International Journal of English: Literature, Language & Skills (IJELLS)
&
Department of English, KLU

Volume 14 Special Issue 2

www.ijells.com / ISSN 2278 0742

Editor (IJELLS)

Dr Mrudula Lakkaraju,
Editor, IJELLS

Editors (KLU)

Dr Lavanya Sivapurapu,
Associate Professor, Conference Convenor

Dr Madhu Munagala,
Associate Professor, Conference Co-Convenor

Dr Sharmila Sigamny,
Associate Professor, Conference Co-Convenor

Editor's Note

It is with immense pleasure that we present this special issue of the *International Journal of English: Literature, Language and Skills (IJELLS)*, featuring selected peer-reviewed articles from the International Conference on Digital Humanities, Cognitive Linguistics & Contemporary Literatures, held on 11th and 12th August 2025 in hybrid mode.

Organised by the Department of English, K L University, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, in collaboration with Cambridge University Press and Assessment, the two-day conference brought together an international community of scholars, educators, and researchers committed to advancing interdisciplinary dialogue across the fields of digital humanities, cognitive linguistics, and contemporary literary studies.

The conference received an overwhelming response. A total of 320 research papers were submitted, out of which nearly 200 were presented across 25 online and 5 offline parallel session platforms. These sessions were enriched by the participation of 10 esteemed international and national experts, specially invited by the conference committee for their contributions to the relevant fields.

The scope and reach of the conference were truly global. Delegates and presenters represented over five countries and 26 states of India, offering a unique blend of global perspectives and regional insights. The sessions witnessed robust academic discussions, led by distinguished scholars from reputed institutions across India and abroad, reinforcing the conference's mission to foster inclusive, multidisciplinary engagement.

The articles featured in this special issue of IJELLS represent a carefully curated selection from the many high-quality papers presented at the conference. Each contribution reflects a commitment to scholarly innovation and theoretical depth, addressing topics such as digital textual analysis, corpus linguistics, cognitive narrative structures, conceptual metaphor theory, AI-assisted literary interpretation, and multimodal discourse analysis. The integration of cognitive and digital frameworks with literary inquiry in these papers underscores the evolving nature of humanities research in a technology-driven world.

This issue not only documents the intellectual achievements of the conference but also highlights the pressing need for academic spaces that support interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation. The convergence of digital methodologies, linguistic cognition, and literary analysis showcased here points to exciting new trajectories for scholarship, teaching, and knowledge production in the years ahead.

On behalf of the editorial board, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our beloved colleagues & conference organisers for their vision and dedication, to the keynote and plenary speakers for their insights, to the reviewers for their thoughtful evaluations, and to the authors for their valuable contributions. All this would not

have been possible without the support of the Department Chair- Dr KV Divya, guidance of the Principal, Prof. Dr V Krishna Reddy and the blessings of the Director- Prof Dr. A Jagadeesh. We also take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our Management. We also acknowledge the continued support of our readers and academic partners, who make such scholarly endeavours possible.

We hope this special issue serves not only as a record of the conference's rich academic discourse but also as a springboard for further research, collaboration, and exploration across disciplines.

- Dr Lavanya Sivapurapu

Contents

1. **Epistemic Concerns in the field of Postcolonial Digital Archiving: Who Gets the Power to Retell the Stories from India?**
   Anu Lekshmi U G 007
2. **Digital Disgrace: Virtual Identity and the Postcolonial Condition in J. M. Coetzee Novels**
   Anup Dadarao Atram & Sandeep P Joshi 014
3. **Exploring Indian English Stories with Simple Metaphors**
   V Aruna Kumari.....018
4. **Digital Humanities: Fostering Diversity and Inclusiveness in Language, Literature, and Culture**
   S Aathira & Yunush Ahamed Mohamed Sherif.....022
5. **Multilingualism and Multiculturalism: Implications for English Language Teaching**
   Audrey Sandrilla Pengal & S Venkateswaran.....029
6. **Teacher's and Learner's Experience on Pedagogical Shift: Voices from the AI-Integrated Classroom**
   Narayana Bashyam.....033
7. **Implications For Designing English Language Curriculum at Secondary Stage in the Digital Age**
   Braj Kishor Gupta & Ajith K.....041
8. **Blogging as a Pedagogical Asset in Digital Humanities**
   Brian Mendonça.....051
9. **Utopia in the Female-only World in Fantasy Fiction: A Critique**
   Debabrata Hazra.....055
10. **Motorbikes, Forests, and Sacred Spaces: Ecological Consciousness in Modern Travel Memoirs**
    Dinesh Raja V & V Srividhya..... 059
11. **Signs of Survival: A Linguistic Landscape Analysis of Refugee Journey in Hashimi's *When the Moon Is Low***
    Entisar Showai Ahmed Al Sunboly & Mirza Sultan Baig.....067
12. **Beyond the Screen: Rethinking Ecocriticism in the Digital Age**
    Harini K.....076
13. **Eco-criticism in the digital age: Exploring Nature, Literature, and Technology**
    Himanshi Gadhia.....081
14. **Integrating Outcome-Based Assessment and Outcome-Based Education: A Theoretical Perspective**
    Iqra Khan.....084
15. **Digital Colonializations of Human Psyche in the Dystopian World of MT Anderson's *Feed***
    Jagajit Manotosh Patra.....087
16. **Evolution of Identity and Digital Platforms: A Study with Reference to the Episode "Striking Vipers" of Black Mirror**
    H Joshua Arul Raj & Saranya SS.....094
17. **Embracing Technology - Enhanced Language Learning (TELL)**
    Enamala Kalavathi & E.Sharmila Sgamany.....098
18. **Breathing Landscapes: An Ecocritical Reading of Arundathi Roy's *The God of Small Things***
    J Kalpana.....104
19. ***The Scent of Pepper*: Unravelling Kodava Identity Amidst Colonial Shadows**
    J Kavitha & N Usha.....111
20. **The Algorithmic Flâneur: AI-Generated Narratives and Urban Spatialities in Literary Texts**
    Kavitha N.....116
21. **Digital Humanities and the Shifting Landscape of Contemporary Literary Studies**
    Manisha Berwal & Mahesh Arora.....122
22. **Diasporic Mindsets: Who Live Abroad**
    Murali Mohan Namamula & Bhuvaneswari Pagidipati.....126

23. **A Comparative Analysis of Empathy and Emotional Regulation in Digital and Print Storytelling**
Neha Rathi.....129
24. **Conceptual Metaphors in *The Village by the Sea* by Anita Desai**
S Nirmala Nigil Bhavan.....136
25. **Reconfiguring the Archive: Indigenous Oral Traditions and Social Media as Sites of Narrative Sovereignty**
Prerana Sana.....143
26. **Displacement and Identity: A Critical Evaluation of VS Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*, and *The Enigma of Arrival***
G Pushpalatha & Bala Agarwal.....150
27. **Investigating Technology-Enhanced Language Learning: Strategies, Impact and Challenges**
Rahul More.....156
28. **Reimagining Language Classrooms: A Study on Technology-Enhanced Language Learning Practices**
P Rajitha Nair.....164
29. **The Intersection of Cognitive Frameworks and Digital Tools in Developing Future Language Learning Ecosystems**
U Ramesh Babu.....173
30. **Learning With Purpose: A Study on Outcome-Based Assessment in English Education**
V Ramya Sudha 177
31. **Emotion, Embodiment and AI: A Cognitive Digital Approach to Analyzing Literary Affects in English Literature**
T Sharon Raghukar.....181
32. **Exploring Conceptual Metaphors in Padma Sachdev's Autobiography *A Drop in the Ocean***
Shiwali Sharma.....187
33. **Cognition and Compassion: Literary Ethics in the Reimagining Duryodhana**
Shreya Shubhangi & Sayani Banerjee.....193
34. **Assessing the Effectiveness of Blended Learning in Improving Writing Skills Among Graduates: A Case Study of Cambridge Empower B2 LMS**
K Shyam Sundar & Illur Prem Kumar.....199
35. **Mapping the Mind: Narrative Structures and Mental Spaces in Derek Walcott's Major Plays**
Snehal Bhandakkar & Ghizala R. Hashmi.....208
36. **From Chalkboards to Cloud Platforms: A Cognitive and Technological Approach to Digital Literacy for English Educators**
Soni Gandepudi.....212
37. **Vijay Tendulkar's Portrayal of Dystopian Path of Collective Trauma of Puna People in the Play *Ghashiram Kotwal***
Tanami Roychoudhury & Harish Tapadia.....218
38. **The Impact of AI-Driven Debate Arena as a Writing Assistant on Tertiary Students' Writing Skills: Opportunities and Challenges**
Tanuja Chundru, Venkata Ramana Manipatruni & TS Rajeswari.....223
39. **Technology – Enhanced Language Learning in English Language Education**
P Venkanna.....229
40. **The Cognitive Impact of Multilingual Education: A Case Study of Karnataka's 'Nali Kali' Program**
Md Zabiulla Khan I & Monbinder Kaur.....239

Author Profiles.....247

Epistemic Concerns in the field of Postcolonial Digital Archiving: Who Gets the Power to Retell the Stories from India?

Anu Lekshmi U G

Abstract

Digital archiving related to the colonial past foreground pressing epistemic and ethical questions about the way historical knowledge is produced, owned, and disseminated in the digital domain. The British Library's Endangered Archives Programme (EAP), South Asia Open Archives (SAOA) and Pad.ma (Public Access Digital Media Archive), are some of the widely known digital archiving initiatives which attempt to digitize India's colonial past. Even though these projects assume the mantle of preserving India's historical and cultural legacy, their archiving methods and policies risk reinforcing epistemic hierarchies depending on what they choose to preserve. The paper derives insights from postcolonial theory and archival studies to examine how the knowledge is at once disseminated and restricted within the confines of the digital domain, resulting in the replication of colonial patterns of knowledge extraction and control, even under the banner of democratization

Keywords: Postcolonial Digital Archiving, Epistemic Authority, Metadata Standards, Dublin Core, Marc- Encoded Archiving Description (EAD), Endangered Archives Programme (EAP), Community Archives

The practice of archiving is crucial in preserving cultural narratives that shape our understanding of history and identity. In India, archiving followed a different paradigm when it came to recording important events related to matters of administration, political, economic, and social developments. The stories of the past were passed on from one generation to the next through oral tradition which involved preservation through the collective memory of a community.

The interplay between oral traditions and collective memory highlights the importance of inclusive archiving practices that respect and reflect diverse cultural narratives. In the Indian context, the challenges posed by modernization and imperialism have significantly impacted the preservation of these oral traditions and collective memories (Goel 2093). Recognizing and addressing these issues is essential for fostering a more equitable representation of India's rich cultural heritage.

The emergence of digital archiving has opened new avenues for preserving these narratives, yet it also raises critical questions about ownership and representation in the digital realm. Engaging local communities in the digitization process is vital to ensure their voices are authentically represented. The issue of authority in determining who possesses the right to classify, interpret, and narrate the histories of a community constitutes a central concern within the discourse on inclusive archiving. Questions of representation, legitimacy, and epistemic control are deeply implicated in archival practices, shaping not only what is preserved but also how collective memory is constructed and mediated.

Digital archiving related to the colonial past foreground pressing epistemic and ethical questions about the way historical knowledge is produced, owned, and disseminated in the digital domain. The British Library's Endangered Archives Programme (EAP), South Asia Open Archives (SAOA) and Pad.ma (Public Access Digital Media Archive), are some of the widely known digital archiving initiatives which attempt to digitize India's colonial past. Even though these projects assume the mantle of preserving India's historical and cultural legacy, their archiving methods and policies risk reinforcing epistemic hierarchies depending on what they choose to preserve.

This paper critically analyses the archival logic of these digital platforms by comparing their power dynamics, mode of access, policies on metadata control and representation of voices. The paper derives insights from postcolonial theory and archival studies to examine how the knowledge is at once disseminated and restricted within the confines of the digital domain, resulting in the replication of colonial patterns of knowledge extraction and control, even under the banner of democratization.

History of Postcolonial Digital Archiving

The history of postcolonial digital archiving cannot be understood without first acknowledging the colonial foundations of archival practice. During the colonial period, archives functioned as tools of administration, surveillance, and control, carefully recording land, populations, and cultural practices. These records, however, reflected the perspectives of the colonizers while systematically excluding or misrepresenting indigenous voices. The authority of the archive was thus deeply tied to imperial power, producing what Ann Laura Stoler has described as the "archival grain" of colonial governance (Stoler 20).

Following decolonization in the mid–twentieth century, newly independent nations inherited this documentary legacy. Initially, many postcolonial governments mobilized archives to construct national histories and assert political legitimacy. Yet, by the 1970s and 1980s, scholars and activists increasingly began to question the epistemic authority of these inherited archives. The rise of postcolonial studies during the late twentieth century—marked by the work of Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha—brought renewed attention to the silences, omissions, and power asymmetries embedded in archival practice. Spivak's seminal question "Can the Subaltern Speak?"—resonates deeply with archival critique, highlighting how structures of knowledge often preclude subaltern voices from entering the historical record (Spivak 285). The demand to "decolonize" knowledge and to recover marginalized perspectives created fertile ground for rethinking archival logics.

The advent of digital technologies in the late 1990s and early 2000s marked a new phase. Digitization promised to expand access to rare or fragile materials, and colonial archives held in Europe and North America were among the first to be digitized. While this shift facilitated global circulation, it also reproduced asymmetries: Western institutions continued to control the infrastructures of access, framing colonial records through their own cataloguing systems and metadata regimes (Derrida 11). The digital turn, in this sense, risked reinscribing colonial hierarchies under the guise of democratization.

In response, the early twenty-first century witnessed the emergence of explicitly postcolonial digital archives. These projects sought not merely to digitize collections but to reconfigure the very principles of archival practice. They foregrounded marginalized voices, incorporated oral histories, folk traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems, and emphasized community participation in both curation and interpretation. Initiatives such as *Pad.ma (Public Access Digital Media Archive)* in India, the *South Asia Open Archives (SAOA)*, and locally curated collections supported by the British Library's *Endangered Archives Programme* represent distinct attempts to challenge colonial logics of classification and ownership (SAOA; British Library).

At present, postcolonial digital archiving confronts a series of complex challenges. One of the most pressing is the friction between universal metadata frameworks—such as Dublin Core—and knowledge systems that are rooted in specific cultural contexts. This conflict reveals the epistemological tensions inherent in digital preservation (Caswell 27). Equally significant is the persistence of the digital divide: the very communities most affected by colonial histories often remain those with the least access to the technological resources required for sustaining archives.

