiction during its nascent stage during the middle of the 20th Century were mostly in the form of translation of such literary canons as H.B. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1943, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet*, and the English folklore, *Robin Hood* in 1960 (Lalthangliana 243). Along with these translation works there developed the production of non-fiction works focusing on Mizo's ethnography, socio-cultural history, travelogues, and

essays about social commentary and criticism. The advent of Mizo fiction and creative writing could be traced back during the 1930s with such early novels as *Hawilopari* (1936) and *Lali* (1937) by Biakliana, and *Chhingpuii* (1938-39) by Kaphleia (247). Story-telling and folklore through oral tradition had enlivened the creative curiosity and encapsulated the vivacity of Mizo's imagination through the ages but it was only after the introduction and development of formal education in the second half of the 20th Century that Mizo fiction saw the steady growth in its production and audience.

Within a short span of time, the art of writing and the power of narrative manifested in Mizo fiction where such narratives evoke the regional uniqueness of Mizo's experiences and cultural identity. Lalhmingliana Saiawi was a Mizo author whose literary credentials boast several novels and non-fiction works. This article will focus on two of his major novels *Lungrang Laiawrha* (1993) and *Lungrang Hmangaihna* (1995) of which the latter was awarded Mizo Academy of Letters' Book of the Year Award in 1995. The first of the sequel *Lungrang Laiawrha* (1) (1993) was the author's first novel and his second book. The author grounded the story with historical events in Mizoram during 1917-40. *Lungrang Laiawrha* was the main character of the novel. It narrated the character's search for identity because of his illegitimate status, which corresponded with the sense of cultural alienation situated in the Mizo colonial past. The fixation on the deceased father's clan name by the mother showed the crisis that came with the knowledge of not belonging when encountering forces beyond one's control and thereby raising the issue of self-assertion.

The novel *Lungrang Hmangaihna* (2) (1995) continued the story of *Laiawrha* and his children. It explored a more recent and uncomfortable history of Mizoram pertaining to the experience of the secession incited by the political party, namely the Mizo National Front, in 1966. The secessionist revolt and the subsequent military incursion of the Indian government ended with the signing of the Peace Accord in 1986 with the Central Government of India. The period of unrest known as *Rambuai* (3) in Mizo brought insurmountable suffering and Saiawi narrativises upon the theme of trauma and pain of war by bringing out the significance of trauma narrative. The author denoted a second-hand perspective about the war experiences of Mizoram in LRH, where he explored the political circumstances leading up to the hugely disproportionate political upheaval in Mizoram. This paper will give appraisal of select Saiawi texts to elucidate the imports of narrative on Mizo ethnic and cultural identity. It will attempt to assert that narrative comprises crucial means to direct the course of Mizo culture through its engagement with the continuum of discourse on identity formation from the past reacting on the present and the resources it preserve for the future as well.

Ethnic and Cultural Identity of Mizo

The concept of cultural identity is a constant problematic issue which constitutes a crucial role in human engagements. Perception of how we view the world as an individual or a group determines the character of our interaction and relation in a multicultural domain. Cultural identity owes its survival to collective memory, which is described as "a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behaviour and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation" (Assmann and Czaplicka 126). Thus, cultural identity is neither an arbitrary nor an isolated construct of a society but is derived from inherited and cumulative dispositions shared by society throughout its history. This process of collective identity formation which is consequential to inheritance from experience and memory, allows the collective to develop mutual interests made possible by the shared image of and about the past. An individual may form multiple collective identities depending on the number of their affiliations in formal and informal institutions.

One of the central aspects of cultural identity is its significance to ethnic identity. Ethnic identity in the contemporary world has become a mode of affirming the sense of identity for minority groups to navigate the complexities of multiculturalism. Peter Wade remarks on ethnicity as "a social construction that is centrally about identifications of difference and sameness" but acknowledges that the lines of demarcation exponentially become blurred in the modern context due to the production of differences in other areas as race, gender, and class (15). It is important to note that the critical feature in the assertion of ethnic identity is the ties conferred to the people's geographical location by the consolidation of the social bond among groups in a particular geographical location.

The evolution of the concept of ethnicity also problematises the theory of identity. The complexity of the concept of identity lies in the fluidity and mobility of identity itself, validated by discourses. The description of identity becomes polemical as Moya remarks on the application and practices of theory to "delegitimate, and in some cases eliminate, the concept itself by revealing its ontological, epistemological, and political limitations" (2). The limitation of post-modernism on identity studied on the grounds of its detachment to the contemporary empirical application has led to attempts at reorientation or efforts to reorganise the approach concerning identity. The chief proponent of the postpositivist realist theory Mohanty, denotes in his essay "The Epistemic Status of Cultural Identity: On Beloved and the Postcolonial Condition" the functionality of identity markers on cultural groups and

the need to engage in the mode of its creation and practice concerning other cultures. He underpins the act of reassessing the available study on identity to be the primary emphasis of all inquiries about identity, namely, "the relation between personal experience and public meanings-subjective choices and evaluations on the one hand, and objective social location, on the other" (29-30). The study of culture, ethnicity, and identity, though often amalgamated into one another depending on its application, continues to be an ongoing process of re-evaluation, negotiation, revision, and revitalisation.

Ethnic identity in Mizo culture is largely defined by the shared history among different tribes within the canopy of the term 'Mizo'. The pre-colonial Mizo social history was signified with clusters of social groups that were governed autonomously by a chief with hierarchical structure to maintain administration within their locality and autonomy was maintained in these respective localities in which tension often led to war. Recent scholars have expressed the problem of conferring identity to Mizo as a unified entity in the pre-colonial Mizoram. The autonomy of each settlement and the nature of agrarian economy grounded the tradition of migration in Mizo society because, in the pre-colonial past, shifting form of cultivation or jhum was heavily practiced which necessitated for migration. The history of Mizoram and its people saw various pivotal transitions from historical events that marked these changes. The first significant transition in its history is the British colonization of Mizoram in 1890. Joy L.K. Pachuau observed how British colonization changed the course of Mizo culture wherein, "...the fluidity and movement of and between 'tribes' that had always been a feature of the Mizo past was forced to come to an end" (16).

Due to the British annexation of Mizoram and its layered consequences, there came about a conscious zeal and effort to reclaim and revisit the pre-colonial cultural history. Shortly after the end of colonization of India in 1947, there was an awakened interest in identity formation among the educated class of Mizo people which resulted in literary production on ethnicity, social and cultural history. The Mizo people were confronted with the issue of negotiating their identity with cultural transformation due to colonization which explains the concerted effort to build the character of inclusivity and broadening of Mizo ethnic description.

Saiawi's Representation of Mizo Narrative

Zoramdinthara in his *Mizo Fiction: Emergence and Development* (2013), a book based on his doctoral dissertation, offers his appraisal on Saiawi's penmanship commenting on the

author's narrative style and characterization as "a master of character painter" (204). His characterization represented an archetype of common Mizo people nuanced by their disposition and their mode of interaction with their society. Saiawi's narrative put impetus on Mizo's cultural identity by representing important landmarks in its cultural history. Saiawi's ethnic concern and Mizo's cultural identity was apparent from his continuing plotline from the first to the second novel where the narrative was carried forward with real historical events in Mizoram presented as they happened in chronological order. The blend of reality in his narrative made up for whatever was lacking in proper plot structure. As asserted about the author's primary concern on representation of Mizo cultural, plot structure only came second to his narrative in his novels which he crafted without proper timeline within the narrative itself but the passage of time is usually suggestive from real historical events in Mizoram. As Paleczny asserts, "identity is our spiritual, intellectual and emotional portrait" (Paleczny and Zieliński 354); this article attempts to appraise Saiawi's novels for their import on Mizo cultural identity focusing on important historical events or "fixed points" (4) (Assmann and Czaplicka 129) of cultural memory.

In LRL, Saiawi's titular character Laiawrha hailed from a humble background in a small Mizovillage of Saihum. His lineage was shrouded in mystery on account of his illegitimate conception. His mother Chhuhahthangi had fallen in love with a visitor from another village; a man named Darkhuma. It was only after Chhuhahthangi's pregnancy that Darkhuma's demise was found out and that his family had moved away without a trace. The plot primarily covered the theme of familial relationship from the life of Laiawrha and his lower social status to come out as a successful family man later in his life in the next novel LRH. The significance of Saiawi's narrative lies in his interweaving of Mizo cultural life with his characters as the lives of his characters and their disposition are deeply placed in the heart of a typical Mizo's social set-up. The plot did not involve incidents out of the ordinary according to Mizo's sensibilities. However, the author's brilliance was shown most in his skills to create fictional characters that reflect most sincerely of the Mizo ethos of their time and social location.