Taken together, the development of postcolonial digital archiving traces a trajectory from the colonial consolidation of archival authority, through postcolonial critique, to the

emergence of community-driven digital initiatives. This history makes visible both the enduring asymmetries of power within archival practice and the potential of digital technologies to serve as instruments of reclamation, resistance, and the reconfiguration of collective memory.

The paper aims to critically identify and analyze the challenges that hinder postcolonial digital archiving from becoming more inclusive, with particular attention to issues of epistemic bias in metadata standards, unequal access to digital infrastructure, the marginalization of indigenous knowledge systems, and the persistence of colonial power dynamics in the ownership, representation, and accessibility of archives.

Epistemic authority in digital archiving refers to the power to define, describe, and legitimize knowledge within archival systems. Foundational theorists such as Jacques Derrida argue that archives are not neutral repositories but institutions that actively construct what is knowable and authoritative (*Archive Fever* 2–5). Achille Mbembe likewise emphasizes the archive's role in materializing political power and delimiting its limits ("The Power of the Archive" 21). Verne Harris extends this perspective by showing how appraisal and classification practices shape collective memory, privileging some narratives while silencing others ("The Archival Sliver" 68).

Within the field of knowledge organization, Hope Olson demonstrates how cataloguing and metadata standards encode dominant cultural assumptions (*The Power to Name* 44), while Geoffrey Bowker and Susan Leigh Star highlight how classification systems, though appearing neutral, structure access and visibility, thereby embedding epistemic hierarchies (*Sorting Things Out* 5–6). This concern has been taken up in digital contexts, where universal standards such as Dublin Core risk marginalizing culturally specific knowledge practices.

Scholars such as Michelle Caswell and Anne J. Gilliland argue for community archives as counter-sites of authority, where participatory description and governance redistribute epistemic power ("Records and Their Imaginaries" 58). Caswell's later work, *Urgent Archives*, calls for "liberatory memory work" that challenges institutional dominance through inclusive archival practices (112). Parallel developments in indigenous contexts, such as Kimberly Christen and Jane Anderson's work on Traditional Knowledge (TK) Labels and Mukurtu CMS, illustrate how culturally situated metadata protocols operationalize community authority over access, naming, and reuse ("Toward Slow Archives" 90).

Beyond institutional repositories, discovery itself has emerged as a site of epistemic authority. Safiya Umoja Noble's analysis of search algorithms demonstrates how commercial platforms reproduce racial and gendered hierarchies, often undermining the inclusive intent of digital archives (*Algorithms of Oppression* 4–7). Together, these studies show that epistemic authority is simultaneously infrastructural, institutional, and contested, with current debates focusing on how to integrate community protocols and resist algorithmic erasures without reproducing colonial hierarchies.

This paper employs a comparative analysis of the policies adopted by three prominent digital archiving initiatives—the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme (EAP), the South Asia Open Archives (SAOA), and Pad.ma (Public Access Digital Media Archive)—in order to examine the controversies and challenges involved in digitizing India's colonial past through the lens of postcolonial theoretical insights.

The British Library's Endangered Archives Programme (EAP), established in 2004 with funding from the Arcadia Fund, presents itself as a global custodian of endangered cultural heritage ("About the Endangered Archives Programme"). By digitizing fragile collections and making them freely accessible through its platform, while returning physical custody to local owners, the programme positions itself as both a preserver and mediator of vulnerable knowledge systems. Yet, critics have pointed out that even as EAP emphasizes local partnerships, the concentration of digital surrogates within the British Library perpetuates colonial asymmetries of control and visibility (Nixon 4). The hosting of digitized archives in London raises questions about epistemic authority, since the repository that gains scholarly

recognition and infrastructural permanence remains in the Global North, while source communities are left with limited influence over metadata practices and the interpretive frameworks imposed on their cultural records (Gupta 38).

Similarly, the South Asia Open Archives (SAOA), launched in 2017 under the Centre for Research Libraries, promotes itself as a collaborative and open-access initiative designed to democratize access to historical sources from South Asia ("About SAOA"). Drawing on contributions from international libraries, it makes rare, fragile, and colonial-era materials widely available for global scholarship. However, while SAOA foregrounds inclusivity and open access, critical observers note that its reliance on Western research infrastructures and English-language cataloguing norms risks reinscribing the very hierarchies it seeks to dismantle (Caswell and Gilliland 60). The claim to democratization can appear paradoxical, as the frameworks of access and classification are still shaped by elite academic institutions, leaving local publics and indigenous epistemologies at the margins of digital representation (Gupta 40).

By contrast, Pad.ma (Public Access Digital Media Archive), founded in 2008 by collectives such as CAMP and the Alternative Law Forum, situates itself more explicitly as an experiment in critical archival practice (CAMP et al.). Focused primarily on video materials relating to Indian politics and culture, Pad.ma resists archival neutrality by foregrounding collaborative annotation and interpretation (Mazzarella 181). Its stated aim of enabling users to read against the grain of dominant narratives represents a significant departure from universalist standards such as Dublin Core, privileging situated knowledge and critical engagement. Yet, while its radical ethos opens space for alternative forms of archival authority, Pad.ma has also faced critique for its sustainability and limited reach beyond specialist academic and activist communities (Mazzarella 187). The platform's experimental architecture, though theoretically rich, may struggle to achieve the kind of longevity and infrastructural stability offered by more conventional repositories such as EAP and SAOA (Caswell 112).

Taken together, these three initiatives illustrate the tensions inherent in postcolonial digital archiving. While EAP and SAOA frame themselves as democratizing forces in the preservation of South Asian heritage, they remain bound to global research infrastructures and metadata regimes that reproduce colonial power imbalances (Nixon 8). Pad.ma, in contrast, gestures towards decolonial possibilities by centering critical annotation and participatory knowledge production, yet its marginal position and fragile infrastructure highlight the precarity of alternative models (Mazzarella 189). The comparative analysis of these projects thus underscores the unresolved struggle between universalist standards and situated epistemologies, revealing that inclusivity in digital archiving cannot be achieved solely through technical preservation or open access but requires deeper transformations in authority, control, and interpretive practice (Caswell 120).

Metadata, often described as "data about data," refers to the descriptive, structural, and administrative information that enables the organization, discovery, and management of digital resources. As Gilliland defines it, metadata is "structured information that describes, explains, locates, or otherwise makes it easier to retrieve, use, or manage an information resource" (Gilliland 7). While seemingly technical and neutral, metadata is deeply cultural, shaping how knowledge is categorized, retrieved, and legitimized.

Several widely adopted metadata platforms dominate the landscape of digital archiving. Dublin Core, developed in the mid-1990s, provides a simple set of fifteen descriptive elements intended for universal applicability across digital repositories. MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloguing), a standard created by the Library of Congress in the 1960s, remains foundational in library cataloguing systems worldwide. More recent frameworks such as Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and MODS (Metadata Object Description Schema) continue to extend this infrastructure by structuring archival and bibliographic information in machine-readable formats. These platforms are widely considered universal and interoperable, yet they originate

from Western institutional contexts, reflecting specific epistemologies of classification and order.

Scholars have criticized such standards for embodying Eurocentric assumptions about knowledge organization. Olson observes that "subject cataloguing and classification encode dominant cultural norms" (*The Power to Name* 45), meaning that categories often marginalize or misrepresent non-Western worldviews. Bowker and Star similarly argue that "any classification system is both a moral and an ethical choice" (*Sorting Things Out* 5), underscoring how supposedly neutral metadata infrastructures embed Western-centric logics of order. In postcolonial contexts, this reliance on universal schemas risks erasing indigenous knowledge systems, since culturally specific relationships and meanings are often flattened into categories legible to Euro-American cataloguing traditions. As Christen and Anderson point out, "conventional metadata standards cannot accommodate indigenous protocols for access and circulation" ("Toward Slow Archives" 92), a critique that has spurred the creation of alternative frameworks such as Traditional Knowledge (TK) Labels and Mukurtu CMS.

Thus, while metadata platforms like Dublin Core, MARC, and EAD remain indispensable for interoperability, their Eurocentric underpinnings raise questions about epistemic authority in digital archiving. Without critical intervention, these systems may reinforce colonial legacies of knowledge control rather than enabling genuinely inclusive access.

Mainstream metadata standards such as Dublin Core, MARC, and Encoded Archival Description (EAD) were developed to ensure interoperability across libraries, archives, and digital repositories. Their primary emphasis has been on universality, standardization, and machine-readability. Dublin Core, with its fifteen basic descriptive elements, was designed in the 1990s for broad applicability across digital collections. Similarly, MARC, first developed at the Library of Congress in the 1960s, provides bibliographic records in machine-readable format, while EAD offers structured XML encoding for archival finding aids. These systems have been celebrated for facilitating global information exchange, yet their universality is also their limitation. As Bowker and Star argue, "any classification system is both a moral and an ethical choice" (*Sorting Things Out* 5), and these metadata standards carry with them Eurocentric assumptions of order, hierarchy, and objectivity.

In the context of indigenous knowledge, these standards often lack the flexibility to capture culturally specific epistemologies. Olson highlights that cataloguing systems "naturalize dominant cultural assumptions and render alternative worldviews invisible" (*The Power to Name* 45). For instance, MARC's subject headings and controlled vocabularies frequently impose Western categories onto materials with very different local meanings. Dublin Core's minimal elements reduce complex cultural relationships to simplistic descriptors, and EAD's hierarchical finding aids replicate archival logics of authority that prioritize provenance over community-centered narratives. These limitations illustrate how "universal" metadata practices can inadvertently perpetuate epistemic injustice, flattening diverse indigenous frameworks of knowledge into formats designed for Western institutional needs.

By contrast, alternative platforms such as Traditional Knowledge (TK) Labels and Mukurtu CMS foreground community authority and cultural specificity. TK Labels, developed by Local Contexts, allow indigenous communities to attach contextual information—such as restrictions on access, protocols for reuse, or cultural significance—to digital items, ensuring that metadata reflects community-defined categories rather than imposed taxonomies. Mukurtu CMS, an open-source content management system designed with Native communities in the United States, similarly enables granular control over who can see, share, or annotate archival materials. As Christen and Anderson explain, "conventional metadata standards cannot accommodate indigenous protocols for access and circulation" ("Toward Slow Archives" 92), which is why tools like Mukurtu and TK Labels offer a necessary corrective by embedding cultural sovereignty into metadata structures.

The comparison thus reveals a fundamental tension between standardization and inclusivity. While Dublin Core, MARC, and EAD excel at interoperability across global infrastructures, their design privileges Western epistemologies and limits the representation of non-dominant knowledge systems. In contrast, TK Labels and Mukurtu CMS prioritize community needs and cultural protocols but face challenges in interoperability with mainstream repositories, making them less visible in global discovery systems. As Caswell argues, achieving "liberatory memory work" requires archives to move beyond technical preservation and to embed inclusivity at the level of description and access (*Urgent Archives* 118). Ultimately, the degree of inclusivity of indigenous knowledge systems depends not on the mere adoption of metadata but on whether frameworks allow for epistemic self-determination by the communities represented.

In the Indian context, these debates around metadata and epistemic authority acquire urgency given the nation's long history of colonial archival extraction and the continued asymmetries in digital preservation. Projects such as the EAP, SAOA, and Pad.ma reveal the tensions between global research infrastructures and locally situated ways of knowing: while EAP and SAOA make colonial-era records accessible to international audiences, they often do so through Eurocentric metadata frameworks that privilege English-language discovery and Western scholarly categories; Pad.ma, conversely, attempts to embed critical, locally inflected annotation practices, though it remains fragile and niche. For India, where archives are deeply entangled with questions of cultural sovereignty, caste, language, and regional identities, inclusivity in digital archiving must move beyond the rhetoric of access toward practices that genuinely recognize and incorporate indigenous epistemologies. Without such transformations, the risk remains that India's digitized past will continue to be mediated through colonial categories of knowledge, even in the guise of open access and preservation.

Works Cited

"About the Endangered Archives Programme." *British Library*, 2023, www.bl.uk/endangered-archives.

"About SAOA." *South Asia Open Archives*, Center for Research Libraries, 2017, www.southasiaopenarchives.org.

Bowker, Geoffrey C., and Susan Leigh Star. *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences*. MIT Press, 1999.

British Library. *Endangered Archives Programme*. The British Library, 2023, www.bl.uk/endangered-archives.

CAMP, Majlis, and Alternative Law Forum. "Pad.ma: Public Access Digital Media Archive." *Pad.ma*, 2008, pad.ma.

Caswell, Michelle. *Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory, and the Photographic Record in Cambodia*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2014.

---. *Urgent Archives: Enacting Liberatory Memory Work*. Routledge, 2021.

Caswell, Michelle, and Anne J. Gilliland. "False Promise and New Hope: Dead-End Alternatives in Archival Research." *Archival Science*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2016, pp. 121–145.

---. "Records and Their Imaginaries: Imagining the Impossible, Making Possible Imaginations." *Archival Science*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2016, pp. 53–75.

Christen, Kimberly, and Jane Anderson. "Toward Slow Archives." *Archival Science*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2019, pp. 87–116.

Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Translated by Eric Prenowitz, University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Goel, Adiva. "Preserving South Asian Tribal Legacies: Exploring Oral Traditions, Traditional Spoken Narratives and Folk Tales." *International Journal of Social Science and*

Economic Research, vol. 9, no. 7, July 2024, pp. 2092–2098. doi.org/10.46609/IJSSER.2024.v09i07.003. Accessed July 2024.

Gilliland, Anne J. *Introduction to Metadata*. Getty Research Institute, 2016.

Gupta, Charu. "The Archive and the Politics of Access." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 54, no. 44, 2019, pp. 36–42.

Harris, Verne. "The Archival Sliver: Power, Memory, and Archives in South Africa." *Archival Science*, vol. 2, nos. 1–2, 2002, pp. 63–86.

Mazzarella, William. "Archives of the Future: Media, Memory, and Pad.ma." *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2013, pp. 177–190.

Mbembe, Achille. "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits." *Refiguring the Archive*, edited by Carolyn Hamilton et al., Springer, 2002, pp. 19–27.

Nixon, Lauren. "Postcolonial Digital Archives and the British Library: Problematizing Access." *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2020, pp. 1–19.

Noble, Safiya Umoja. *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. NYU Press, 2018.

Olson, Hope A. *The Power to Name: Locating the Limits of Subject Representation in Libraries*. Kluwer Academic, 2002.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books, 1978.

Singh, Bhawani. "Examining the Impact of Digitalization on Indigenous Cultural Heritage Preservation in India." *Enigma in Cultural*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2024, pp. 43–57.

South Asia Open Archives (SAOA). *South Asia Open Archives*. Center for Research Libraries, 2023, www.southasiaopenarchives.org.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, University of Illinois Press, 1988, pp. 271–313.

Stoler, Ann Laura. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

Digital Disgrace: Virtual Identity and the Postcolonial Condition in J. M. Coetzee Novel

Anup Dadarao Atram & Sandeep P Joshi

Abstract

This research paper explores how J. M. Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* connects with the idea of identity in today's digital world. The story set in post-apartheid South Africa deals with themes of shame, power, race, and personal struggle. These things are important today especially people wear different masks in digital world. The paper compares the struggles of the main character i.e. David Lurie with the struggle faced by people in creating their identities on digital platforms like social media. Even today, effect of colonialism can find everywhere. Be it physical world or digital world. By looking at *Disgrace* from both a postcolonial and digital point of view, the paper explains how the digital identity intersects with themes of post-colonial world.

Keywords: digital, post-apartheid, colonialism, identity.

Introduction

J. M. Coetzee is one of the most effective writers of postcolonial literature. His novel *Disgrace* (1999) explores the deep struggles of identity, race, and power in post-apartheid South Africa. The novel contains main character David Lurie, a university professor who loses everything after a scandal with his students and later faces many personal and social challenges. The novel shows how individuals try to survive in a world where power structures have been changed. *Disgrace* was written way before the advent of digital things and but its themes are important even today.

In the digital age, people often create second version of their self in digital world. These identities differ from their actual identity in daily life. People may feel pressured to present themselves in their ways but they actually fearful of facing judgment, shaming, or trolling. In this way, the digital world creates new forms of visibility and invisibility, similar to what Coetzee shows in *Disgrace*.

This paper will try to analyze how *Disgrace* can be read through digital Lense. It will connect Coetzee's postcolonial themes with the idea of virtual identity. It will show that the novel's exploration of shame, loss, and silence has similarities to online identity. The paper will use principles from postcolonial theory and digital studies to understand these connections. The aim is to show that *Disgrace* is not just a story about colonialism, but also a story of different identities.

Understanding Postcolonial Identity in *Disgrace*

To understand how *Disgrace* can be studied through digital lenses, we must first look at how it presents identity in a postcolonial society. South Africa, where the novel is set, has a long and painful history of colonialism. Even though colonial rule ended in 1994, its effects are observed afterwards. Coetzee's novel shows how the characters live in a country still struggling with injustice, violence, and identity.

The main character, David Lurie, represents the old white dominant authority of the colonial past. David who is a university professor who misuses his power by having an affair with his student. After being forced to resign, Lurie loses his social position. This fall from power is more than just a personal failure but it marks failing of colonial power structures in

South African society. As the new post-colonial order grows, Lurie who represents decline of colonial world. He cannot accept the change and often tries to resists it (Coetzee 66).

Lucy, Lurie's daughter, is also a good example who is witnessing identity changes in a postcolonial setting. She chooses to live a quiet, rural life and does not seek power or attention even though she belongs to ruling class of whites. After she is sexually assaulted by three Black men, she refuses to report the crime. This silence is troubling to Lurie, but Lucy explains that she wants to stay on the land and embrace the new South Africa. It means she is giving up her rights and safety (Coetzee 112). Her decision shows a very different approach to identity, one that accepts change.

Postcolonial identity as shown in *Disgrace* is a struggle between old systems of power and the new. As scholar Elleke Boehmer writes, postcolonial identity is often "fragmented and negotiated" (Boehmer 5). In this way, *Disgrace* offers a powerful picture of changing society in a postcolonial world.

Postcolonial Identity and the Digital Self

In today's world, identity is not only shaped by the history but also by digital technology. Individuals now can express themselves online through social media. This has given rise to what many scholars call the "virtual self", their own version of self but most importantly this version found in only digital world. These virtual identities are made up through posts and photos.

Sherry Turkle, a well-known digital culture expert, says that people use digital platforms to represent themselves in a such a way that they wanted to be in real life (Turkle 12). This version is different than real life character. This means digital identities can be fake, or even misleading. For some, digital world gives freedom to explore different parts of themselves. But for some people from marginalized section of the society, digital world can become places of judgment or even violence. Postcolonial thinkers like Homi Bhabha have discussed how identity is often "in-between" means these identities not rigid but always diverting which is shaped by power and culture (Bhabha 2). This has some similarities with digital identity. Online, people are often "in-between". Power plays an important role here as some get to speak up and others get silenced.

Another problem is that digital platforms often reflect the same power structures that existed in colonial times. People in rich countries usually have more access to the internet and digital tools. Their voices are louder, and their messages or ideas are more widely shared. This is called the "digital divide." Scholar Nishant Shah says that digital spaces are not neutral. They are shaped by race, class, and global inequality (Shah 93). In other words, the online world may seem modern and open, but it still has old unjust structures. When we compare this to *Disgrace*, we see that the characters' struggles in it with identity crisis are also exist in today's virtual world. The digital self, like the postcolonial self, is fragile, delicate, and shaped by external forces beyond reach of person.

Linking *Disgrace* to Digital Identity

Although *Disgrace* was written well before beginning of digital media or digital technologies, its themes are strongly related to the struggle of digital identity. The novel's characters deal with power, shame, and silence, all of which are important in both postcolonial societies and the digital world. In this section, we will explore how the characters in *Disgrace* represents the challenges of virtual identity in today's world. Now let's compare post-colonial themes with digital world.

David Lurie's fall from power can be compared to the trolling or humiliation that many people feel as they are being judged online. In the novel, David opposes to public apology as demanded by them. He does not want to apologize. Instead, he was defending his behavior and

says, "I was a servant of Eros" (Coetzee 52). In digital spaces, we often see similar situations where people try to defend their online identities or reputations. This can lead to what some call "cancel culture," where a person's online presence is rejected due to something they said or did.

Lurie was exposed and had to face shame and disgrace. In the digital world, people also experience public shame through social media. Any post can go viral, leading to sudden loss of privacy and respect. The fear of being "disgraced" online is similar to the social downfall that Lurie had faced. Scholar Zizi Papacharissi writes that online platforms create a certain space where people are always visible and are being judged (Papacharissi 70). Lurie's downfall reflects how quickly identity can be damaged when actions became public.

Lucy, on the other hand, chooses silence. After her sexual assault, she refuses to report the crime or to seek justice. Lurie ask Lucy to take action. Lucy explains, "What happened to me is a purely private matter" (Coetzee 112). This silence can be compared to the way some people, especially women or minorities, remain silence in digital spaces because they fear hate or trolling. Lucy's silence becomes a kind of resistance. It is her way of adjusting to new structures.

In an online world, silence can be powerful. Some people use it to avoid conflict. Others use it to protect their mental health or to protest. Scholar Safiya Noble shows how search engines and platforms often ignore or misrepresent Black women and other marginalized groups (Noble 34). Lucy's denial or remaining silent in the justice system is similar to how some voices are made invisible online. Furthermore, the novel's rural setting, where Lucy chooses to stay and rebuild again, symbolizes a kind of digital disconnection. In today's world, some people choose to step away from online life to find peace or avoid conflicts.

Colonial Legacy and Digital Control

Although colonialism officially ended in many countries, its effects can be seen in modern world, including the digital world. The novel *Disgrace* shows how colonialism continues to affect people's lives even after political change has taken place. In the same way, digital platforms today often show the same inequalities and older power structures of colonial times.

In *Disgrace*, David Lurie begins as a person with authority and privilege. As a white male academic in South Africa, he once held power, but post-apartheid changes make him feel lost. He can no longer control the world around him, and his voice is no longer respected in the way it used to be. This shows how old systems of power do not disappear easily—they shift, and those who once had control often struggle to accept the new order (Coetzee 66).

This struggle can also be seen in digital spaces. Even though the internet is often described as open and equal, but its access is not the same for everyone. People in rich countries usually have better internet access, more digital skills, and greater visibility online. In contrast, many people in poor or formerly colonized regions remain unheard. This is called the "digital divide."

Digital tools and algorithms are also discrimination. Scholar Ruha Benjamin explains that "technology can increase or deepen discrimination" (Benjamin 5). For example, search engines may show more results from Western countries, or social media platforms may silence voices that challenge dominant views. This means that digital spaces are not neutral. They often continue the control and exclusion that colonial systems created.

In *Disgrace*, the characters are shaped by these legacies. Lucy's decision to accept the new order reflects a resistance. She stays silent in the old systems, but instead settle on to live in a changed world. In the same way, some people in digital spaces find new ways to resist digital control just by creating alternative platforms, using digital art. Thus, both the novel and the digital world show how colonial legacies still have the dominant effect on society and people at large.

Accountability and Public Pressure

Ethical questions about who is responsible is central in both *Disgrace* and today's digital culture. In the novel, David Lurie is told to accept his wrongdoing, but he refused. And he is not willing publicly apologize (Coetzee 58). His resistance to public shame shows the tension between personal truth and public expectations.

In the digital world, these same issues appear in what is often called "online shaming". When someone's online behavior is exposed, they are pressured to make a public apology. Sometimes these apologies are genuine, but and sometimes they had to apologized in unnatural way. The line between real accountability and public pressure becomes blurred. Lucy's choice to remain silent after her assault raises further ethical questions. She tells her father, "I must live here" (Coetzee 112), suggesting that her decision is about survival, it's not about her weakness. Her silence becomes a form of strength. Similarly, in digital spaces, some people choose not to respond to criticism because speaking out can make them more vulnerable. For many marginalized sections, silence is the only way to restrain from violence.

Conclusion

J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* is a powerful novel that explores questions of identity, power, and shame in a postcolonial society. In both the novel and the digital world, people can be exposed, judged, or erased. Some, like Lurie, fight to protect their public image, while others, like Lucy, who remains silent as a form of strength. Digital spaces are not free from discrimination. They often carry forward the same unfair and unjust structures of the past. The digital divide, unequal access, and algorithmic control all show that identity is still shaped by who has power and who does not. Like *Disgrace*, the digital world forces us to remain silent against power.

By reading *Disgrace* through the lens of digital identity, we can see how postcolonial legacies are still prevalent but in new forms. The novel teaches us that identity whether offline or online is fragile, complex, and shaped by many forces beyond our control. As we move forward in the digital age, Coetzee's work helps us think more deeply about justice, and identity.

Works Cited

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
Benjamin, Ruha. *Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code*. Polity, 2019.
Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. Oxford University Press, 2005.
Coetzee, J. M. *Disgrace*. Vintage, 2000.
Noble, Safiya Umoja. *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. NYU Press, 2018.
Papacharissi, Zizi. *A Private Sphere: Democracy in a Digital Age*. Polity Press, 2010.
Shah, Nishant. "Digital AlterNatives with a Cause?" *Centre for Internet and Society*, 2011.
Turkle, Sherry. *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*. Simon & Schuster, 1995.

Exploring Indian English Stories with Simple Metaphors

V Aruna Kumari

Abstract

Literary metaphors connect literary elements to real-world concepts. This paper emphasizes the use of simple metaphors in Indian English stories to encapsulate intensive cultural emotions and social relevance. Focusing on the short stories of R. K. Narayan, Ruskin Bond, and Anita Desai, the paper demonstrates the profundity underlying simple metaphors which facilitate readership identification with characters and themes. Most of the underlying simple metaphors draw from Indian traditions, nature, and quotidian life, thus turning literature into an accessible and significant tool. In addition, the paper attempts to analyze the Indian culture and way of thinking which brought in such simple metaphors to describe ordinary life with extraordinary deep thinking. Through the methods of close reading and thematic reading, the research argues simple metaphors in the Indian English literature enrich the texts and make them relatable.

Keywords: Indian English Literature, Simple Metaphors, Short Stories, Cultural Context, Literary Devices

Introduction

Literature reflects life and, at the same time, artfully condenses messages of great significance. Among others, metaphor, the most important, links abstract realities to ideas grounded in the tangible world. Metaphors go beyond ornamental features in literature; rather, they are useful and meaningful as they link take-away concepts to real-life situations. In Indian English literature, particularly in the short stories, metaphors are simple but rich in cultural and emotional significance. Roots of these metaphors are in the Indian way of life, the daily routine, and nature. These are enormous metaphors which depict the life of the world and the culture of the deep country. The objective of this paper is to capture the vivid stories as simple metaphors depicted through characters and themes of the readers reality in the works of R. K. Narayan, Ruskin Bond, and Anita Desai along with appreciation of Indian culture and values.

Theoretical Framework: Simple Metaphors as Cultural Anchors

Lakoff and Johnson in their book Metaphors We Live By argue that metaphors are basic to our thinking, not just as an ornament of literature. Indian English short stories are abundant in metaphors which emerge from the daily life of people in their surroundings such as nature, their life, customs, meals, and weather. These are ordinary things in life which are filled with rich emotions and a lot of philosophy.

Understanding Simple Metaphors

Simple metaphors are more accessible and uncomplicated comparisons made between two different things that do not appear to be connected at all, avoiding deep symbolism and abstraction. They are crafted from common imagery drawn from daily life such as nature, home, and when and where we grew up, hence are quite accessible. In Indian English literature, their strength lies in their sociocultural and emotional immediacy. Unlike more obscure literary metaphors, these simple ones are rooted in metaphors of life—they are concerned with society, emotions, and real experiences. They are quite popular with Indian English writers who are attempting to blend traditional Indian ethos with modern narratives.

As an example, in Indian narratives, a tree often stands for family tree, symbolizing family roots, family legacy, and even wisdom. A cup of tea could metaphorically suggest warmth and human connection as well as social class differences, depending on how it is presented.

Cultural Context and Indian Interpretation

Indian English authors usually create their metaphors around customs, festivals, and family bonds, which provides anthropological colour to their work. By using symbols relevant to the culture, authors make the work accessible to the readers. The importance of communal living and spirituality in the Indian context makes even the most commonplace and mundane events richly metaphoric. In this regard, Indian English tales bear simple, and at times rudimentary, metaphors which serve the twin purpose of meaning and identity. Indian culture is preserved through words which interlink their traditions and world.

R. K. Narayan: Simplicity as Strength

R. K. Narayan's art is delicate and metaphorically rich, as he draws from the life of the middle class and the culture of South India. Consider the short story 'An Astrologer's Day' where the protagonist has to shed his past to become a street astrologer. The dusk around his stall, and the street lamp overhead, serve as a metaphor for the secrets and ignorance he harbors, as well as the knowledge and truth he wishes to attain. The interplay of darkness and light captures the moral and existential dilemmas within his life.