From the author's narration of life in Saihum in 1917, it was apparent that his elucidation upon the rural life of Mizo as the physical embodiment of the genesis of a time and space well lost in the Mizo past yet is the driving force in the ongoing process of Mizo cultural life. He intentionally executed the power of reminiscing upon the cultural history and social life intended to conceptualize the inevitable changes that he juxtaposed with contemporary cultural life. The concept of identity in Mizo culture that has been formed

within the ethnic groups of the shared history of migration in pre-colonial times to consolidate further within geographical boundaries instituted by the British rule and the consequential integration to the Indian government required drastic re-alignment in the evolution of Mizo identity formation. Saiawi was one such author who engages in a discourse that mediated the textuality of history and the circumstantial experience of the Mizo society, which in the words of Radhakrishnan, is "to enable an articulation of historically determinate and intentional, but non-authoritarian, attitudes to 'reality' and 'knowledge' " (200).

Saiawi's Narrative on *Rambuai*

Narratives on *Rambuai* have been rendered into a sub-genre as *Rambuai* Literature in which *Rambuai* fiction account for a sizeable contribution in Mizo Literature. C. Lalawmpuia Vanchiau, a Mizo writer of repute, in his anthology called *Rambuai Literature* (2014) documents that fiction focusing on *Rambuai* is estimated to be around seventy books (111). Among notable *Rambuai* fiction writers the likes of K C Lalvunga, James Dokhuma, C. Laizawna, C. Lalnunchanga and many others, Saiawi was also an important author who raised consciousness about the significance of *Rambuai* narratives. His works containing *Rambuai* narratives include *Lungrang Hmangaihna* (1995), *Keimah Unionliana* (1997), and *Nukawki Fanu* (1998). Being an avid advocate of inscribing the tale of Mizo ethnicity in his narrative, his fictions on *Rambuai* incorporated aspects of the personal and the socio-political in the events in and around the revolt. As tragic and painful experiences of the collective Mizo during the period, Saiawi's narratives revealed, as many other writers of *Rambuai* literature, an engagement of and about truths and meaning pertaining to its cause, the nature of the people's sufferings, and the hope of healing. Moreover, discourse through such narratives provides modes of its documentation and knowledge about the historical event that become tremendously consequential in Mizo people's ongoing identity formation.

In LRH, the author narrated the events of *Rambuai* from a second hand perspective. This approach of narration caused a degree of obscurity as to the depth in which Mizo civilians endured hardships yet the autobiographical element embodied by the character Zochhuana could be seen from the author's autobiographical essay in *Thukhawchang Bu 4-na* (5). In the essay the author explained his *Rambuai* experience from Maharashtra much like Zochhuana who observed the war from outside Mizoram. His engagement in both texts revealed his attempt at making sense of *Rambuai* from the political and the ethnic aspects but excluding the element of the personal which he explored in his other novels such as *Keimah*

Unionliana (1997) and *Nukawki Fanu* (1998). The absence of direct experience gave the author freedom to explore *Rambuai* as a collective experience of Mizo people and to judiciously educate about the same.

Saiawi's narrative on Mizo cultural history covered a wide range of events that impact social changes. For him, the political, cultural, and social and their intermingling through the course of Mizo history revealed the Mizo's efforts to restructure its identity. As such, his narrative in LRH emphasises the Mizo people's trauma due to warfare and wartime atrocities during *Rambuai*. The very act of revisiting *Rambuai* era has layered nuances for the Mizo people and Saiawi's narrative had a deep and lasting impact on Mizo society that provided a study on the nature of historical events and their contribution to determine the outcome of identity construction which in the words of Mohanty "in them, and through them, we learn to define and reshape our values and our commitments, we give texture and form to our collective futures" (43). Discourse on *Rambuai* signifies the impact of collective memory in restructuring and reshaping the course of Mizo people's ethnic and cultural identity; most importantly, the significance of narrative as a mode of healing and to find meaning amidst the trauma.

The political background that culminates in the revolt could be traced shortly after India's independence in 1947. After independence, there was an awakened interest in the collective Mizo identity and the political events that ensued thereafter ignited a political zeal to attain separate nationhood. The first political party named Mizo Union was formed in the year 1946, and other political parties started to form soon after the end of British colonisation when participation in larger political structures became a possibility. In independent India, Mizoram had a separate advisory council with 36 members and in 1952, it became an Autonomous District under the Assam government viz-à-viz the Indian Union. The first effort to democratise Mizoram by the Assam government was to end the system of chieftainship on 1st April 1954 under the 'Lushai Hills (Acquisition of Chiefs Right) Act XXI of 1954' which removed the authority of the Mizo chiefs effectively (Lalthangliana 272). The issue of integration with the Indian Union clashed with the Mizo people's opinion, and the discontentment of the Mizo people reached its climax with the coming of *mautam* (6) famine. The Mizo people had already experienced this ecological event, for it occurred roughly every 50 years, causing widespread devastation, and it had seared into the cultural memory.

The coming of another *mautam* was anticipated before the event of famine in 1959-60, and it appealed to the Assam government to institute strategies to respond and manage the famine. The concern raised by the Mizo people was ignored and received scepticism. When

the mautam famine struck Mizoram, the meagre response and relief triggered a spirit of increasing dissension in Mizoram. A new political party called Mizo National Famine Front, which later became Mizo National Front, was formed to address the matter of famine relief efforts that later developed into a full fledged political party. The Mizo National Front submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India on 30th October 1965, appealing for "freedom and independence" (Lalnithanga 125). The movement of dissension gained momentum, spearheaded by the MNF, which led to an armed revolt against the Indian government in 1966.

The turbulent political climate between the 1960s and 1980s profoundly impacted Mizo society, weighing heavily as a period of collective trauma and suffering. The bombings of the jet fighters, burning of villages, displacing of entire towns and their people, rampant physical assault, persecution, and rape were among the many agonising *Rambuai* experiences of the Mizo people. The Mizo people had resented the intimidating warfare approach of the MNF, while their appeal on the grounds of ethnocentric identity attracted the public in the beginning of its activism. However, the public soon became victim of rampant violence and terrorism in the hands of MNF insurgents. The military response to the insurrection by the Indian Union put the public in the throes of persecution from both forces, which resulted in a period of misery that claimed the lives of many Mizo civilians up until the signing of the Peace Accord in 1986.

Through the character Zochhuana and his family, we were shown the extent of the terror of war beyond the state's capital Aizawl. Their visit to Zialung offered stories of horror endured and witnessed by the civilians. Zialung had experienced the worst of the battle that claims the lives of civilians from both the militants and the army. Any informants on both sides were shot down ruthlessly to arouse fear and to show the "fungibility of victimhood" (Nayar 24), the interchangeability of circumstances for the witness to these killings. Zochhuana's friend was among those killed in one of these conflicts, which greatly distressed him. The villagers' emaciated physical appearance told the story of their hunger and strife, yet the everyday and social life of Zialung gave the impression that their spirits could not be broken. Due to restriction of movement and curfews, famine followed in Zialung due to agricultural activities being either halted or severely restricted, leading to widespread starvation. For most civilians, the only source of employment was manual labour entailing the risk of their life in the hands of the army. Consequent to their supervision and surveillance, the government implemented the forced merging of four villages at Zialung, leading to a decrease in cultivable lands. So it was impossible to sustain a large number of

people who rely on agricultural land for sustenance in such circumstances and subsequently extended famine. Zochhuana was amazed at the resilience of the people in the village despite all the woes of *Rambuai* they had to go through. However, the villagers of Zialungwere ominously silent of their sufferings because “trauma is sometimes nearly if not totally unspeakable” (Pederson 336). For Saiawi, the act of narrating *Rambuai* atrocities was a conscious choice to bring out the unjust horror that the civilian victim had to endure. The author worked to elucidate the history and context of *Rambuai* and located the centrality of the suffering in the realm of the social because the civilian lot was the space where the real horror was fixed. His narrative on *Rambuai* attempted

to communicate that which resists ordinary processes of remembering and narrating, of representation and comprehension. Trauma narratives raise important questions about the possibility of verbalising the unspeakable, narrating the unnarratable and making sense of the incomprehensible. (Schönfelder 30)

Conclusion

Though Mizo culture was no stranger to creative art from its folk tradition, creative writing of and about its culture and people are a relatively novel conception. Notwithstanding to the fact, Mizo fiction quickly developed its unique course to bear the multiplicity of narratives within its culture. The select period texts of Saiawi mirrored the lived experiences and culture of Mizo people from the past to enlighten the mass about the significance of Mizo historical events and vibrancy of its culture. Though inevitable social changes affected the Mizo cultural landscape in the modern times drastically, narratives such as Saiawi’s contribute as blueprint of the people’s ethnic and cultural identity. Conceived out of wedlock, Laiawrha asserted his identity by forging his own destiny within the complex fabric of Mizo society. The story of Laiawrha and his search for identity runs parallel to the fate of Mizo people who similarly had to realign their identity against the tides of historic events such as British colonization and integration to the Indian Union necessitating on restructuring its cultural characters which was often negotiated with its share of struggles. Saiawi offered informative glimpses to the nature of these forces of cultural changes that resulted in the present form of Mizo culture.