For instance, "He had not in the least intended to be an astrologer when he began life…He had to leave his village without telling anybody, and he came to this town and set up as an astrologer." In Narayan's narrative "The Axe", the axe symbolizes the uprooting of not just a tree, but traditions. And heritage. The act of cutting down the ancestral home is the ultimate act of abandonment that one undergoes in the face of modernity disguised as progress. In "The Vendor of Sweets," the vendor's sweets symbolize customs, enticements, and change. Jagan, the vendor, symbolizes the older generation struggling with conflicting modern ideals. With clear, almost blunt, metaphors, Narayan depicts complex human experiences relatable.

Ruskin Bond: Nature as a Metaphor for Human Emotions

Ruskin Bond includes nature-themed comparisons in his works to evoke feelings of passion and sentiment in a story that is simply put in words. For example, in "The Night Train at Deoli," a girl selling baskets symbolizes beauty, missed opportunities, and desires that go unfulfilled. The train is a metaphor for life's fleeting moments and stagnation, especially for those who know Indian railways.

The metaphor umbrella in "The Blue Umbrella" captures the essence of purity, social envy, and desire. The umbrella in the possession of Binya transformed the perception of her village, marking her as a social envy. Such small objects can reflect social perceptions and at the same time portray deep meaning.

The umbrella in "The Cherry Tree" captures the essence of purity, desire, and social envy. Binya's reign of the umbrella changed the perception of her village towards her. Such small objects can reflect social perceptions and at the same time portray deep meaning.

The existence of hills, rural life, and monsoons inspired Bond's writing. His works dwell into the essence of Indian life filled with deep meanings. His works dwell into the essence of Indian life filled with deep meanings. His works dwell into the essence of Indian life filled with deep meanings.

Anita Desai: Her Imaginary Worlds and the Inner Mind

Anita Desai often uses simple metaphors to illustrate the emotional turmoil of her characters, particularly women grappling with societal and personal constraints. In her novel, The Accompanist, music symbolizes a concealed self and dormant ambitions. The protagonist's position— "always just a step behind his fame and light"—captures the existence of many people who live in the shadows of someone else's success.

In Games at Twilight, the figurative use of twilight represents the end of both the glory of childhood and innocence. Ravi's muted triumph in hide and seek painfully reveals the perception of himself as a "nothing," and the setting sun also mirrors his emotional downfall. In A Devoted Son, the metaphor of father and son illustrates the change in power in the family with the relation of age. The father's diminishing dominion, which is also his physical decline, is countered with the son's advancing career. The alienation of the son to the traditional father figure in modernity is also captured in the son's dominion over his father's prescription diet. This dominion becomes a metaphor on love, dominion, and the loss of freedom. There is a measure of profundity and timelessness in one of Desai's metaphors as they stem from the deeper layers of humanity.

Simple Metaphors: Cultural Importance

The straightforward metaphors found in Indian English literature are significant in their culture context because they pertain to traditions, aspects of life, and reminiscences. Indian writers, for example, tend to favour simple everyday metaphors over more complex and elaborate ones offered in Western literature because Indian metaphors are more emotionally anchored to life, such as streets, markets, household items, music, and nature. Some symbols such as the mango tree, a railway platform, and a cup of tea have more meaning than their physical existence. They embody memories, emotions and meaningful experiences.

In Indian narratives, the monsoon symbolizes change, unpredictability, a longing emotionally significant something, and renewal. Its arrival is seasonal and culturally nostalgic which makes the readers instantly relate to the metaphor. In the same way, a village well may denote community, gossip, and the essence of life. The metaphor of a caged bird poignantly captures the constrained existence of woman's life.

It is R. K. Narayan, Ruskin Bond, and Anita Desai whose imagery is not meant to confuse but to unify the worlds they represent. Narayan and Desai featured the ordinary in Malgudi. Evocative and familiar, these cultural metaphors capture the hopes, aspirations, struggles, and triumphs of Indian life.

These images evoke responses because they embody the integrated way Indians think with the heart, worship, and daily life. To Indian readers, such images are not merely embellishments; they are integrated into daily life. Furthermore, the metaphors enrich the readers' experiences and relationships with the ideas at hand and helps the stories stay emotionally and culturally woven into their setting.

Why Simple Metaphors Work

Accessibility

Literary devices such as metaphors can be made as simple as food, trees, or even the weather. They help in making literature easier to grasp. They help in understanding and interacting in both social and academic settings on a deeper level, enhancing participation and even cross-cultural engagement.

Emotional Depth
Their simplicity is the reason they bring out such strong feelings. Readers can relate their realities to the characters' experiences and emotions.

Cultural Authenticity
These examples express the Indian worldview that blends emotive and spiritual dimensions. For instance, the monsoon rains are much more than a season of downpours; they symbolize a deeper cleansing, metamorphosis, and reunion.

Thematic Reading and Close Analysis

An examination of these stories reveals some recurring metaphorical motifs:
• Transition and Change: (e.g. The axe; the train)
• Growth and Resilience: (e.g. The cherry tree; music)
• Innocence and Experience: (e.g. Games at twilight; the dim lights)
One can explore Indian literature to observe the poets' metaphorical creativity and the heartfelt narrative through a careful study of language, context, and imagery.

Conclusion

In Indian English short stories by R. K. Narayan, Ruskin Bond, and Anita Desai do not use images to confuse but to unite and help readers connect to worlds greater than their own. Bond depicts trains, music features in Desai's stories, and Narayan portrays the banal in Malgudi—put to use, evocative settings to awaken strong sentiments. It is appropriate to label them as cultural metaphors as they encapsulate the dreams, struggles, achievements, and the everyday Indian life. These metaphors shaped by nature, social life, and the Indian way of life elevate the status of common things into significant tokens of identity, remembrance, and change. Instead of obscuring meaning, such metaphors shed light and make literature easier and simpler to understand and appreciate for a larger audience. A closer examination of such metaphors shows that they communicate fundamental realities through simple expressions, and that is the beauty of Indian English literature, how the ordinary is said in a profound way.

References

Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press, 1980.
Narayan, R. K. *Malgudi Days*. Indian Thought Publications, 1943.
Bond, Ruskin. *The Blue Umbrella*. Rupa Publications, 1980.
Desai, Anita. *Games at Twilight and Other Stories*. Penguin, 1978.
Mehrotra, Arvind Krishna. *An Illustrated History of Indian Literature in English*. Permanent Black, 2003.

Digital Humanities: Fostering Diversity and Inclusiveness in Language, Literature, and Culture

S Aathira & Yunush Ahamed Mohamed Sherif

Abstract

This paper explores the transformative role of Digital Humanities (DH) in fostering diversity and inclusiveness across language, literature, and cultural studies. It examines how DH methodologies and tools enable the recovery, analysis, and amplification of marginalized voices and underrepresented narratives. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as intersectionality and Critical Digital Humanities, the paper highlights prominent DH projects that actively engage with issues of race, gender, sexuality, and linguistic diversity. Concurrently, it critically addresses inherent challenges, including data bias, algorithmic fairness issues, and the persistent digital divide, which can impede equitable representation. The paper concludes by advocating for intentional strategies, ethical guidelines, and interdisciplinary collaborations to harness DH's full potential in creating a more inclusive and representative scholarly landscape.

Keywords: Digital humanities, Issues, Ethics, language and literature.

Introduction

Digital Humanities (DH) is an active and ever-changing field of scholarly endeavour standing at the crossroads of computing or digital technologies and the established humanities disciplines. This broad field encompasses both digitized (remediated) and born-digital content, combining established humanities methodologies from disciplines like rhetoric, history, philosophy, linguistics, literature, art, archaeology, music, and cultural studies with computational tools and techniques. The appearance of DH marks a radical "computational turn" in humanities scholarship, recognizing a fundamental change in the way knowledge is created and communicated, extending the boundaries beyond the printed word as the central medium. This change enables new modes of scholarship, marked by collaborative, transdisciplinary, and computationally involved research, teaching, and publication.

By breaking past the constraints of conventional print, Digital Humanities has the ability to circumvent established gatekeepers and create new pathways for voices that have traditionally been excluded or silenced to be heard and legitimised. This transformation opens up access to cultural knowledge to a wider spectrum of voices, allowing more varied viewpoints to inform scholarly conversation. The rethinking of media and approach is thus essential to exploring how digital spaces can actively intensify marginalised voices and those excluded by print-dominant academic systems. At the heart of this debate is the notion of the "spectrum of voices," that is, the immense multiplicity of viewpoints, experiences, and linguistic and cultural forms previously marginalised, silenced, or underrepresented in conventional academic canons and archives. Diversity and inclusiveness, here, go beyond the category of presence; they require fair access to the production, transmission, and critical examination of these diverse voices.

This essay argues that Digital Humanities presents unparalleled possibilities to expand this "spectrum of voices" in language, literature, and culture through new tools and platforms for discovery, analysis, and dissemination. Yet actualizing this promise requires a critical confrontation with built-in biases and system inequalities buried within digital infrastructures and practices.

Theoretical Frameworks for Diversity and Inclusiveness in the Digital Humanities

The quest for diversity and inclusivity in Digital Humanities is deeply informed by critical theoretical models that shed light on power relations and structural inequalities. These models are not theoretical musings; they are practical guides to ethical DH work, helping digital scholarship participate directly in a more just world.

Intersectionality, introduced in the late 1980s by Kimberlé Crenshaw, argues that different dimensions of identity—e.g., gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation—cannot be separated. Rather, such categories intersect and intersect each other, all together contributing to people's lived experiences and creating unique modes of discrimination and marginalization. For Digital Humanities, intersectionality is a necessary tool for mapping the interlocking, overlapping determinations that characterize data, archives, and methods. It forces researchers to attend to fundamental questions of power, social justice, and critical theory inherent in digital systems. Through an intersectional perspective, DH practitioners are able to investigate how multiple forms of oppression intersect and accrete to create specific experiences of marginalization and exclusion in digital environments.

Critical Digital Humanities: Prioritizing Power, Social Justice, Anti-Racism, Decolonial, Feminist, and Queer/Trans/Non-Binary Methodologies Drawing from intersectional ethics, Critical Digital Humanities (CDH) has developed as an essential, intersectional discipline that prioritizes issues of power, social justice, and critical theory in the production as well as study of digital technology. CDH thematically positions anti-racist, decolonial, feminist, and queer/trans/non-binary labor at its center, positioning the contemporary shift in digital technology as a deep moment of social and political change. This practice foregrounds creative praxis, co-creation, public outreach, and community-based research, promoting a DH that is deeply invested in meeting historical and contemporary inequalities. The work of CDH scholars is to comprehend how digital technologies transform the production and distribution of knowledge while also leveraging these technologies, guided by ethical training in matters of power and inequality, to shape a more just world. This investment guarantees that DH projects are not technical exercises but are infused with a deep sense of social responsibility.

Feminist Digital Humanities, a central part of CDH, precisely deals with the disciplinary tendency of Digital Humanities to reproduce patriarchal or hegemonic accounts in academia. Its goals are to identify and map women's digital contributions, define their significance, and facilitate feminist scholarship via technological intervention. Feminist Digital Humanities spotlights the imperative roles played by women, feminism, and cyberfeminism in technology, frequently focusing research on the gendered history of women's exclusion from technology discourses and the use of digital tools to facilitate feminist activism. Through the intersectional feminist perspective, Feminist Digital Humanities offers a model for ethical engagement with digital humanities that is actively seeking to counter normalized sexual harassment, predation, and discrimination in digital environments.

Reader-Response Theory and Social Constructionism in Interpreting Multiple Meanings, coupled with such critical frameworks are reader-response theory, based on social constructionism, and its essential focus on how meaning is created in interaction with texts. This theory holds that meaning is not a property of the text in itself but is actively negotiated between the social values, individual experiences, and cultural expectations of the reader and the text's content. According to this view, there can be no one 'correct' reading of any text; instead, "each reader is unique" as a result of their own particular social and cultural histories. This model is crucial for Digital Humanities in that it highlights the multiplicity of interpretation that digital media can provide.

The incorporation of reader-response theory into DH practice suggests an important move away from solely objective textual analysis to a clear recognition of subjective and varied

encounters. This theoretical basis, when married to practical use of DH tools, makes it possible to develop platforms that facilitate diverse interaction with texts and cultural data.

For example, suppose a DH project is based on the premise that "there is no generic reader". In that case, it can be developed in a manner that accommodates multiple annotation, community contribution, or customized pathways through material. This mode of design actively enables a wider "spectrum of voices" not just in the content presented but also in terms of its interpretation and engagement. This shifts from simply digitizing current materials to actually designing for inclusive interaction, creating a more participatory and democratized academic space.

Digital Humanities Methodologies and Tools for Amplifying Diverse Voices

Digital Humanities offers a powerful set of methodologies and tools that are very much at the vanguard of giving voice to various dissenting voices and undermining conventional narratives in language, literature, and cultural studies. The power of transformation that these tools possess, however, is not found in their presence but in being applied through the critical and ethically grounded lens.

Text Analysis for Linguistic and Literary Diversity

Text analysis software allows scholars to analyze and interpret huge amounts of electronic texts, recognizing patterns, frequencies, and inter-relationships that may not be visible through standard close reading.

- **Voyant Tools**: This online platform provides a convenient interface for reading and examining digital texts. Word frequencies and collocates are automatically calculated, and they are displayed graphically. Although the tool is impartial, its ability to examine repeated language and strategic emphasis can be used to reveal representation patterns or omissions concerning diverse groups in massive corpora. For instance, a researcher could employ Voyant to determine how often particular identity words (e.g., "woman," "immigrant," "queer") occur across a corpus of historical newspapers, or to explore the linguistic contexts in which these words are deployed. This can uncover prevailing narratives or signal the silence of marginalized voices, and lead to further qualitative investigation of why such trends exist.
- **AntConc**: As a freeware corpus analysis tool, AntConc enables concordancing and in-depth text analysis. It enables scholars to analyze keywords in context (KWIC) and detect words that occur together with high frequency (collocates). This feature is especially useful for revealing indirect biases of language use or pointing out distinctive linguistic features within texts from particular communities. For example, an investigation of the co-occurrence between words that are gender- or racially related and adjectives or verbs may reveal hidden biases in the character description or public perception. One can utilize AntConc to compare the linguistic features between texts of marginalized and canonical writers and identify different stylistic preferences or thematic issues.
- **MALLET (MAchine Learning for LanguagE Toolkit):** This robust topic modelling software is used to scan large amounts of unlabelled text and find clusters of words that co-occur together, which capture underlying "topics". MALLET can detect hidden themes in multicultural literary or cultural collections that may not be accessible through other means. This can unmask previously hidden narratives or voices of marginalized communities. For instance, using topic modelling on a corpus of non-canonical poetry can unveil thematic concerns that unify women writers as a group but were unseen in conventional literary histories. MALLET can also detect "corpus-specific stopwords"—very frequent words but perhaps lacking substantial thematic value—which, in the absence of critical examination, can unintentionally conceal themes about diversity.