As asserted by Erin Peters that “contemporary responses to the disabling nature of psychological trauma demonstrate an inadvertent recognition of the therapeutic value of attempting to construct a publicly available trauma narrative” (80). The art of narrative demonstrated by the select author indicated the significance of trauma narrative in providing modes of constructing collective identity through the process of navigating adversities of *Rambuai*. The aftermath of the war and its psychological effects on the individual conveyed its import to the psyche of the collective through the shared experience which manifested as unhealed wound for the Mizo people. The act of narrating *Rambuai* experiences provides impactful ground on which the Mizo as a collective could find space to negotiate meaning and quite possibly healing. LRH offered testament on the vital role of representation, narration and the search for new truths about *Rambuai* in the current of cultural identity for not only the past and present generation but for posterity of the Mizos which is why revisiting the painful experience of *Rambuai* serves emblematic for the Mizos as didactic message, therapeutic effort, and ethnic description.

End Notes

1. Lungrang Laiawrha is the name of the titular character of which the novel is conferred the same name. Lungrang is the clan name of the author’s invention which denotes the symbolic role of ethnicity in Mizo identity. The title will henceforth be referred to as LRL.
2. The title of the novel has been translated by us as The Love of Lungrang and will henceforth be referred to as LRH.
3. The period of the struggle is called *Rambuai* in Mizo, meaning a 'disordered state', a term devoid of political connotation.
4. “These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance)” (Assmann and Czaplicka 129).
5. The title of the essay is “Mizoram Buai Lai Vai Ram Atangin” which translates as “Mizoram Unrest from Outside the State” and the title of the book Thukhawchang Bu 4-na translates as Discourse Vol 4. Translation of both titles is done by us for the sole purpose of the paper.
6. Mautam as a verb form implies “to die down simultaneously as the mau bamboos do periodically about every fifty years after flowering and fruiting. This occurrence is followed by a plague of rats which devour the rice crops and cause a famine” (Lorrain 309). It is also used as a noun indicating the natural phenomena and the subsequent famine resulting from it.

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Significance of the Binaries in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*- A Critique

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Abstract

This research article aims at exploring the binaries in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *The Remains of the Day* by presenting contrasting elements since binaries can reveal the nuances and complexities of the human experience aptly. The article is divided into four chapters namely Author's Introduction, About the novel, A critical study of the binaries in the play; subtitled as "Professionalism vs. Personal Desires", "Classicism vs. Modernity", "Pride vs. Disillusionment", and the Conclusion. The article concludes that the dichotomies in the novel imparts the intricacies of human nature, the difficulties of self-awareness, and the effects of life decisions and the tragic vision of rigid professionalism.

Key terms: Gentlemanship, Classic English butler, English Country Houses, Class Hierarchy, Binaries, Professionalism, Personal desires, Classicism, Modernity, Pride, Disillusionment, Tragic vision

Kazuo Ishiguro, a well-known British novelist and screenwriter, was born in Nagasaki, Japan, on November 8, 1954. He is renowned for his distinctive literary style, which mixes nuanced emotional undertones, striking imagery, and an in-depth examination of interpersonal relationships and emotions. Memory, identity, and the search for meaning in a complex and evolving world are common themes in Ishiguro's writing. Ishiguro grew up in England after his family immigrated there when he was barely five years old. At the University of Kent, he majored in English and philosophy. The University of East Anglia awarded him a master's degree in creative writing. Ishiguro has won various accolades for his writing, including the coveted Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017. His works have received widespread praise. Several of his novels have received high praise from critics, including *The Remains of the Day*, *Never Let Me Go*, *An Artist of the Floating World*, and *When We Were Orphans*. Many of his works have been adapted into successful films and have garnered international

recognition. Ishiguro is known for his reflective and thought-provoking writing, frequently delving into the depths of human emotions, recollections, and life decisions. His writing offers remarkable insights into the human mind and the difficulties of living in a complicated world by delving subtly and deeply into the human condition. Kazuo Ishiguro has established himself as a major character in contemporary literature and gained a devoted following of readers all over the world because of his distinctive voice and fascinating storytelling.

Ishiguro's third novel, *The Remains of the Day*, was published in 1989. The novel is a first-person account, the reminiscences of James Stevens, addressed as Mr. Stevens or Stevens in the novel, an elderly English butler whose facade of formality has made him incapable of comprehending and developing close relationships. Mr. Stevens has served in an English country house, Darlington Hall during the 1930s. *The Remains of the Day* won the Booker Prize in 1989. It was adapted as a Merchant and Ivory film released in 1993 starring Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson. (Mander, 02-06-2022)

The novel is narrated in the form of a diary by Mr. Stevens and is told from a first-person perspective. The novel is divided into chapters, and each chapter consists of a series of episodic events and memories recounted by Mr. Stevens as he reflects on his past. The overall structure of the novel is a journey as the protagonist goes on a road trip across England to visit his former colleague, Miss Kenton, whom he has worked with at Darlington Hall.

The Remains of the Day is Stevens' recollection of the past during a motoring trip through the English countryside. The novel begins in July 1956 at Darlington Hall, where Stevens has worked for 34 years which is now owned by Mr Farraday, an American businessman who has purchased the estate following the death of Lord Darlington. Through Stevens' reflections, the readers understand his dedication towards his profession and the adoration he has for his former employer, Lord Darlington, a wealthy English aristocrat. During his motoring trip, Stevens reminisces about his interactions with his master, other staff members at the country house, and his strained relationship with his father, Mr. Stevens Senior. He also thinks a lot about Miss. Kenton with whom he has a troubled relationship.

As the novel progresses, Stevens gradually confronts the flaws in his strict adherence to duty and his self-imposed emotional detachment. He questions all the choices he has made and the hardships he has faced for the sake of his profession. Stevens internally struggles with his sense of identity, the meaning of dignity, and realises that he may have lived his life in an entirely different way. He even regrets, though not outwardly, his failure to express his love interests towards Miss Kenton, with whom he has a troubled relationship. Thus, *The Remains*

of the Day is an introspective novel that dives into the human condition, capturing the intricacies of human emotions and the complexities of personal relationships, while also exploring the societal changes and political landscape of pre-World War II Britain.

Adding to the introspective element of the novel, it contains a lot of binaries which often create conflict and tension within the story, and thought provoking moments. The components and the natures of these binaries in the novel are so many; personal, social, political, ethical, emotional, hierarchical, comprehension of past and present and so on. The novel's thematic core is built upon binary aspects such as professionalism vs. personal desires, classism vs. modernity, and pride vs. disillusionment which are embedded within the introspective narration of Mr. Stevens. Examining the contrasting elements within the broader context of the novel can bring out different perspectives and presence of complex ideas on English gentlemanship which Ishiguro might have intended to address.

Binary or dichotomous elements of form and content in a novel are two ideas or concepts that are in opposition to each other. These elements might have been employed by the author either consciously or unconsciously while writing the novel. Moreover, the components of the binary need not be two equal and independent entities but also interdependent. Hence, examining how they relate to and interact with one another can bring out multiple perspectives or deeper understanding on specific issues within the novel. Ishiguro's novel *The Remains of the Day* contains a lot of binary oppositions that is inherent in the text. So, the article aims to unearth these binaries, juxtapose them and analyse how they correspond to each other so that the core problems of the novel can be comprehended better.

Professionalism vs. Personal Desires

Mr. Stevens has dedicated his entire life to the butlership: a profession that demands a strong set of principles; dignity, duty, and loyalty. Informed by the aristocratic gentlemanship, a butler should be knowledgeable about the art of service, including all types of etiquette, household management, and maintaining a sense of decorum at all times. He must uphold his Lord's or master's reputation with unwavering dedication at all times. He should prioritise the requirements of his master over his own and must be ready to face all kinds of situations to make his master comfortable. A butler must maintain confidentiality on the interactions or conversations between his master and guests. He should respect their privacy, maintain their secrets, and avoid gossiping or disclosing any private information. Moreover, he should

remain stoic and composed, never revealing his own emotions or personal opinions on anything, and always upholding a sense of decorum. He should not entertain the romantic relationships between the servant staff members. In case he comes across such relationships, he should not think twice to relieve them from their duties as their commitment to their service is hampered by marriage. More than anything, according to Mr Stevens, the quality of 'dignity' is what ultimately defines a butler. To him, dignity and greatness are inseparable. "And let me now posit this: 'dignity' has to do crucially with a butler's ability not to abandon the professional being he inhabits." (Ishiguro 42). In fact, he ponders over the quality of 'dignity' of a butler and what it comprises and he looks up to his father to inherit this essential quality. "Yet it is my firm conviction that at the peak of his career at Loughborough House, my father was indeed the embodiment of 'dignity'" (Ishiguro 34).

This 'English character' and gentlemanship can be better understood using the observations made by EM Foster in his famous essays titled "Notes on the English Character". Foster talks about the impact of class and social hierarchy on English character. He discusses the rigid class system prevalent in England, and how it shapes the behavior and attitudes of people from different classes. He also reflects on the way in which social status and class distinctions affect relationships, behavior, and values. He points out the English tendency to keep emotions hidden and on the ways in which the English character is shaped by this quality of privacy and reserve. "He must not express great joy or sorrow, or even open his mouth too wide when he talks — his pipe might fall out if he did. He must bottle up his emotions, or let them out only on a very special occasion." (Foster, January 1926). Also, he talks about the importance of manners, politeness, and social etiquette in English society, and how these norms shape relationships and interactions on the importance of manners, politeness, and social etiquette in English society, and how these norms shape relationships and interactions. Mr. Stevens' character from the novel is all inclusive of these characteristic traits.

Mr. Stevens strives to be the greatest classic English butler ever. He, to a greater extent, becomes one and gains the trust and loyalty of his master, Lord Darlington. Let it be his unwavering loyalty towards his master, Lord Darlington, or the way he never questioned the actions of Lord Darlington with regard to international political affairs, or his detached, unemotional description of his brother's death in the Boer war or the way he restrained himself from expressing his love for Miss Kenton or the way he maintained his calm while serving the international guests even when his father passes away; Stevens proves to be a 'great' butler. But this comes at a big cost; loss of personal and private life and individual

freedom. Because a butler has to be devoid of all emotional and personal feelings towards anything that happens in the country house. "They wear their professionalism as a decent gentleman will wear his suit" (Ishiguro 43). But by the time he becomes the butler at Darlington Hall, he is unable to break free from the role and is constantly on duty in the presence of others because of which he loses his individuality. Hence, this sense of 'dignity' that Stevens mentions can be equated to the restraint that is codified by the hierarchy of social classes of England. This he realises gradually throughout the novel through his introspection and external events.

Throughout the novel, from the unreliable and biased narration of Mr Stevens, one can find traces of personal desires lurking in the character of Stevens which can contradict the very persona of the 'butler' Stevens. In an instance from the novel, Stevens, who has not left Darlington Hall in years, during his motor trip, takes the advice of a stranger that he will be rewarded with a breathtaking panoramic view of the English countryside landscape, if he can afford to climb a hill, which is unfamiliar to him. Stevens feels "a healthy flush of anticipation" for the first time for the journey ahead after climbing to the top of the hill (Ishiguro 26). This instance can be metaphorically extended to how Stevens has remained indoors of the country house, a representation of rigid culture, all these years and how he wishes to enjoy the scenic beauty of the English countryside landscape, a representation of nature which is the binary of culture. Even though Stevens remains stoic or seems to be one throughout the novel, there are a few instances where the readers can find his personal feelings and desires lurking right under his facade of professionalism. One such instance is when Miss. Kenton enters his pantry without knocking to find him reading a book. When she asks what book he is reading he declines to answer. She sneakily grabs the book to find that Stevens is actually reading a sentimental comedy novel. Even though Stevens justifies his reading that he reads only to gain a strong command of the English language his act reveals to the readers that he might have a strong romantic streak in him. Moreover, he is not ready to accept the fact that it is not so scandalous to read a romantic novel as suggested by Miss. Kenton.

Classicism vs. Modernity

There is a conflict between traditional values associated with classicism and the changing times of modernity inherent in the novel. Stevens, the classic English butler, is a testimony of the classicism of an old-world who values loyalty, duty, and professionalism above his life.

Also, Lord Darlington, the wealthy aristocrat and aspiring politician who values justice and decency, represents ‘gentlemanship’ of the English tradition. He is ashamed to be an Englishman considering the suffering the Treaty of Versailles inflicted on the German people. This prompts Lord Darlington to get involved in world politics in an effort to change some of the treaty's strictest provisions. But during the interwar period, there is a great deal of political and social upheaval that makes Lord Darlington's morals and sense of justice outdated and naive. In the important political conference that is held in Darlington Hall in March 1923, Mr. Lewis, an American senator, stands up and accuses the political representatives of England as naive dreamers as they do not have any real sense of the changing political scenario in the modern world. He even criticises Lord Darlington that

‘He is an amateur and international affairs today are no longer for gentlemen amateurs. The sooner you here in Europe realize that, the better. All you decent, well-meaning gentlemen, let me ask you, have you any idea what sort of place the world is becoming all around you? The days when you could act out of your noble instincts are over. Except of course, you here in Europe don’t yet seem to know it. Gentlemen like our good host still believe it’s their business to meddle in matters they don’t understand. So much hog-wash has been spoken here these past two days. Well-meaning, naïve hog-wash. You here in Europe need professionals to run your affairs. If you don’t realize that soon you’re headed for disaster. A toast, gentlemen. Let me make a toast. To professionalism.’(Ishiguro 102)

Lord Darlington’s high ideals that he has inherited from the English way of life lead him into the dangerous arena of international political affairs and an alliance with the growing Nazi regime. He is used like a pawn before being exposed as a collaborator of the Nazis. Lord Darlington represents English tradition whereas Darlington Hall is an emblematic representation of England. The failure of Lord Darlington in his political career can be viewed as the failure of the English way of life to tackle political problems. Likewise, ‘the diminished condition of the estate is taken to be emblematic of the nation as a whole’ and is viewed as a failure of England as a nation to tackle international political problems (Su 553). That is why Stevens faces disillusionment towards the end of the novel because almost his entire life has been dedicated to uphold the values of English tradition which fails miserably in the changing modern world.

In his introspective narration, Stevens mentions that in the past, his father frequently recounts a tale about an Indian butler. One time, when his employer is engaged in entertaining visitors in another room, the butler discovers a tiger resting beneath the dining table. The butler calmly walks off to shoot the tiger after having a brief conversation with his employer. He assures his employer that everything is fine before returning some time later to refill the teapots. "Dinner will be served at the usual time and I am pleased to say there will be no discernible traces left of the recent occurrence by that time." (Ishiguro 36). Stevens says the story reveals his father's ideals and the kind of butler he desires to become. His father has recounted numerous such stories which Stevens has eagerly listened to and has lost himself in the euphoria of these captivating real life stories narrated by his father.

Another story that Stevens tells involves his father and an army officer who, during the Southern African War, is responsible for many unnecessary deaths, including Leonard, Stevens' older brother. The general has avoided court martial and has lived a successful post-war life despite the mindless leadership that has caused the terrifying disaster. He has once visited Mr. Silver's home. Stevens' father, despite the emotional distress it has caused him, acted as the man's valet for four days. He carries out his tasks so expertly that the general, who leaves him a donation, never guesses what he is thinking.

They are not stories actually but felt experiences from a grand narrative of butlership, part of the collective consciousness that is borne by the classic English butlers and its expectation on butlers to be subservient to one's master and losing individuality in the process. The character of Stevens reminds of the misguided idealism of his generation from the previous one. The tradition has become very stagnant and does not undergo any change. This can be understood clearly from the incidents that have happened during the March 1923 conference and Stevens' response towards them. Unfortunately, Stevens' ailing father passes away while the conference is going on. When Miss. Kenton informs Stevens of his father's sad demise, he simply says "I see" (Ishiguro 106). Later he remarks to Miss. Kenton "You see, I know my father would have wished me to carry on just now." (Ishiguro 106). Even at that moment Stevens is unable to step out of his duties as a butler. He is trapped and unable to react to his father's passing spontaneously or naturally. Instead, he goes back to his work, determined to deliver excellent service expected from him despite the situation.