- **Text Encoding Initiative (TEI):** TEI offers a commonly used standard for describing texts in digital format, accepted by libraries, museums, publishers, and independent scholars. Its power is in facilitating rich semantic markup, which supports close annotation of texts beyond transcription. This is essential for locating and analyzing voice, identity, and cultural context elements in various literary pieces.
- **The Orlando Project**: a well-known feminist Digital Humanities project, illustrates this through use of SGML (an early precursor to TEI) to encode interpretive metadata into its research notes, building a very manipulable and searchable history of women's writing. This intense encoding enables subtle investigation of how gender, class, and other variables are represented in the texts.

Mapping and Data Visualization for Cultural and Historical Narratives

Visualization software converts intricate data into a tangible graphical representation, providing new avenues through which to investigate cultural and historical phenomena.

- GIS Mapping (ArcGIS Online, StoryMapJS): Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software such as ArcGIS Online and StoryMapJS are revolutionizing methods in cultural studies through the ability of researchers to analyze different cultural phenomena with greater accuracy and scope. These applications can be utilized to chart historical migration flows, create visualizations of the geographical distribution of cultural trends, or mark the trajectory of marginalized peoples. StoryMapJS, in particular, aids in the narration of stories that emphasize the geography of a sequence of events and is, therefore, a good platform on which to present narratives that are spatially oriented. An example would be mapping out where historical Black churches or Indigenous communities established themselves and seeing patterns of community resilience and formation emerge.
- Network Analysis (Gephi): Gephi is one of the most prominent visualization and exploration programs for different kinds of graphs and networks. Within Digital Humanities, it is widely employed to analyze social networks of characters in novels or historical subjects, uncover community structures, influence, and central actors. This can reveal hidden-in-plain-sight connections within marginalized communities or emphasize the relational nature of identity formation. For instance, a study of the Ho Tung family network illustrated how Gephi could highlight kinship and friendship relationships, showing the role of local relationships in coalition formation. This technique enables researchers to go beyond biographies of individuals to grasp the collective agency and interconnectivity of various groups.

Case Studies: Demonstrating Diversity and Inclusiveness in Practice

Theoretically, the potential for diversity and inclusivity in Digital Humanities is richly illustrated by numerous significant projects that actively engage with marginalised and underrepresented voices and histories. These projects exemplify the potential for active historical and cultural reclaiming in DH, extending beyond mere digitisation to a fundamental recasting of the historical record.

The Colored Conventions Project (CCP) is a prime example of how Digital Humanities can unearth and amplify forgotten histories. This digital research space uses digital technologies to uncover the "buried history of nineteenth-century Black organizing" in the United States. The project is specifically interested in correcting the historical marginalization of the Colored Conventions movement by more dominant abolitionist accounts, revealing a rich and persistent tradition of Black activism. CCP's methods are cutting-edge and highly collaborative. They consist of digitizing and transcribing the proceedings of these conventions,

assembling rich datasets amenable to text analysis, and crafting interactive digital exhibitions that profile participants and map intricate social networks. A central focus of the project is its collectivity, reflecting the collaborative nature of the historical organizing initiatives themselves.

This is accomplished through mass crowdsourcing efforts, where more than 2,500 individuals--scholars, educators, undergraduates, and members of the general public--have participated in transcribing historical documents. Utilizing tools such as Omeka for document collection and digital exhibit curation, the project shares this critical history with a broad base of users. By actively recovering and making these records, CCP offers counter-narratives to prevailing, frequently homogenous, historical accounts, hence illustrating DH as an effective tool for historical and cultural reclamation.

Digital Archive of Indigenous Language Persistence (DAILP): Preserving Indigenous Languages and Knowledge. The Digital Archive of Indigenous Language Persistence (DAILP) is a prime example of the vital contribution of DH to language preservation and maintenance of endangered languages as well as Indigenous knowledge systems. The community-driven digital archive is particularly oriented to serve Indigenous people's knowledge, interpretations, and representations of the past. Its pilot collection, that of Cherokee syllabary documents, is translated and annotated in a collaborative approach involving Cherokee community members, students, and linguists.

DAILP's primary goal is to grow its online collection by employing a community-driven design strategy that promotes open language learning and long-term perpetuation of Indigenous languages. It establishes a shared online environment that enables communication between Indigenous language learners, speakers, and scholars, allowing them to read documents and media stored in partner libraries and museums. The project actively prioritizes decolonial methods of Indigenous language learning, documentation, and recovery centered on collaborative translation spaces and "community-use-inspired language practice". This venture is consistent with key principles of locality, relationality, responsibility, and acknowledgment of the fact that all computational technology entails a cultural character.

The Digital Archive of Indigenous Language Persistence illustrates that if DH projects are to truly amplify diverse voices, they need to break with top-down academic driven models and shift towards models of reciprocity and co-creation with the communities whose histories and cultures are being represented. This model of collaborative production is central to avoiding potential biases and confirming the relevance and authenticity of the digital output, addressing directly ethical concerns over ownership and representation. Feminist Digital Humanities projects (e.g., Women Writers Project, Orlando Project): Bridging Gender Gaps in Literary History Feminist Digital Humanities projects explicitly bridge previously existing gender gaps in literary and cultural history, showing DH's ability to challenge mainstream canons and foster inclusive scholarship.

- Women Writers Project (WWP): This sustained feminist digital humanities initiative is committed to bringing texts of early modern English language women writers online through electronic text encoding. It squarely meets the historical "lack of access" to these frequently rare or hard-to-acquire texts and actively encourages new scholarship on their rediscovered writings. WWP uses a "Women Writers Vector Toolkit" to enable researchers to perform word vector analysis, investigating larger thematic questions on across large collections of texts. This computer-based methodology is capable of revealing patterns and relationships in women's writing that would otherwise be obscured and so enhancing literary history.
- Orlando Project: Called an "ongoing feminist experiment" in the employment of computers for the study of literary history, the Orlando Project generates a peer-reviewed textbase of women's writing in the British Isles, from the beginnings to the modern period. It is a "richly searchable textbase of born-digital, original writing," that

includes extensive interpretive information and contextual historical material on topics such as law, economics, science, and politics. The Orlando Project employs SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language), conforming to Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) guidelines, to encode interpretive information and to blend different fields of inquiry. This encoded structure facilitates sophisticated cross-referencing and searchability, pushing against the conventional linear literary history by emphasizing process and dynamic relations within women's literary production. Collaboration between literary scholars, digital humanists, and computing scientists within the project again emphasizes the interdisciplinary method required to achieve encompassing feminist scholarship.

Projects Focusing on Race and Cultural Heritage (e.g., "The real face of White Australia," Barbados Synagogue Restoration Project). Digital Humanities projects are also used to focus on issues of race and cultural heritage preservation of particular communities, adding depth and inclusivity to historical understanding. The understanding that DH tools are value-free, and their power of transformation for diversity and inclusiveness comes from their use on critical questions, points to the importance of humanistic inquiry in technological innovation. Moreover, the knowledge that true inclusivity depends on extensive community engagement and collective design marks a major turn towards co-creation and exchange with the communities whose voices are being spoken represents. Though it has enormous transformative power, Digital Humanities has to constantly grapple with enormous challenges. The widespread problems of embedded data and algorithmic biases, based on pre-existing inequalities in society and on technical design itself, threaten continuously to replicate and even extend marginalization.

Conclusion

The ongoing digital divide, including disparities in access, digital literacy, and inclusive participation, also hinders the scope and effect of inclusive DH projects. These challenges are framed by a living, dynamic tension within DH: it is a discipline of great potential for social justice, but it has inherent dangers if not balanced with careful critical conscience and strong ethical considerations. The future of a diverse Digital Humanities depends upon continued critical self-reflection, strict application of ethical standards, and a commitment to human control over technological development. Sustained investment in digital literacy initiatives, attempts at guaranteeing affordable and accessible technology, and the fostering of community-driven partnerships will be imperative to fully democratizing knowledge.

The lessons gained within Digital Humanities about the intricacies of bias, equity, and representation have implications far outside the discipline itself. As digital technologies continue to permeate every aspect of society, DH's ongoing struggle and advancement in addressing these problems can serve as an important model for other academic fields, industries, and policy-making organisations working towards a more equitable and inclusive digital future. It places Digital Humanities not simply as an academic endeavour, but as a beacon for ethical technological innovation in an interconnected and diverse world.

Works Cited

en.wikipedia.org, accessed on July 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_humanities#:~:text=Digital%20humanities%20incorporates%20both%20digitized,sciences%2C%20with%20tools%20provided%20by

Digital humanities - Wikipedia, accessed on July 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_humanities

Cultural Studies and Digital Humanities - The Academic is an International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, accessed on July 19, 2025, https://theacademic.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/121.pdf
Topic Modeling | Mallet - GitHub Pages, accessed on July 19, 2025, https://mimno.github.io/Mallet/topics.html
Intersectionality in Digital Humanities - Project MUSE - Johns Hopkins University, accessed on July 19, 2025, https://muse.jhu.edu/book/71642
About Us - Critical Digital Humanities Initiative - University of Toronto, accessed on July 19, 2025, https://dhn.utoronto.ca/about/
Exploring Digital Humanities in Gender Tech - Number Analytics, accessed on July 19, 2025, https://www.numberanalytics.com/blog/digital-humanities-gender-tech-guide
Intersectionality in Digital Humanities - UNT Library's Discover, accessed on July 19, 2025, https://discover.library.unt.edu/catalog/b6855510
Digital Humanities: Critical DH - Research Guides - Virginia Tech, accessed on July 19, 2025, https://guides.lib.vt.edu/dh/criticaldh
Feminist digital humanities - Wikipedia, accessed on July 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_digital_humanities
BSRP: Phase 4: Synagogue Block Redevelopment Project and Other External Works - Digital Library of the Caribbean, accessed on July 19, 2025, https://dloc.com/collections/p4_syn_block
Diversity in Literary Response: Revisiting Gender Expectations - ERIC, accessed on July 19, 2025, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1074297.pdf
Digital Archive of Indigenous Language Persistence (DAILP), accessed on July 19, 2025, https://cssh.northeastern.edu/research/projects/digital-archive-of-indigenous-language-persistence-dailp/
Tools - Digital Humanities - LibGuides at University of South Florida ..., accessed on July 19, 2025, https://guides.lib.usf.edu/c.php?g=262651&p=1767828
Digital Humanities Tools: Text Analysis - LibGuides - The University of Arizona, accessed on July 19, 2025, https://libguides.library.arizona.edu/dighumantools/text

Multilingualism and Multiculturalism: Implications for English Language Teaching

Audrey Sandrilla Pengal & S Venkateswaran

Abstract

English has become the global language and it is being taught as a second language in India wherein there prevails a multicultural and multi lingual scenario. Teaching a language as a second language in such a context has its strengths and limitations. The problems or issues vary from the designing of the curriculum and the transaction of the content developed in classrooms that have a different environment. Also, the teacher and learner profiles contribute to the objective of developing communicative competence in the learners at all levels. Further, as developing employability skills has become the focus of English language curriculum this paper, in the light of the paradigm shifts, explores the ways in which the issues can be addressed by taking into consideration the cognitive abilities of the learners at the intermediate level.

Keywords: communicative competence, curriculum, multiculturalism and multilingualism, cognitive levels.

Culture and language are interdependent for the simple reason that culture of an environment decides the language elements to be used and the language used reflects the cultural ecology of the users of language. The way people view the world is determined wholly or partly by the structure of their Native Language. Anthropological linguists have studied the ways in which relationships within the family are expressed in different cultures and they have also studied how people communicate with one another at certain social and cultural contexts and events and how they have formed the overall structure of the community. The inter relation between culture and language has been established in many studies. From birth, the child's life, opinions and language are shaped by what it comes in contact with. Culture is a set of beliefs and practices governing the life of a society for which a particular language is the vehicle of expression. The understanding of a culture and its people can be enhanced by the knowledge of their language. Different thoughts are brought about by the use of different forms of language. People who share a culture but speak different languages will have different world views. “Language is rooted in culture and. culture is reflected and passed on by language from one generation to the next. In the light of this perception, one can see that learning a new language involves the learning of a new culture.” (Allwright &
Bailey, 1991) Consequently, teachers of a language are also teachers of Culture (Byram,1989). In the Indian context diversity is defined in terms of many languages and many different cultures. Multilingualism is a unique feature of Indian culture and heritage.

The United Nation’s 2004 Human Development Report links cultural liberty to language rights and human development and argues that there is:

> …No more powerful means of ‘encouraging’ individuals to assimilate to a dominant culture than having the economic, social and political returns stacked against their mother tongue. Such assimilation is not freely chosen if the choice is between one’s mother tongue and one’s future.

The press release about the UN report exemplifies the role of language as an exclusionary tool;

> Limitations on people’s ability to use their native language – and limited facility in speaking and dominant or official national language -can exclude people from education, political life and access to justice.

Viewed from the above perception in a country like India the need for teaching English language becomes highly imperative and if one fails to learn that official national language, it

amounts to excluding the society from the core of education. This language has been looked at as the language of power, status and upward mobility in the background of globalisation where English has become the global language. In India every individual is minimum a bilingual in other words every individual has some level of fluency to two languages namely L1(Regional language/ Mother tongue/ Home language/First language) and L2 invariably English and these two languages are formally taught in schools at all stages (Primary/Secondary and Tertiary) also in India there are schools and colleges where L2 has been the language of instruction or medium of instruction. The impact of formal teaching of L1 and use of L1 in teaching L2 has been found to be a tool of hinderance in the development of skills in L2. Perhaps this perception may be the result of the inadequate competences acquired by the learners in the class rooms. Studies have also proved that using L1 while teaching other subjects the contents of which are in English has been helpful in understanding the contents but not developing L2(Second Language English) skills and not helping the learners to become communicatively competent in the use of L2. The linguistic diversity in India is vast and multilingual context has added to the problems.

In the global scenario the issues governing multilingualism and multiculturalism are as follows:

1. medium-of-instruction policies as ideological and discursive constructs;
2. the gap between (pluralist) discourse and (monolingual) practice;
3. the importance of resources
4. the relationship between ethnolinguistic diversity and social conflict;
5. the potential impact of language rights in education;
6. the tension between global and local concerns.
   (James Tollefson and Amy Tsui (2004)

The issues of Language Education policy are universal. Besides these issues there are some inherent paradoxes and tensions that surround multilingual and multicultural educational systems.