As the novel progresses, a sequence of incidents makes Stevens reconsider his commitment to tradition because of the changing social and political climate in England. Many of the country houses are closed, or made into museums, or sold to foreigners, like the case of Darlington Hall. He starts to wonder if his uncompromising adherence to tradition is

really honourable or if it has actually made him ignorant to the realities of his surroundings. Moreover, from Stevens's narration, the readers come to know of Lord Darlington and his failed lawsuit against a newspaper that endlessly accuses him of pro-Nazi activities before the war. When his lordship loses the case for libel, his reputation is destroyed, suffers social ostracism and his health is ruined. He remains invalid until his death. From these incidents, Stevens realises that the strict adherence to tradition has led to moral compromises and mistakes by his employer, Lord Darlington, during the politically tumultuous years leading up to World War II. Through the realisation in Stevens', the novel reflects the tension between the old-world classicism and the evolving modernity, where societal norms and values are shifting.

Pride vs. Disillusionment

The protagonist, Mr. Stevens, is the product of a suppressive and rigid social system to which he remains intensely loyal. Mr. Stevens is an embodiment of or a slice of this rigid social system. He takes immense pride in being a classical English butler and he sees himself as a "great" butler who upholds the rigid code of conduct and decorum which is expected of him and in his ability to carry out his professional duties precisely with a great amount of attention to details. Even the country house that he works for, Darlington Hall, represents a prominent object of nostalgia because of its 'long-standing associations with continuity, tradition, and Englishness' (Su 554). Stevens feels a sense of satisfaction in his strenuous efforts to ensure that the needs of his master and his guests are fulfilled properly. By doing this, Mr. Stevens unconsciously finds pride in the social hierarchy that comes with being a butler. He enjoys the company of or the possibility of meeting people from the upper class such as international leaders, political party heads, and admirals from foreign nations and so on. He finds the complexities of social etiquette and protocol meaningful and fulfilling. But, as the narration in the novel moves forward, the readers understand that Mr. Stevens' pride in being a butler is a major flaw. His total dedication to his butler duties frequently causes him to repress his own emotions, desires, and opinions, which causes him to feel emotionally distant and alone. Ultimately, he has to confront a sense of disillusionment and self-reflection due to his fixation with his responsibilities and his unwillingness to face his own failings and regrets. Thus, his pride in being a butler, multifaceted and complex, has negative consequences in terms of his personality and emotional well-being.

Stevens has given up his personal life, including his unrequited romance with the maid Miss Kenton, to carry out his butler responsibilities. He regrets his decisions after realising that he has had the chance to experience love and connection. Disillusionment sets in as he wonders if his unshakable commitment to his job as a butler was really worth the personal sacrifices he had to make. Stevens' motor trip is under the pretext that he is going to know whether Miss Kenton is still interested in serving Darlington Hall. But actually this is a made up reason because Stevens uses this reason to meet Miss Kenton and get back with her since her letter hints at a troubled marriage life.

Conclusion

The Remains of the Day comprises deeply embedded binaries in terms of formalistic and thematic aspects. These binaries lead to extensive analyses using comparison and contrast which in turn offers inclusive and intense meanings. Reading the novel in the perspective of “professionalism vs personal desires”, throws light on Stevens' dilemmas on the self doubt whether his profession as a butler adds up to a meaningful life in Darlington Hall in the past as well as his present time. Analysis of the binary pair “classism vs. modernity” is useful in understanding Stevens' realisations throughout the novel that reflect the tension between old-world classicism and modernity, where societal norms and values are shifting. Juxtaposition of the components pride and disillusionment reflects on the collective tendency in English society to keep emotions hidden and the insistence to follow manners, politeness, and social etiquette through the character of Stevens. He can be seen as an embodiment of a suppressive and rigid social system and takes pride in being a classical English butler.

Thus, examination of the dichotomies in the novel *The Remains of the Day* not only reveals the complexities of human nature, the challenges of self-awareness, and the consequences of choices made in life but also ‘a mediating, tragic vision of professionalism’ (Atkinson 180).

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~English Language Teaching~

Gamification to Engage and Motivate EFL students in ‘Speaking’ Class

Asiya Tabassum

Abstract

Student engagement in the learning process escalates their concentration and focus and helps in stimulating them toward higher-level critical thinking. Student engagement can be enhanced if the instructors opt for a student-centered approach to giving instructions. Such an approach will be beneficial for both the teacher and the students in achieving the course’s learning objectives. Student involvement in the learning process increases the level of motivation to learn and improve their education. Many educators believe that stronger and improved student engagement is the most common pedagogical objectives as it is an important condition for active learning. The students need to be highly motivated for this. Students who have high motivation exert themselves to be engaged in class. Motivation comes from a sense of achievement, value, and intrinsic joy in the act of learning. The students can be motivated and engaged in the learning process in a variety of ways. In practice, the student’s performance and engagement are said to be enhanced by applying gamification to learning (Hamari et al. 2014, Seaborn & Fels 2015) which signifies an enhancement in the motivation level. This paper aims to outline examples of how gamification could be employed to motivate students to acquire language productively. Finally, it will discuss some of the expected challenges regarding the application of gamification teaching and learning environment.

Keywords: Gamification, EFL (English as a foreign language), ‘Speaking’ class, Motivation, Engagement

Introduction

As the 21st -century is making progress the field of language learning and teaching has become more technology oriented. Innovating teaching strategies, approaches, and applications have equipped teachers to strengthen their students’ language learning abilities.

Among the varied ways of engaging and motivating students in any classroom, gamification is gaining immense popularity. It is a novel approach being widely used these days by educators to improve students' engagement and motivation and is yielding positive results. Though this is not a new technique to motivate, it is relatively new. Due to recent developments in technology-assisted language learning EFL/ESL educators and researchers are under tremendous pressure to become more technologically advanced, together with an increasing expansion and usage of mobile applications (Godwin-Jones, 2015). This expansion paved way for new sub-fields of study that uses technology such as gamification. Gamification is a new pedagogical technique being used extensively by educators to motivate both digital natives and digital immigrants to learn. Digital tools for educational purposes have experienced a huge expansion in both formal and informal educational settings in recent years. A considerable number of gamified apps have emerged in language learning to make learning more engaging and to improve language skills. Because game-based or gamified activities help teachers to motivate and engage students in the language-learning task, it is gaining popularity among EFL/ESL teachers.

Literature Review

Definition of Gamification

Gamification of education is an approach to boost engagement by integrating game elements into a non-game context (Dichev and Dicheva 2017) Games provide the player with a sense of accomplishment by way of rewards and feedback (Kapp, 2012). Furthermore, games endow the players with an entailing experience by engaging the players resulting in remembering the information and understanding the concept (Gee, 2003). The term gamification is defined as “applying game design components in a non-game environment” (Deterding, Dixon, Khaled & Nacke, 2011). Gamification has been extensively embraced as a pedagogical approach in recent times. It has been actively explored in the educational sector. Children are empowered and their relationship with the environment is enhanced with the help of games, not only games also help children to convey their emotions, procure experience, and alleviate and refine their problem-solving skills. The sudden shift in the mode of study due to the pandemic has prompted many academicians to employ gamification in their virtual classrooms to keep their students engaged and motivate them. The need to deploy gamification arises to the fact that Students' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is found

to be low in the virtual learning environment as compared to the traditional educational settings due to the absence of correspondence with teachers and peers (Buckley, P., & Doyle, E. 2016). Gamification holds the effectiveness to engage and motivate learners provided it is used appropriately (Hammer & Lee, 2011; Muntean, 2011).

Motivation

Motivation elucidates why certain behaviors are instigated, pursued, or ceased by humans and animals. It is a force that leads humans to act. It is believed to be something that drives people to success. Motivation plays a vital role in the productivity and success of an individual. Learner motivation is an area of interest for educators and researchers as the learning outcomes and learners' achievements are intimately linked to motivation (Mese, E. & Sevilen, C. 2021). Motivation enhances when one has clear goals to accomplish and these goals and expectations lead to language competency. A motivated learner manifests 'effort, aspiration, and determination.' (Gardner, 2001:13). Over the years, students' motivation has become the point of focus for researchers in the area of teaching and learning processes (Pintrich, 2003). The notion of motivation presents two components of motivation: vitalization (What drives an individual to work) and trajectory (concerning what pursuits and endeavors) (Pintrich, 2003).

21st Century skills

The learning skills required to be successful in the 21st century are termed 21st-century skills and these include the 4 C's: Critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. These skills are not new, as they have been taught in the classroom for decades. Yet, they are being included in the schools' strategic plans to better prepare students for college, career, and life. According to a YouTube widely circulated video titled "Do you know", we are preparing the students for the situations and technologies that are still non-existing to resolve issues that are not known to us yet. Gamification can be used as an effective tool in instilling these skills in students by way of using game elements.

Game Elements

The foundation of any game is based on its elements. The common gamification elements are points, badges, certificates, timers, avatars, challenges, and leaderboards. All these can be smoothly employed in learning in general and language learning in particular. The games promote engagement and motivation and teach students the 4C's. Nevertheless, there are some major challenges involved in gamifying a lesson or a course but all that is worth it in the end.

Gamification to motivate learners

Motivation is of various kinds built on different purposes or objectives to bring about action. In general, motivation is broadly classified into two groups Intrinsic and Extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation, which is based on internal reward, motivates individuals in innately engrossing and entertaining behaviors. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is based on external rewards. It can be obtaining an external reward or avoiding a punishment (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). The popularity of gamification expeditiously improved and is successfully employed by businesses, web designers, and educationists to attract and motivate target groups. (Mollick and Rothbard, 2014) However, there is a need to carry out more systematic research to get the know-how of gamification in the field of education. Gamification can only be successful in motivating students if educators use it for an extended amount of time for them to process enough information and for the learning to take place.

Types of Gamification

Karl Kapp, Professor of Instructional Technology at Bloomsburg University classified gamification into two types, namely structural gamification and content gamification. These two types are considered pivotal to higher efficiency and advantage.

- **Structural Gamification** is the application of game elements to move learners' content without making any modifications. This means that content remains untouched while the structure around it becomes like a game. In simple words, it works like our LinkedIn profile where users are motivated to complete their profiles to 100% by merely including progress meters, tier levels, and badges.

- **Content Gamification** is the application of game elements and modification of instructional content to make it game-like. It can be explained in simple words as starting a class with a challenge rather than a list of objectives or adding a character or avatar for the narration of a story. All these additions make the content game-like but don't swivel the content into a game.

Gamification Models in Education

Gamification is gaining immense popularity in recent times and is being used in educational settings for several reasons. It makes learning fun by motivating students and engaging them with the subject matter. The gamification theory in education is that the students are at their best when they learn the fun way. Having goals, achievements, and targets makes learning more meaningful. The major component of gamification is game mechanics followed by game dynamics. Game mechanics are related to players' progression like points, badges, leader boards, and levels. Mechanics also includes tasks like quests, assignments, quizzes, and puzzles. Another important game mechanic is game content, which may be anything like role-play, simulation, drag, and drop, etc. There are some additional features along with these. The players need to perform certain tasks assigned and based on what is done by the player points are awarded automatically. The more points the more are chances for the player to unlock the achievements, and the player is compared with other players and the leader board shows the best player based on these point comparisons. These mechanics can be mixed and matched to launch game mechanics like receiving rewards, choosing their own time and way of doing a task, and others. The game dynamics promote motivation as the rewards received by the students keep them motivated and help them continue or maintain the same condition and even work harder to progress into better conditions. As gamification is perceived as an interactive learning method, it provides sensations. The challenges presented to the learner in this method in different forms keep the player motivated to not only finish the task but also keep them motivated to learn at the same time. When the challenge is accomplished, it gives the player a sense of satisfaction.

Gamified course: Foundation-level English Speaking course

Foundation-level is a compulsory 4-semester program for all undergraduate students at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Nizwa. It is a prerequisite for the

specialization programs at the university. The course includes basic communication skills. Speaking skill was adapted for this empirical qualitative research study. The speaking course in the first semester was taught both online and face-to-face. The first half of the semester was taught online and after the progress test (Mid-Semester) exam, it was switched to face-to-face. The subject of the study was 27 students in the foundation level-2 program. The speaking skill Exam course was chosen to be gamified. The speaking skill exam consists of three parts. Part-1 has general topics with questions and prompts for the students to answer. In part-2 of the exam, the students will be given answers and they must frame questions. The part-3 of exam has 3 different topics directions, instructions, and narrating a story by looking at the picture. Each week a different part of the exam was used to apply the gamification technique. The Jeopardy game was used to gamify part-1 topics of the exam. To gamify part-2 which is making questions bamboo game website was used. To practice part-3 of the exam different online games were used. For practicing giving directions role play was used, for instructions, and for narrating stories, YouTube videos were used.

Table:1 A Framework for designing gamified lesson

Motive	A reason for gamifying a topic/Lesson	
Objective	Aim towards which efforts are directed	Qualitative and Quantitative
Behaviors	Actions that are taken by students to achieve the objectives	Stop Start Continue
Incentives	Things offered to help students towards positive behaviors	Intrinsic Extrinsic Tangible Intangible
Measure	Progress signals are provided to help students remain motivated.	Badges leader boards certificates Points Avatars

The gamified design framework has five phases for instructors to gamify a lesson/topic. First, there should be a clear motive where the teacher decided a reason for gamifying a lesson. Students should be explained the reason. The next phase is to decide the objectives of the gamified lesson. These are the tasks which students have to complete to achieve the results. At this stage, the teacher can model the tasks for students to make them clearly understand what is expected of them. The achievement can be qualitative and quantitative. Then the actions the students need to take to achieve the objectives can be decided at this phase. Students will be instructed when to start, stop, and continue. Now, is the time to decide the incentives whether they should be intrinsic, extrinsic, tangible, or intangible things that motivate students towards positive behavior. The final phase is to measure success, students

can be provided with badges, leaderboards, certificates, points, and Avatars to keep them motivated.

Table 2: Gamified Lesson Plan Model

Motive: To motivate students to speak in a target language.
Objective: Students speak on simple topics by answering questions about themselves. (Qualitative)
Behaviors: students in groups choose a topic and then decide on the speaker and start speaking, continue for a minute, and then stop when the bell rings.
Incentives: students compete in groups to win (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation)
Measure: students receive points upon completion of their chance and receive a certificate at the end.

Table 3: Gamified lesson plan Model

Introduction to topic and tasks		
The teacher explains to the students the speaking exam pattern in detail. Learners may be exposed to examples		
Gamified Task		
Objective	Gamified Activity	Assessment
Ex: Students will learn to speak about general topics (Rules, Sports, Countries, Clothes, etc.) for about a minute.	For the 'Speaking' class. We will divide the class into three teams for a speaking challenge. The team that scores the highest point is the winner. Game rules: Each time a new member of the team should answer. The answers must be complete sentences. Giving only a Yes/No answer will disqualify your team	Choose a topic of your choice from the list given. Prepare a minute of speaking. Record yourself. Submit the recording on Moodle.

Gamification Instruction planning tips:

1. Familiarize yourself with game elements and gamification terminology.

Before a teacher attempts a gamified lesson, it is important to have a sound knowledge of the gamification process, game elements, and gamification terminology. All these would help the teacher to decide the type of game or game mechanics that can be applied to a particular lesson.

2. Develop clear and measurable goals.

By the end of the lesson,

- Students will be able to respond to the questions asked about general topics.

- Students will be able to speak for about a minute on any given topic.
 - Students will be able to answer the questions in complete sentences.
 - Students will learn to collaborate with a team to accomplish a given task.
3. Identify the learning outcome or challenge common to the class.
- Example: All students in each team must participate, Students must answer in a complete sentence, and students must speak for at least about a minute. The team must score the highest. Learning outcome, challenge, or theme for my gamified lesson
4. Jeopardy game
- Start the game with a challenge or theme. (Jeopardy followed a theme).
 - Scaffold the learning to make it more challenging as the students “level up.”
For example, Jeopardy is played for points, for 100 points the topic should be easier with fewer questions to answer, and increase the difficulty level when they play for 500 points.
 - Identify the points where students can “level up” in this case the highest points lead to success.
 - Identify specific challenges that students must complete to progress. Make it in a way that if a student does not fulfill, they must fail and try again. For example, if the same student speaks for the second time, or if they give incomplete answers, the team gets negative points.
 - Integrate the collaboration or competition elements to enhance motivation.
Students must work together as a team to achieve success and at the same time, they must compete at certain points. Jeopardy provides room for both in a team the students collaborate, but they compete with another team of students.
 - Clarify to the students the criteria for winning a game. Here they only win when they have the highest points.
5. Identify learning resources: Make your students familiar with the game rules and procedures. Provide the students with some materials before class or during the class.
- Example: Before the class, watch the video of the IELTS speaking part 1.
6. Identify in-class activities: Discuss the topics, gameplay, etc.
- Reflections for designing a gamified lesson.
- Provide instant feedback!
 - Give chances to score points.
 - Involve students in designing a gamified lesson.

- Make progress visible.
7. Create an assessment to determine the student’s success, and to see if the learning objectives have been achieved. For Example: Choose a topic of your choice from the list given. Prepare a minute of speaking. Record yourself. Submit the recording on Moodle.