1. linguistic diversity is more visible today, yet increasingly disappearing;
2. languages are equal, yet language hierarchies prevail;
3. hybridities in multilingual practices and in identities are old, yet awareness of them has increased;
4. tensions between state-imposed homogenization and real-life multi-lingualism can occasion the closing or carving out of spaces;
5. English, English, everywhere...

Indian classrooms at the secondary level: A profile, classes at the secondary stage Indian schools are diverse in nature in terms of language proficiency, individual differences, levels of motivation, attitude, aptitude, heterogeneous, linguistic backgrounds, medium of instruction, abilities, teacher perceptions and agendas that mostly mismatch with the learner agendas and the like Though diverse, these classes are also inclusive in many ways.

The language policy of the states and the government at the centre driven National Education Policy do concur in many ways with a little disagreement with reference to language education. The three-language formula recommended by the centre is not accepted in a few states. In the states that advocate two language formula also, the classes are diverse and inclusive. The First Language Policy and Programme (1970) categorically states that the Three Language Formula is a programme and not a policy. The NCERT report on Language (1986) points at deficiencies in the formula. And yet the National Policy on Education (1986) and its revised version (1992) got stuck in the Three Language Formula.

English has been taught as the second language all over the country wherein a multicultural and multilingual environment prevails. The teaching of English with clearly well-defined objectives in multilingual contexts has its obstacles.

Multi lingual contexts have been looked at unfortunately as obstacles in teaching and learning a second language by many practitioners." Education in India has not responded to the challenges of its multilingual ethos. The core of Indian multilingualism is in complementary relationship between languages and in the need to bridge the gap between the minor, minority and tribal languages and the languages of wider communication, including the regional and state level languages -Hindi and English.". (Mohanty,2006)

The implications are, NCF 2005 underlined that bilingual proficiency raises the levels of cognitive growth, social tolerance, divergent thinking and achievement in education. Nevertheless, there is a need to empower our learners by enhancing their communicative competence in English the language of power and 'Lingua franca' besides being the language of reference and a link language.

Addressing this issue has to begin with addressing the curriculum designing and content development areas that helps in meeting the challenges posed by multilingual and multicultural contexts in English classrooms. The term curriculum has been used in this paper to refer to the content to be transacted in the language classrooms which focusses on developing the four major skills namely Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing and in the process developing communicative competent learners and users of English which implies that the learner will be fluent, accurate, appropriate in the use of target Language (Englis. The NCF (2005), in this regard has recommended the use of learners local and folk traditions including tales, riddles, songs, proverbs and so on and it has also emphasised on the need to bring them into the class room and integrate them with the prescribed contents for transactions. Using tales, stories, proverbs as listed above may enhance the motivational levels of the students and the teachers' ability to localise the content. Contextualising teaching facilitates learning. Language takes place in social contexts and makes connections with the realities that make up those contexts. All languages operate in context in relation with other languages too. Contextualising linguistic input has been considered as one of the important macro strategies for language teaching. "Linguistic context in relation to class rooms refers to the immediate linguistic environment that contains formal aspects of language required for the process of meaning making" (Kumaravadivelu (2003), P205).

Contextualising teaching may help in narrowing the target language comprehension load. Contextualising can take place by blending a local with the global, localising the content in English as supplements and if need be, providing linguistic input in the learners first language. Teaching English in Multi lingual context can be made rewarding by using translanguaging as a strategy by the teacher in the class room. Translanguaging is defined as a capability of a bilingual or a multilingual where the many languages known to the learner are tactfully used simultaneously to produce a text in another language. According to Garcia (2009)., translanguaging encapsulates 'the discursive practices in which bilingual engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds'. Leaners other language capabilities have been found to be helping or promoting the learning of L2 that is English in the Indian Context. These capabilities enable or help in learners exerting their autonomy and finding the learner in a zone nee of comfort from where the learner can travel upwards to the zone of the target language. Many Studies have also recommended the use of L1in L2 Classroom in order to soften the anxiety level of the learners, improved retention of content and reduce the cognitive load. Code switching and code mixing can be used as strategies of teaching L2. Translation used judiciously can promote the other language acquisition.

Multilingual classrooms can be more rewarding and promote experiential learning and thus act as a catalyst in the second language learning process. Bilingual contexts and the related issues can be overcome by using translation as a cognitive strategy. L1 can used as a scaffold for facilitating L2 acquisition. Notwithstanding the problems posed by multilingual and

multicultural context teacher of English needs to take a different role in teaching the same. He or she has to become a catalyst, and chain agent and a facilitator by catering to both the affective and cognitive domains of the learner which can be achieved by providing enough space for collaborative and cooperative learning. The teacher of English must necessarily come to terms with the paradigm shifts that have taken place over a period of time. These shifts include teacher centred ness, learner centred and now learning centredness. Which looks at earning a language as a cognitive process. The teacher of English must provide opportunities for the learners in the class room for negotiating with a text (content)for meaning. The teacher of English in the process will have to be a co participant in the learning process. Multilingualism can never be a stumbling block in the English Language learning process but a boon provided teachers of English are competent enough in using the languages that interact with each other in the multilingual context. The need of the hour is the teachers become curriculum designers, content developers, and highly well-informed pedagogue.

References

Agnihotri, R. (1996). Multilingualism, colonialism and translation. In S. Ramakrishna(ed.), Translation and Multilingualism: Post-colonial Context (34-45). Delhi: Pencraft International.

Cohen, A.D. (1995). In which language do/should multilinguals think? Language, Culture, and Curriculum, 8, 99-113.

Cook, V.J. (1999). Going beyond the native speaker in language teaching. TESOL Quarterly, 33/2,185-209.

Cummins, J. (1984). Bilingualism and Special Education: Issues in Assessment and Pedagogy. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Cummins, J. (2000). Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.

Ghosh, D. (2010). Transfer of L1 Literary Capability to L2: A Study at the Tertiary Level. Unpublished M.Phil. dissertation). Hyderabad: The English and Foreign Language University.

Garcia, O. (2006). Lost in the Transculturation: The case of bilingual education in New York City. In Martin Putz, Joshua A. Fishman and Joanne Neff-Van Aertselaer (eds.), Along the Routes to Power: Exploration

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006) Understanding Language Teaching: From Method to Post method. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). Beyond Methods: Macro strategies for Language Teaching. Delhi: Orient Black Swan.

Mohanty, A.K. (2009). Multilingual Education – A Bridge Too Far? In Ajit Mohanty, Minati Panda, Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb Kangas (eds.), Multilingual Education for Social Justice: Globalising the local (295-312). New Delhi: Orient Black Swan.

Widdowson, H.G (2003), Defining Issues in English Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Teacher's and Learner's Experience on Pedagogical Shift: Voices from the AI-Integrated Classroom

Narayana Bashyam

Abstract

The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English language classrooms has preceded in transformative shifts in pedagogy, directing teachers to reimagine their roles, methodologies, and classroom dynamics. The study explores these vicissitudes through teacher observations that show both adaptive strategies and emerging challenges in AI-supported learning environments. Equally central are learners' voices, whose feedback sheds light on motivation, autonomy, and engagement shaped by AI-enhanced instruction. Using a qualitative narrative inquiry approach, the study draws on interviews, reflective journals, and student feedback from AI-integrated classrooms. Findings highlight a duality: while AI facilitates differentiated instruction, real-time feedback, and learner independence, it also raises concerns about depersonalization, ethical dilemmas, and gaps in teacher preparedness. The paper argues for intentional reflective practice, ethical integration of technology, and robust institutional support to empower educators and learners alike. It contributes to ongoing conversations about sustainable, inclusive, and human-centered language education in an increasingly digital age.

Keywords: Pedagogical shift, teacher and learner's experience, reflective practice, ethical integration

Background of the Study

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly influenced contemporary education, reshaping how language is taught, learned, and assessed. In English language teaching (ELT), AI has moved beyond grammar-checking and automated feedback tools to now include intelligent tutoring systems, conversational agents, content generation tools, and predictive analytics for learner behavior (Luckin et al., 2016; Holmes et al., 2019). These developments have prompted educators to reconsider traditional pedagogical models and to adopt hybrid, adaptive, and personalized learning strategies that respond to the evolving digital ecology of the classroom (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

Within this context, teachers are not only implementers of AI tools but also active participants navigating professional and emotional transformations. Studies have shown that integrating AI into the classroom demands a reconfiguration of teacher roles—from knowledge transmitters to facilitators, co-learners, and digital mediators (Huang et al., 2021; Popenici & Kerr, 2017). However, this shift is not without tension. While AI enables customized learning experiences and supports inclusive education (Chen et al., 2020), it also raises concerns about teacher deskilling, data privacy, and the erosion of the humanistic elements of language instruction (Selwyn, 2019).

Equally critical is the learner's experience in this technologically mediated environment. As digital natives and non-natives navigate AI-enhanced classrooms, their perceptions, motivations, and learning outcomes are profoundly shaped by the interplay of automation and human facilitation (Tsai et al., 2020). Research on learner feedback in AI-integrated settings suggests increased learner autonomy and immediate engagement but also highlights anxieties around depersonalized instruction and algorithmic bias (Bano et al., 2023; Blume, 2021).

Despite growing research on AI in education, there is limited exploration of the narrative dimension—the lived experiences, reflections, and voices of teachers and students adapting to

AI in real-time classroom scenarios. This paper seeks to fill this gap by foregrounding narrative inquiry to capture the affective, ethical, and pedagogical shifts engendered by AI integration in English classrooms. Through teacher narratives and learner feedback, this study aims to provide nuanced insights into how AI is not just a technological tool but a transformative presence redefining classroom relationships, pedagogical practices, and learner agency.

Literature Review

The Emergence of Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching (ELT)

The inception of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English Language Teaching (ELT) has greatly transformed instructional approaches by allowing adaptive learning environments, real-time feedback, and personalized teaching. Web platforms like ChatGPT, Grammarly, Duolingo, and AI-powered learning management systems (LMS) have improved not only linguistic accuracy but also fluency, comprehension, and learner confidence (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Luckin et al., 2016). These applications can automate repetitive tasks such as grading and feedback while providing students prompt support, thereby permitting teachers to focus more on classroom friendly ambience and human interaction (Chen et al., 2020).

Personalization the AI's most significant feature. AI systems can modify content and difficulty levels to meet individual requirements by investigating learner performance data (Holmes et al., 2019). This means custom vocabulary practice, pronunciation improvement by means of speech recognition, and grammar correction through AI-assisted writing aids in ELT classrooms (Blume, 2021). Moreover, natural language processing (NLP) empowers intelligent tutoring systems engages conversation with students, helping them to replicate language use in everyday situations.

But the emergence of AI is not without its disadvantages. Apprehensions around algorithmic bias, data privacy, and the excessive reliance on AI-generated material are raised by several research (Selwyn, 2019; Bano et al., 2023). Teachers concern about losing their instructional autonomy to algorithms, while others claim a lack of institutional support in the form of training and infrastructure (Popenici & Kerr, 2017). AI-powered tools frequently fall short in ELT, where cultural sensitivity, emotional engagement, and creativity are crucial, consecutively the risk of depersonalising the learning experience (Nguyen et al., 2022).

The Role of Teachers in AI-Enhanced Environments

In the context of AI-enhanced classrooms, the role of the teacher has evolved from traditional knowledge providers as facilitators, mentors, and digital navigators (Huang et al., 2021). Teachers in AI-integrated environments are required to arrange hybrid pedagogies, blending human instruction with algorithm-driven feedback. This frequently comprises curating content, mediating between student and machine responses, and engaging in continuous assessment (Luckin et al., 2016). The teacher's moral duty becomes essential: determining when and how to use AI, dealing student data responsibly, and upholding academic integrity in an age of AI-created content (Selwyn, 2019).

Redefining one's professional identity is another. To manage the cognitive overload of tech-rich environments, teachers today need to be emotionally resilient, technologically literate, and possess technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) (Koehler et al., 2013). Others feel inaccessible or exploited, particularly in institutions with limited resources, while others welcome this shift as a means of achieving efficiency and creativity (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Particularly, research on teacher agency in AI settings prove that they can regain their professional voice and process these changes with the support of narrative reflection (Barkhuizen et al., 2014).

Learner Autonomy, Engagement, and Feedback in AI-Integrated Classrooms

As Artificial intelligence becomes more prevalent, the learner's role is undergoing significant transformation in the classrooms. Today's learners are expected to be self-regulated, independent and digitally savvy. AI technologies creating opportunities by offering personalized feedback and on-demand support for students to take greater ownership of their learning (Tsai et al., 2020).

The study signifies that AI adopts greater learner engagement through gamification, adaptive feedback, and interactive learning environments. Tools such as AI writing assistants, pronunciation apps, and chatbots provide immediate targeted feedback, helping students stay motivated and fostering a willingness to experiment with language use (Bano et al., 2023).

However, not all students benefit equally. Learners with limited digital skills or inadequate access to technology may find AI tools challenging, risking feelings of exclusion or overdependence on the technology (Nguyen et al., 2022). Moreover, some students report a sense of detachment due to the impersonal nature of AI, raising questions about the psychological and emotional scopes of AI-powered learning (Blume, 2021).

Feedback, remains a cornerstone of language learning, is one area where AI has made considerable contributions. Yet, while AI might overlook context, tone, and rhetorical effectiveness, it can provide immediate, grammar-focused corrections. Human intervention is vital to help learners construe feedback meaningfully, improve critical awareness, and apply learning thoughtfully (Chen et al., 2020).

Finally, these trends point toward a blended approach, where technology complements human guidance. Listening to students' perspectives and experiences with AI feedback is crucial for shaping future educational practices.

Narrative Inquiry in an AI-powered Learning

Narrative inquiry is a significant approach to investigate the personal and professional dimensions of teaching and learning shaped by AI and technology. As a form of qualitative inquiry, it selects storytelling, reflection, and lived experience, presenting deep insights into identity construction, belief systems, and sense of purpose (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

In English Language Teaching and educational technology, narrative inquiry consents researchers to see how teachers adapt pedagogical shift, face uncertainty, and rethink their professional roles (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). It also permits learners to share their experiences with AI, giving voice to their aspirations, fears, and response in ways that data alone might miss.

Narrative helps as both data and mode of expression. For teachers, writing and sharing stories can encourage professional growth, community-building, and emotional processing. For students, narratives help how technology influences their learning journeys, language use, and self-image (Johnson & Golombek, 2011).

This approach highlights profoundly connected themes: how pedagogy changes, how technology is embedded, and how teacher and learner identities change. AI interprets both challenges and opportunities, making reflection and open dialogue through stories even more significant. Teaching in the AI era must move from traditional lectures to experiential, inquiry-driven, and student-cantered methods. Teachers need to foster growth mindsets, directing between tradition and innovation, while learners must develop resilience, independence, and ethical awareness in using digital tools (Holmes et al., 2019).