Speaking part-1: General Topics

Speaking part-1	Speaking part-2	Directions	Instructions	Story
100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500

Team 1	Team 2	Team 3
0	0	0
+ -	+ -	+ -

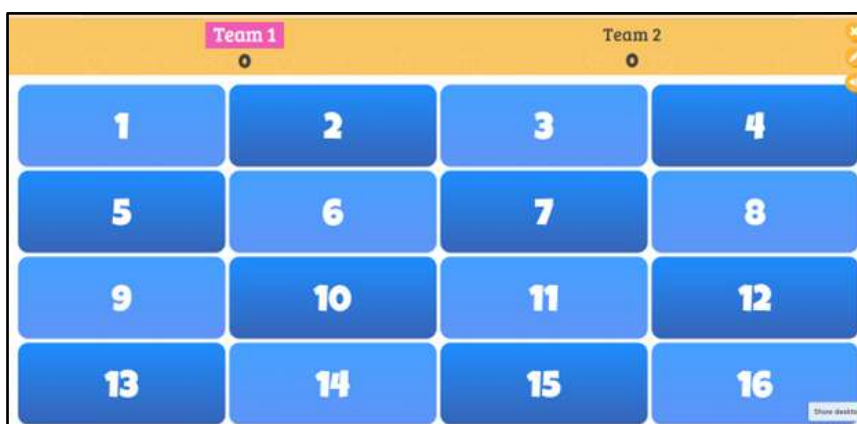
RULES	SPORTS	COUNTRIES	COMPARATIVES	CLOTHES AND SHOPS
100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500

Team 1	Team 2	Team 3
300	200	500
+ -	+ -	+ -

Speaking Part-2: (Making questions)

Speaking part-2 is where students are required to ask questions. The answer is given by the teacher and students make questions. Bamboozle is used to gamify this part. Bamboozle is a gamified site that is simple and effective. It can be played both online and offline. It can be played in teams. I divide the class into 2-4 depending on the strength of the day I am doing speaking practice. The game is opened by the teachers on their computers connected with a projector, the number grids are displayed, and each team selects a random number taking

turns the answer is then shown on the screen and one of the students from the team must make a question based on the answer given. The website has some games already available on different ELT topics and you can create your own game by following simple steps.



The Baamzoozle game screen looks like this. Students choose a random number teacher then flips that number and the answer appears, and the students then have to frame the question. The interesting part of the game is sometimes when students chose a particular number and upon flipping, they get bonus points, or they may get a chance to take points from another team.



Speaking part-3 (Giving directions, instructions, and narrating a story)

To Practice giving directions role play was used. Students were divided into teams. Both teams were given a street map, university map, or other maps. Each team nominates a member, and members from both teams come to the front of the class. They are instructed to initiate a casual conversation greeting each other and then a member from one team asks the directions from the member of the opposite team. The members have to use the vocabulary taught to give directions, if they give accurate directions, they receive points. The team can decide which place they want to go or sometimes the teacher gives them questions to ask

directions to different places on the map given. Instructions and story narration were practiced using YouTube videos by muting them and showing only the visuals. Students were taught imperative verbs and simple past tense in their grammar classes which they need to use while giving instructions and narrative stories. It was very interesting to see them coming up with unique stories by watching mute videos, then the teacher plays the actual story with audio for them.

Findings:

The findings of research on the use of gamification to engage and motivate EFL students in 'Speaking' class suggest that this approach can be effective in enhancing students' motivation and willingness to speak. Students who participated in gamified activities were more motivated and engaged in class and reported feeling more comfortable and confident in speaking English. Gamification also provided opportunities for students to practice their language skills in a safe and non-threatening environment, and to receive instant feedback on their performance. Overall, the use of gamification in the EFL classroom appears to have a positive impact on students' speaking skills and confidence and can be an effective tool for promoting language learning.

Anticipated challenges and practical solutions

Gamification can be an effective way to engage and motivate learners in the English language classroom, but it also presents several challenges. Here are some of the challenges and practical solutions:

- **Difficulty in balancing fun and learning:** Gamification can make learning more enjoyable, but it's important to balance the fun and learning aspects. Too much focus on games and rewards can distract from the actual learning goals. One practical solution is to align the game mechanics with the learning outcomes so that the activities and rewards are directly tied to the language skills being developed.
- **Limited engagement:** While some learners may be highly motivated by gamification, others may not be as interested or may even be resistant to the idea. To overcome this challenge, it's important to design activities that appeal to a range of learning styles and

interests. For example, some learners may prefer visual or auditory activities, while others may enjoy more kinesthetic or tactile experiences.

- **Limited resources:** Developing effective gamification activities can require significant time and resources, especially if the games involve digital technology. However, there are many low-cost and even no-cost solutions available. For example, teachers can use simple game mechanics like point systems, leaderboards, and badges to motivate learners. They can also use physical games or activities that require little to no technology, such as board games or role-playing exercises.
- **Limited feedback:** While gamification can provide instant feedback to learners, it's important to ensure that the feedback is accurate and meaningful. Teachers can provide feedback that goes beyond just acknowledging success or failure in the game, such as specific comments on language use, pronunciation, or grammar. They can also use peer feedback, self-assessment, and reflection activities to encourage learners to evaluate their own progress.
- **Limited integration with curriculum:** Gamification should be integrated with the larger curriculum and learning objectives. To overcome this challenge, teachers can align game mechanics with specific language skills, and integrate the gamified activities with existing lessons and materials. They can also use gamification to reinforce or supplement classroom instruction, rather than as a replacement for it.

Overall, gamification can be a useful tool in teaching the English language, but it's important to approach it with a thoughtful and strategic mindset. By balancing fun and learning, appealing to a range of learning styles and interests, using low-cost solutions, providing accurate and meaningful feedback, and integrating gamification with the larger curriculum, teachers can create effective gamified learning experiences for their learners.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, gamification has the potential to be an effective tool in engaging and motivating EFL students in 'Speaking' classes. This research paper has provided evidence that gamification can enhance students' willingness to communicate, increase their engagement and participation, and provide opportunities for them to practice their language skills in a fun and interactive way. However, as with any instructional approach, it is

important to consider the potential challenges and limitations of gamification and to carefully design and implement gamified activities that are aligned with the learning outcomes and needs of the students. With careful planning and implementation, gamification can be a valuable tool in promoting language learning and improving students' speaking skills in the EFL classroom.

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Key Takeaways for a Researcher from *A Handbook for Supervisors*

Sameena Tabassum

Abstract

The book, *Thesis and Dissertation Writing in a Second Language: A Handbook for Supervisors*, co-authored by Brian Paltridge and Sue Starfield explores various significant aspects of the research process. The book was written as a guide or manual of instructions for research supervisors; however, any researcher can learn a great deal about the research process from the book. The authors give real anecdotes from their experience and share their professional expertise which can be highly useful for every researcher.

Key Words: Research, Thesis, Dissertation, Second Language, Research Proposal, Research Methodology

Introduction

The book, *Thesis and Dissertation Writing in a Second Language: A Handbook for Supervisors* is co-authored by Brian Paltridge and Sue Starfield. Paltridge is a Professor of TESOL at the University of Sydney and Starfield is a Professor in the School of Education at the University of New South Wales. Both have extensive experience in teaching thesis writing. The book is divided into several chapters, each dealing with a vital aspect of the research process. Although the work aims to serve as a “handbook for supervisors who are working with students writing a thesis or dissertation in English as their second language” (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007, p. 2), any researcher can benefit immensely from reading this text.

Discussion

The key takeaways from this book, for every researcher, would include the following points.

1. The researcher must be cognizant of the socio-cultural context of the thesis: the kind of university one is affiliated with, the required conventions for the text and the intended readers' values.