AI is not just a tool but a cultural force that restructures power dynamics, communication, and emotions in the classroom. Therefore, investigating teacher and learner autonomy form their identities is critical for sustainable education. Narrative inquiry proposes a powerful means of addressing these themes holistically. By sharing stories of hope, struggle,

adaptation, and learning, this research maps with the conference mission to produce inclusive, forward-thinking, and ethical educational environments.

Methodology

This study choses a qualitative research design, explicitly guided by the principles of narrative inquiry, to discover how English teachers and learners experience the AI-integrated classroom (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In the context of this study, narrative inquiry helps as both a methodology and a lens to inspect pedagogical shift, emotional responses, and reflections on learner engagement within AI-supported English language teaching (ELT).

By focusing on narratives rather than isolated variables, this study seeks to present a holistic understanding of how technology reshapes pedagogical settings and learner experiences. The study included two groups of participants: English language teachers and their students who had direct experience with AI-integrated teaching. All the participants were fluent in English and volunteered to take part after understanding the purpose of the study. While not statistically representative, the sample was theoretically flooded to provide rich, nuanced, and varied stories.

Teacher's Observations on Pedagogical Changes

Lesson Planning and Instruction with AI Tools

Teachers consistently described a noticeable change in how they plan and deliver their lessons after integrating AI tools into the classroom. Instead of relying solely on traditional methods, many now weave in tools like Grammarly to help students improve their writing, use Google Bard and ChatGPT for brainstorming and exploring new ideas, and turn to platforms such as ScribeSense and Quizizz to make assessments more efficient and automated. Despite this eagerness, multiple challenges surfaced. Many teachers reported early confrontation, rooted in discomfort with technology and a lack of institutional support. Many teachers pointed out a major challenge: they were asked to use AI tools in their teaching without receiving proper training or clear guidelines. This lack of support left some feeling anxious, especially about students becoming too dependent on AI-generated content or the possibility of increased plagiarism.

Ethical questions also popped up. Teachers doubted whether students should be allowed to use AI for essay writing, how to make sure students' work is original, and what should be done if AI produces inappropriate or misleading information. These concerns reflect broader warnings from experts, who say that while AI can make teaching more efficient, it may also deteriorate students' critical thinking and ethical judgment if not carefully managed. Despite these challenges, teachers also shared several positives. They noticed that AI tools often made lessons more engaging, particularly for students who were usually less willing to participate. The newness of these technologies piqued curiosity and even helped reduce anxiety around classroom performance.

AI also saved teachers valuable time, especially through automated feedback and formative assessments. With platforms like Socrative and AI-powered grading tools, teachers could spend less time marking and more time having meaningful conversations with students. Another benefit was the improved ability to meet different students' needs. AI offered features like text-to-speech, instant definitions, and simplified summaries, making lessons more accessible for learners of all abilities and backgrounds. This meant that students could interact with material in ways that suited their own learning styles and language skills.

Learner's Views and Response

Students had varied reactions to using AI in their language learning. Many valued the immediate feedback, tailored suggestions, and greater independence these tools provided. They often saw AI as a supportive, non-judgmental helper—one that made grammar checks and vocabulary practice less intimidating. Platforms like Grammarly and Quillbot were described as "more patient" and "less scary" than feedback from instructors, which some students worried might feel harsh or discouraging. Still, some students expressed concerns. They noticed that AI feedback could be inconsistent at times and often missed the context behind their writing.

Change in Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms

The way students are assessed has been changing, too. While AI tools excel at spotting grammar mistakes and improving basic readability, students pointed out that these systems frequently miss the creative and cultural aspects of writing, such as originality or the strength of an argument. Teachers agreed, noting that they often needed to adjust rubrics and criteria when students relied on AI to draft or outline their work.

These changes bring up important questions for everyone involved: Are we putting too much value on getting things "right" and not enough on helping students find their unique voice? Does algorithmic feedback empower individual growth, or does it risk making everyone's writing too similar? Ultimately, as the feedback process moves from personal teacher comments to machine-generated reports, it's a reminder to treat writing as a personal and social experience, not just a technical skill to perfect.

In conclusion, the stories presented in this research reveal a complex but optimistic view of AI's role in teaching and learning English. Although challenges like resistance, ethical uncertainties, and a sense of detachment persist, AI also unfolds exciting opportunities for greater engagement, independence, and collaborative learning. The voices of both teachers and students make it clear that AI's future in education isn't about replacing people—it's about transforming how we teach, learn, and reflect together. As classrooms continue to change, keeping human experiences at the heart of the process through storytelling and meaningful feedback will be essential in creating a teaching approach that is not only technologically advanced but truly human-centred.

Implications and Recommendations

The key insights from teacher observations and student responses in AI-integrated English classrooms call for a fresh look at teaching priorities, institutional roles, and educational policies. While AI shows great potential to boost engagement, personalize learning, and reduce teachers' workloads, its success depends on ongoing human guidance, compact infrastructure, and a commitment to ethical, inclusive education. The following recommendations are aimed at important groups shaping classroom experiences: teachers, institutions, and policymakers.

Recommendations

- **Build strong digital infrastructure:** Make sure both teachers and students have fair access to devices and reliable internet. Invest in cloud-based platforms that smoothly integrate AI tools with learning management systems to streamline feedback and data tracking
- **Create dedicated EdTech support teams:** Assign technology coordinators or instructional designers to help educators use and troubleshoot AI tools. Provide ongoing, bite-sized training sessions rather than just one-time orientations.

- **Develop clear AI policies and ethical guidelines:** Define acceptable uses of AI for tasks like assessments, writing help, and plagiarism checks. Be transparent about how student data is collected, stored, and used by AI applications.
- **Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration:** Support partnerships between English departments and fields like computer science, data ethics, and instructional design to co-create resources. Experiment with classroom models where language and digital skills are taught together.
- **Evaluate AI tools based on pedagogy, not just technology:** Institutions should prioritize tools that align with curriculum goals and student needs, not just those that are popular or highly automated. Teachers should have a voice in selecting technology to ensure it fits classroom realities.

A Future Vision: AI-integrated Classroom

This study's findings remind us that integrating technology isn't only about the tools themselves—it's about the people who use them. For AI to truly transform English language education, the collective efforts of teachers, institutions, and policymakers must come together. Teachers should be empowered as co-creators of AI-enhanced learning, not just users. Institutions need to become supportive ecosystems that foster innovation, not just providers of equipment. Policymakers must ensure that the AI revolution in education is fair, inclusive, and grounded firmly in sound teaching principles.

Above all, any approach to AI in education must honour the deeply human elements of teaching and learning—conversation, empathy, reflection, and storytelling. Only then can AI become a true partner in creating meaningful, accessible, and future-ready language education.

Conclusion

This research investigated how English language teachers and learners' voices AI integration in the classroom, focusing on pedagogical vicissitudes and learner response. Using narrative inquiry, it highlighted the human voices often overshadowed by the excitement around educational technology. Both teachers and students shared how AI has become a transformative yet sometimes divisive presence in language learning.

Teachers described a shifting identity—from content deliverers to facilitators of AI-enhanced learning—experiencing both challenges and opportunities. AI improved lesson planning, personalized feedback, and saved time but also brought ethical questions, workload uncertainty, and emotional resistance. They emphasized the need for ongoing learning, collaboration, and emotional support, showing that successful AI use depends as much on adaptability as on technology. Students' feedback painted a nuanced picture, revealing both empowerment and alienation. Many appreciated the autonomy and instant, non-judgmental feedback AI provided, yet missed human connection and raised concerns about fairness, loss of individual voice, and accuracy. Importantly, students expressed a desire for a hybrid model blending AI's efficiency with human empathy.

These findings underscore the value of teacher and learner stories in understanding AI's impact on English language teaching. Beyond data and metrics, narratives reveal lived experiences, emotional realities, and professional growth, helping educators and learners reclaim agency and imagine future learning paths grounded in humanity. The study calls for a deeper, inclusive exploration of AI's role in creating equitable and meaningful education. As AI evolves, stakeholders must confront who benefits, who is excluded, and how to ensure AI supports rather than replaces human insight and connection. This requires collaboration among teachers, learners, policymakers, developers, and researchers dedicated to humanizing AI integration.

Ultimately, this research enriches both our understanding of AI in language education and the broader conversation about change, voice, and inclusion. By listening to those on the front lines—teachers adapting to new roles and students navigating shifting learning environments—we move toward a future, where, technology and humanity work in thoughtful partnership.

References

Bano, M., Zowghi, D., Ferretti, S., & Al-Nuaimi, M. (2023). Understanding students' concerns about AI tutors: A mixed-method study in higher education. *Computers & Education, 196*, 104745. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2023.104745

Barkhuizen, G., Benson, P., & Chik, A. (2014). *Narrative inquiry in language teaching and learning research*. Routledge.

Blume, C. (2021). Artificial Intelligence and the foreign language classroom: Potentials and limitations of ChatGPT. *Foreign Language Annals, 54*(2), 328–345. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12577

Chen, L., Chen, P., & Lin, Z. (2020). Artificial Intelligence in education: A review. *IEEE Access, 8*, 75264–75278. https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2020.2988510

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in Qualitative research*. Jossey-Bass.

Holmes, W., Bialik, M., & Fadel, C. (2019). *Artificial Intelligence in education: Promises and implications for teaching and learning*. Center for Curriculum Redesign. https://curriculumredesign.org/wp-content/uploads/AI-in-Education-Promises-and-Implications_for_Teaching_and_Learning.pdf

Huang, R. H., Liu, D. J., Tlili, A., Yang, J. F., & Wang, H. H. (2021). *Handbook on facilitating flexible learning during educational disruption*. Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University. https://iite.unesco.org/publications/handbook-on-facilitating-flexible-learning/

Jenkins, H., Purushotma, R., Weigel, M., Clinton, K., & Robison, A. J. (2009). *Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century*. MIT Press.

Johnson, K. E., & Golombek, P. R. (2011). *Research on second language teacher education: A sociocultural perspective on professional development*. Routledge.

Koehler, M. J., Mishra, P., & Cain, W. (2013). What is technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK)? *Journal of Education, 193*(3), 13–19. https://doi.org/10.1177/002205741319300303

Luckin, R., Holmes, W., Griffiths, M., & Forcier, L. B. (2016). *Intelligence unleashed: An argument for AI in education*. Pearson Education. https://www.pearson.com/content/dam/one-dot-com/one-dot-com/global/Files/about-pearson/innovation/open-ideas/Intelligence-Unleashed-Publication.pdf

Nguyen, A., Gardner, L. A., & Sheridan, D. (2022). The risks and rewards of AI in learning: Perspectives from students and teachers. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 38*(1), 20–37. https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.7190

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 8*(1), 5–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839950080103

Popenici, S. A. D., & Kerr, S. (2017). Exploring the impact of artificial intelligence on teaching and learning in higher education. *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning, 12*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41039-017-0062-8

Selwyn, N. (2019). *Should robots replace teachers? AI and the future of education*. Polity Press.

Tsai, C. W., Shen, P. D., & Tsai, M. J. (2020). Developing the computer programming self-

efficacy scale for computer literacy education. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society, 23*(1), 1–13.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/26915236

Zawacki-Richter, O., Marín, V. I., Bond, M., & Gouverneur, F. (2019). Systematic review of research on artificial intelligence applications in higher education: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 16*, 39. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-019-0171-0

Implications For Designing English Language Curriculum at Secondary Stage in the Digital Age

Braj Kishor Gupta & Ajith K

Abstract

In today's rapidly changing world, where societal linguistic needs evolve quickly, it becomes essential to regularly review and update curricula to stay relevant. Curriculum serves as an instrument for achieving learning objectives. It's a structured program that reflects an institution's vision and acts as a roadmap for students to achieve their goals. The present digital era, characterised by rapid and widespread change, necessitates that educators and language experts revisit the fundamental principles and established practices of curriculum design. This is crucial to address the new needs of language learners that have emerged due to the continuous technological advancements. This need is also driven by the shift in English language teaching and learning from teacher-centric to learner-centric approaches in both classroom practices and curriculum development. Furthermore, there has been a paradigm shift from product-oriented to process-facilitating systems in curriculum development to aid language acquisition. This paper explores the possibilities of incorporating technology-friendly content to promote language learning, particularly at the secondary stage. It also examines the potential outcomes of such incorporation, especially in developing the communicative competencies of learners. The paper will also analyse the differing roles of key stakeholders in the process of designing the English language curriculum. This paper is framed within the Sociocultural Theory of language learning, which emphasises the role of social interaction and technology as a mediating tool.

Keywords: Curriculum, Language Pedagogy, Secondary Education, Technology, NEP2020

1. Introduction

The global landscape has witnessed a profound and rapid transformation, driven by digital technologies that are reshaping societal, cultural, and linguistic needs. In this dynamic environment, the need to regularly review and update educational curricula has become more critical than ever before. In India, a country proverbially characterised by its immense diversity and multilingualism, English serves as a pivotal language for national and international communication, as well as a key to employment and global mobility. The traditional English language curriculum, often rooted in outdated, product-oriented practices and a focus on rote - learning fails to meet the demands of the modern, volatile society. This conspicuous want creates a detrimental mismatch between the knowledge imparted in educational institutions and the skills needed by the industry. The recent and widespread shift in work culture, following the global pandemic has only amplified the urgency to integrate a new set of digital skills, such as data literacy and proficiency with Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, into the curriculum.

The proposed framework for an English language curriculum at the secondary stage represents a timely and significant contribution to the field. Its novelty lies not in the individual components it advocates for, but in its systematic and integrated approach. It moves beyond a general call for technology integration to provide a comprehensive, layered blueprint for curriculum design and implementation. This paper, therefore, serves as an in-depth academic review, providing the necessary theoretical and empirical grounding to substantiate the proposed framework. a robust assessment model, and a critical analysis of the associated ethical considerations. It aims to elevate the original paper from a set of compelling observations to a foundational academic resource that can inform future research and pedagogical practice.

2. Theoretical Perspectives

The development of any educational framework must be anchored in a solid theoretical foundation. The proposed curriculum is built upon a synthesis of three major theoretical perspectives: Sociocultural Theory, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model. Individually, these theories provide valuable guidance; when integrated, they form a powerful and cohesive blueprint for a learner-centric, technology-infused curriculum. This section will explore the relevance of each theory and demonstrate its synergistic application.

2.1 Understanding Sociocultural Theory

This paper is framed within the Sociocultural Theory of language learning, which views language acquisition as a social process with technology serving as a mediating tool. This perspective is crucial in the digital age, where social interaction is increasingly tech-mediated, causing digital platforms to evolve from supplemental tools into primary environments for communication, collaboration, and knowledge construction.