2. Regular face-to-face interactions between the supervisor and the researcher are crucial to avoid miscommunication, especially in a cross-cultural context. There should be a respectful relationship between the supervisor and the researcher with a clear agreement on responsibilities, timetable, supervisor's availability, means of contact and methods of monitoring progress.
3. The supervisor's consistent and constructive feedback facilitates content development, language enhancement and thesis organization, and reduces potential plagiarism.
4. Various types of issues that may directly have an impact on the research student must be addressed promptly. The psycho-affective issues such as perfectionism or fear of failure could be tackled by alleviating anxiety and cultivating confidence; behavioral issues such as procrastination could be prevented by early planning and persistent writing; rhetorical issues could be resolved by acquiring both written and oral presentation and persuasion skills, and social issues such as isolation could be avoided by appreciating cultural diversity, peer critique and group feedback.
5. According to Sung (2000), factors that contribute to the "rounded socio-academic success" include "relationships with supervisors and fellow students as well as an active role in presentations and in departmental activities and social events" (as cited in Paltridge & Starfield, 2007, p. 33).
6. Mauranen (1993) uses the term '*metatext*', to refer to the text that 'talks about the text'. (For example, "This chapter examines certain concepts"). According to Hyland (2004), PhD students use 'metadiscourse' to show the organization of their text; their writing is more sophisticated than that of the Master's students and they are required to write reader-friendly texts, using appropriate hedges such as *possible*, *might*, *tend to* and *perhaps* (as cited in Paltridge & Starfield, 2007).
7. Academic writing is often expected to be impersonal and the research student is required to avoid the use of the personal pronoun 'I'.
8. The criteria used by the examiners to evaluate theses often include the following points:
a critical appraisal of previous research on the topic; a clearly defined and comprehensive investigation of the topic; the appropriate application of research methods and techniques; a thorough presentation and interpretation of results; appropriately developed conclusions and implications that are linked to the research framework and findings; a high standard of literary quality and presentation; a contribution to knowledge on the particular topic. (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007, p. 17)

9. Holbrook et al. (2004) identified the following characteristics of “high quality” PhD theses: the significance of the student’s research topic, potential of the thesis for publication, use of the research literature in the design of the study and writing of the thesis, logic and clarity of the reporting and discussion of findings, and the extent to which the findings can be applied in the field. (as cited in Paltridge & Starfield, 2007, p. 18)
10. An effective research proposal includes: Proposed title, Abstract, Aim/Purpose/Objective, Literature review, Research question/s or hypotheses, Definitions of terms, Research methodology, Significance of the research, Ethical considerations, Timetable and expected budget for the research, Anticipated problems and limitations, References/Works Cited, Bibliography and Appendix.
11. Dudley-Evans (1999) terms the typical ‘IMRAD’ (introduction–methods–results–discussion) type thesis a ‘traditional’ thesis. Thompson (1999) distinguishes between a simple traditional thesis (one which reports on a single study) and a complex traditional thesis (one that reports on more than one study). Dudley-Evans (1999) refers to a ‘topic-based’ thesis, where chapters have titles based on sub-topics of the main topic.
12. An Introduction often follows a CARS (Create a Research Space) framework. The three key moves in the Introduction are: to establish a research territory; to identify a niche or gap in the territory; to then signal how the topic in question occupies that niche (Swales and Feak, as cited in Paltridge and Starfiled, p. 86).
13. Literature review must critique previous research using appropriate summarizing, paraphrasing and citation skills to prevent plagiarism.
14. ‘*Methodology*’ refers to the theoretical paradigm or framework of research (e.g. quantitative or qualitative paradigm). ‘*Methods*’ refers to the actual research instruments used such as interviews, observation and laboratory materials.
15. The key components of a Discussion chapter include: an analysis of the significant findings, limitations and implications; those of a Conclusions chapter include consolidation of present study and recommendations for further research; and those of an abstract include overview, aim, reasons for choosing a particular research methodology and major findings of the study.
16. Hyland identifies three stages in Acknowledgements sections:
 - a *reflecting move* which makes some introspective comment on the writer’s research experience, a *thanking move* which gives credit to individuals and institutions, and an *announcing move* which accepts responsibility for any

flaws or errors and dedicates the thesis to an individual or individual/s.
(Hyland as cited in Paltridge & Starfield, p. 160)

Conclusion

After enlisting the recommended online databases and print resources on thesis writing, the book ends with a sample research proposal. The book is replete with real examples referring to students writing thesis in English as a second language; however, every researcher can benefit tremendously from the professional expertise shared by the writers.

References

Paltridge, B., & Starfield, S. (2007). *Thesis and Dissertation in English as a Second Language: A Handbook for Supervisors*. London and New York: Routledge.

Lesson Plan: Reconnect with the Real World

R Vanitha

The Covid 19 pandemic brought life to a standstill but education continued uninterrupted thanks to technology. The downside was the constant, non-stop contact with digital devices. The mobile phones became mini-worlds inhabited by the student community. This is an activity that moved them away from the digital onslaught and enabled them to reconnect with the world outside the phone. The activity was especially useful when the pandemic brought in long stretches of time spent indoors. This was an effective offline activity conducted through an online classroom setup. It can also be done as a fully offline activity.

Name of the Activity: Reconnect

Skill Focus: Writing, Speaking and Listening Skills

Sub Skills: Life skills and Personality Development.

Level: High School/College students

Time period: 1 week

Group Size: Students belonging to one class (ideal size – not more than 50) and this was replicated across multiple classrooms.

Learning Objectives:

1. To enable students to develop critical and creative thinking
2. To enrich their personality and work on their strengths
3. To enhance their vocabulary (usage of words, phrases, and expressions)
4. To hone the Grammar and sentence construction skills of students.
5. To encourage students to express their opinions and listen to others' opinions and respond

Materials:

1. Pen and paper for writing
2. A mobile phone to take photos and pictures

Methodology:

1. Students were asked to list their favourite hobbies (before the mobile phone took up their time)
2. The activities/ hobbies were enumerated and listed by the teacher.
3. Individual students were encouraged to come up with suggestions
4. The listing was done with the name of the hobby –E.g. gardening, cooking, painting, dancing, playing a sport, solving Sudoku, learning a language etc. by the teacher.
5. The teacher brought in as much diversity as possible in the list of activities by actively acknowledging the responses from the students and goading them into thinking of a variety of hobbies and activities.
6. The students were specifically told that they can list hobbies that they like to do and not necessarily the ones that they were currently practicing.
7. The teacher asked them to create a journal or diary entry every day for one week by practicing any activity from the list.
8. The students were instructed to write down their work in the given format
9. Students were allowed to use a combination of two activities if they so desired
10. The format of the diary entry was
 - a. Name of the student:
 - b. Date and Day:
 - c. Name of the Activity: (Students were allowed to choose fancy names for their activity)
 - d. How did they go about doing the activity? (Preparation and ground work):(100 words)
 - e. What were their thoughts and feelings when they were involved in doing the activity for the day: (100 words)
 - f. One photo showing the students doing the activity as proof of the actual work done.
 - g. This format was followed for 7 days.
11. On the 8th day, students uploaded the written assignment along with the photo proofs as a PDF document in the digital classroom link generated by the teacher for the purpose. The activity was extended to 10/15 days for some classes.
12. Everyday reminders for doing the activity were sent by the student representative of the class to keep the students on track

Observations:

Implementation of this activity across multiple classes resulted in the following observations:

1. The activity enabled the students to come up with original ideas.
2. There was no plagiarism in the assignment as students recorded in their own words their hobby.
3. Some students used repetitive vocabulary and stock phrases like “I enjoyed doing the activity/ The dish came out well/ the painting was beautiful/ the flowers were pretty/” depending on the activity they chose.
4. The use of a single simple sentence structure through the entire writing was observed in some assignments –Eg. For a cooking activity - “I washed the vegetables. I cut them and fried them. I put them in a pan. I added the ingredients, I served it hot”
5. Some students made it appear like an instruction manual – with very little content on what the process of doing the activity meant to them.
6. The vocabulary to explore their emotional state while doing the hobby was limited for many- with standard words like “good, fine, ok, happy, joyful.”

Assessment of Learning:

After the submission, without naming the students, sentences were taken from their assignments (a random sampling across multiple classes that undertook the activity) and the students were asked to identify the error/s in the sentences if any or if they could make better and more impactful sentences with the same idea. They were also asked which words / phrases / sentences appealed to them. Grammatical errors in the sentences were identified by the students themselves. The students came up with alternatives where ever they were felt the vocabulary was not appropriate or apt. The students made simple, compound, and complex sentences (wherever only simple sentences were used with a repetitive sentence construct.)

Teacher Review, Student Review and Evaluation

1. The submitted works of the students were discussed by the teacher in class and certain expressions, words and phrases used are analysed. This was done without mentioning the individual students.

2. Students shared their feedback on the activities of other students and received feedback from others. This honed their skills in giving and receiving opinions. This was made optional for students who wanted to share their writing with the class and receive comments and suggestions.
3. Students interacted with their classmates and the discussion was moderated and facilitated by the teacher. Every student was encouraged to come up with one learning outcome from the exercise - e.g. What was the best part of doing the activity?

Learning Outcome:

This activity revolved around students completely, engaging them every step of the way—from making the choice of hobby to peer review (with just one teacher review). Spotting of errors, use of alternative words or sentences and other inputs from the students made it a very student centric activity with the teacher only providing support where ever required. The speaking activity involving discussions, feedback and suggestions for improvement enabled many students to overcome their inhibitions and speak comfortably. This activity encouraged peer evaluation and assessment and served as a digital detox / cleanser for the minds of the students. It paved the way for collaborative learning and gave the teacher an insight into student thinking. Post the activity, assessment, teacher review, peer review, discussions, and comments, the writing and speaking skills of students showed marked improvement with their listening skills also registering considerable enhancement.

Author Profiles

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