Applying this theory, a digital curriculum uses technologies like wikis, blogs, and collaborative documents as new social spaces where students co-create knowledge and practice language skills in rich contexts. This approach transforms technology from a passive repository of information into an active medium for interaction. Instead of simply receiving knowledge, students use these collaborative tools to collectively build it, reinforcing the theory's emphasis on active learning and linking theoretical principles with practical application

2.2 Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), a cornerstone of modern language pedagogy, focuses on developing learners' ability to use language for real-world purposes. The proposed curriculum embraces CLT by prioritising the functional aspect of English and preparing learners to use language to "get things done." The digital age provides the ideal environment for a full and authentic implementation of CLT.

Digital tools and platforms offer a limitless supply of authentic materials, such as newspaper articles, social media posts, and online interviews, which can be easily integrated into the curriculum. More importantly, technology enables the design of tasks that go beyond the traditional classroom, such as creating a video presentation or collaborating on a blog, which are far more aligned with real-world communication than conventional drills. AI-powered tools, for instance, can simulate real-life communication scenarios, providing students with opportunities to practice speaking in a low-stakes environment while receiving instant, personalised feedback on fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation. This approach generates a "felt need" for learning, where students are motivated to acquire language skills because they are immediately applicable to a meaningful task. By facilitating these authentic, purpose-driven experiences, the proposed framework can realise the potential of CLT in a way that traditional, non-digital curricula could not.

2.3 The TPACK Model

The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model provides a framework for the integrated knowledge of content, pedagogy, and technology required for effective teaching, moving beyond viewing technology as an isolated add-on.

To address challenges in India like inadequate infrastructure and teacher preparedness, the TPACK framework offers a research-backed solution. It provides a roadmap for professional development that guides educators to make purposeful choices about using technology to support learning goals, empowering them as facilitators. The framework continues to evolve, with models like "AI-TPACK" adapting to new instructional demands.

The relationship between the three frameworks is symbiotic. Sociocultural Theory provides the philosophical foundation for social learning, CLT offers the pedagogical approach focused on communicative tasks, and TPACK supplies the practical framework for teachers to blend these elements with technology effectively.

Theory	Core Principle	Relevance to Digital ELT	Practical Example
Sociocultural Theory	Learning is a social process; knowledge is actively constructed through interaction and mediation.	Technology acts as a mediating tool, providing virtual spaces for social interaction and collaborative knowledge building.	Students collaboratively research and write a class-wide digital wiki on a chosen topic, contributing content based on their individual interests (AlAhdal, 2020).
Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)	Language is for communication; focus on functional competence and real-world application.	Digital platforms offer authentic materials and enable the creation of meaningful, purpose-driven tasks that require real-world communication.	Students use AI-powered platforms with speech recognition to practice and refine their pronunciation for a class presentation, receiving real-time feedback. (Artificial intelligence-based language learning, 2025)
TPACK Model	Effective technology integration requires the fusion of Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Knowledge, and Technological Knowledge.	Provides a structured roadmap for teacher professional development, guiding educators to make deliberate, intentional choices about technology use.	A teacher uses their combined knowledge to select a specific AI-powered tool to create a personalised, adaptive learning path for a student struggling with a particular grammar point. (LMS Artificial Intelligence, 2025)

3. The Proposed Curriculum Framework

The shift in curriculum design from a product-oriented to a process-facilitating system is a fundamental principle of the proposed framework. This section dwells on the design of the curriculum, focusing on a Tier 3, high-resource scenario and providing concrete examples of the tasks that can be implemented to achieve its objectives. The analysis of this ideal environment can serve as a conceptual blueprint for the future of ELT in India.

3.1 A Needs-Based Curriculum

A core principle of the curriculum is shifting the focus from knowledge to skills and from a subject-based to a needs-based, learner-centric model. Digital tools are not ancillary to this shift; they are the primary enablers. A traditional classroom's one-size-fits-all curriculum often fails to cater to the diverse needs and learning styles of an entire group. *(New Haven Unified School District, 2025)* Modern technology allows for a fundamental re-imagining of this model.

The proposed framework, particularly in a high-resource setting, leverages technology to provide personalised learning pathways for each student *(Nucamp, 2025).* Adaptive learning platforms and AI-powered Learning Management Systems (LMS) use algorithms to assess a

student's proficiency and automatically deliver content and remediation tailored *(Docebo, 2025)* to their individual needs. This ensures each student receives relevant instruction, thereby maximising engagement and effectiveness. By making the curriculum responsive to the individual learner, this approach fulfils the promise of a truly needs-based and learner-centric system.

3.2 Designing the Framework: Tier 3 (High-Resource)

The paper focuses primarily on a fully digitised, high-resource classroom (Tier 3), where the curriculum can incorporate concepts of Learning Management Systems (LMS), AI, and multimodal projects. A high-resource classroom is defined by its robust infrastructure, which includes a reliable internet connection, digital devices for every student, and access to advanced educational technologies.

At the heart of this environment is an AI-powered LMS, such as Work Ramp, Do Cebo, or Absorb LMS *(WorkRamp, 2025).* These platforms go beyond basic course management to automate administrative tasks, curate content, and provide personalised learning paths and recommendations for students *(Docebo, 2025).* The ISTE Standards provide a comprehensive framework for this environment, guiding educators to use technology to design authentic, learner-driven activities and to act as facilitators who use data to guide instruction *(ISTE, 2025).* AI, in particular, offers the potential to automate routine tasks, such as generating content, quizzes, and even feedback, thereby freeing up teachers to focus on more meaningful, project-based work and one-on-one student support (Nucamp, 2025). By designing a curriculum around a Tier 3 setting, the framework can fully leverage the potential of these technologies to create an innovative and highly effective learning environment.

3.3 Implementing Meaningful Tasks

The proposed curriculum emphasizes the need to go beyond theoretical discussion to the practical implementation of tasks, using Digital Multimodal Composing (DMC) as a core task type. DMC is a pedagogical approach that moves beyond traditional writing to include digital media like video, audio, and visuals, preparing students for the multimodal literacies required in the digital age. Creating projects such as a podcast or a video can increase learner autonomy and motivation. When students share these creations online with an authentic audience, they become more motivated and engaged, and their "voice" is legitimized *(ERIC, 2022).* AI can be seamlessly integrated into these tasks to enhance the learning experience. AI tools can generate real-world case studies for students to analyse, providing opportunities to practice critical thinking and problem-solving skills *(Faculty Focus, 2025).*

A powerful strategy is the "two-case-study" method, where students complete a task first without and then with AI assistance to understand its appropriate use. This approach fosters not just digital literacy but also critical digital literacy, which involves assessing the credibility and ethical implications of technology *(ISTE, 2025).*

Curriculum Principle	**Technology Tool/Platform**	**Corresponding Multimodal Task/Project**	**Learning Outcome**
Personalization	AI-powered LMS with adaptive algorithms	Automated, AI-generated learning paths and quizzes tailored to an individual student's needs.	Increased student engagement and accelerated mastery of foundational language skills.*(WorkRamp, 2025)*
Authentic Communication	Digital media (e.g., video, audio, graphic design software)	Digital storytelling projects, podcast production, or infographic design on a real-world	Development of multimodal literacies, critical thinking, and creative expression.*(ERIC, 2022)*

		topic.	
Learner-Driven Inquiry	Collaborative platforms (e.g., wikis, Google Docs) and AI tools	Student-led research projects and wiki creation on a topic of personal interest, using AI for initial research and content generation.	Enhanced collaborative skills, research skills, and genre awareness. *(ERIC, 2022)*
Critical Thinking	AI-powered tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Perplexity)	A "two-case-study" method where students complete a task with and without AI, followed by a critical reflection on the process.	Strategic use of technology, critical evaluation of AI output, and development of higher-order problem-solving skills. *(Faculty Focus, 2025)*
Professional Development	Moodle for Teachers, other professional learning networks (PLNs)	A series of hands-on workshops for teachers on using AI to generate WebQuests and create Moodle activities.	Increased teacher confidence, technological knowledge (TK), and proficiency with digital tools for pedagogy. *(IOSR Journal, 2025)*

4. Implementation Challenges

A successful curriculum is not merely a document of goals and tasks; it is a complex, dynamic system that relies on the concerted efforts of multiple stakeholders, a robust professional development plan, and a supportive infrastructure. This section discusses the practicalities of implementing the proposed framework, emphasising the evolving roles of educators, the critical need for continuous professional development, and the strategic focus on a high-resource environment as a model for future innovation.

4.1 Evolving Roles of Key Stakeholders

This framework necessitates a redefinition of roles for all stakeholders. Traditionally, the teacher was the sole purveyor of knowledge, but in a technology-infused classroom, their role shifts to that of a facilitator, curator, and mentor. They must design complex learning environments that empower students to take ownership of their learning. Students, in turn, are no longer passive recipients of information; they become active learners, content creators, and collaborators in their own education *(SETDA, 2025).*

Successful implementation requires a collaborative approach involving all stakeholders, from educators and administrators to policymakers and parents *(Fiveable, 2025).* Administrators and policymakers must establish a shared vision for digital transformation, ensure equitable access to technology, and provide resources for curriculum development and professional growth *(ISTE, 2025).* Parents and community members must also be engaged and educated on the benefits of digital learning to support the curriculum at home. The post-pandemic momentum for technology adoption offers a unique opportunity for public-private partnerships to deliver blended learning for all students in India *(Think with Google, 2025).*

4.2 Teachers' Professional Development

For the successful implementation of technology-infused curricula in India, providing digital tools without adequate training is insufficient and often leads to ineffective use of the technology. The proposed framework, therefore, mandates a continuous, robust professional development plan rooted in the TPACK model *(IOSR Journal, 2025).*

A TPACK-based professional development program goes beyond basic technical training; it helps teachers integrate technology to achieve specific content and pedagogical

goals *(CITE Journal, 2025*). Case studies show that a professional learning approach combining workshops with immediate, real-life classroom application is highly effective in building a teacher's TPACK. Online platforms and organisations like "Integrating Technology for Active Lifelong Learning" offer free, hands-on courses for educators, covering topics such as using AI to generate content and managing Moodle sites. These resources provide a practical pathway for teachers to gain not only digital competencies but also the confidence and skill to act as change-makers in a dynamic educational environment *(ResearchGate, 2025).*

4.3 The Digital Divide

It's important to note that a significant digital divide exists across India. While this report models an ideal Tier 3, high-resource scenario, this model is not a one-size-fits-all solution. This divide is multifaceted, encompassing a lack of physical infrastructure like electricity and computers, as well as disparities in reliable internet access, digital literacy, and socioeconomic *factors (BSSS Publications, 2016).*

Acknowledging these limitations is a necessary step toward a pragmatic, long-term strategy. Although the Tier 3 model provides a vision for a fully digitized curriculum, its innovations can be adapted for lower-resource settings. Research shows that innovative projects are already being implemented in low-resource contexts (Tiers 1 and 2), often leveraging mobile devices to provide access to learning materials and professional development *(ResearchGate, 2022)*. By first developing a blueprint for a high-resource environment, this framework can serve as a foundation for future research and policymaking aimed at adapting these best practices for India's diverse educational landscape.

5. The Assessment Framework

The transition from a product-oriented to a process-facilitating curriculum requires a parallel shift in assessment practices. The proposed framework advocates for a move away from traditional, rote-based exams towards a competency-based assessment model that measures higher-order skills such as critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving. This section outlines how this can be achieved, with a particular focus on innovative digital assessment methods and the strategic use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as a guiding standard.

5.1 Adopting Competency-Based Assessment

Traditional assessment methods, often focused on written tests and disconnected facts, are insufficient for measuring a learner's holistic language competence in the digital age. Competency-based learning emphasizes demonstrating outcomes and skills over the memorization of information *(Learner Variability Project, 2025)*. Digital assessment tools and platforms are transforming this process by enabling a more comprehensive and responsive evaluation framework.

AI-powered assessments, for example, can provide real-time feedback on writing and speaking, which enhances learner engagement and provides a personalized learning experience. Moreover, digital environments facilitate authentic tasks, like video discussions and collaborative projects that can holistically measure proficiency in social interaction, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills abilities difficult to evaluate with traditional tests *(Digital Applied Linguistics, 2025).* This shift in assessment is not just a technological upgrade; it is a pedagogical necessity that aligns with the curriculum's goal of developing communicative competence for real-world application *(Learning Gate, 2025)*.

5.2 The CEFR as Reference Point

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a widely recognized international standard providing a clear, comprehensive framework for describing

language proficiency. It organizes language skills into six levels, from A1 (beginner) to C2 (proficient), defined by "can-do" statements that describe what a learner can do with the language *(LTI, 2025).*

The strategic use of the CEFR is a critical component of the proposed framework. While its Eurocentric origins are subject to academic debate, its methodology specifically its use of "can-do" descriptors provides an invaluable blueprint for designing valid and reliable competency-based assessments (SCIENTIA, 2025). Rather than simply adopting the CEFR as a foreign standard, the proposed framework leverages its conceptual approach to create contextually relevant assessment tasks that measure real-world skills *(Tracktest English, 2025; Oxford University, 2025).* Online platforms like Track test and Oxford University's Language Centre already use this framework to evaluate language proficiency digitally, using assessments that measure all four language skills through tasks like voice recordings and written responses. This demonstrates that the CEFR's principles are compatible with digital assessment and are already being successfully operationalized.

CEFR Level	Corresponding "Can-do" Statement	Digital Assessment Task	Technology Tool
A1	"Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details..."	Create a short video introduction of oneself and a friend, and use a voice recording tool to ask and answer a few simple questions.	A mobile device with a video recorder and a language learning app with speech recognition. (ResearchGate, 2022)
A2	"Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters."	Participate in a live, text-based chat with a virtual AI assistant on a familiar topic, such as ordering food or asking for directions.	An AI chatbot or virtual assistant platform. (WorkRamp, 2025)
B1	"Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest."	Write a short, opinion-based blog post on a topic of personal interest and respond to a few comments from a simulated peer audience.	Personal blog platform or collaborative online document. (Ohio Department of Education, 2025)
B2	"Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue, giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options."	Design an infographic on a social issue (e.g., climate change) using a graphic design tool, presenting both the problem and potential solutions.	Canva, Piktochart, or other graphic design software. (EHE Distance Education, 2025)
C1	"Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning... and can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes."	Create and produce a 10-minute podcast episode on a complex academic topic, including a written summary and a transcript.	Podcast recording and editing software, and collaborative online documents. (EHE Distance Education, 2025)

6. Ethical Considerations in the Digital Curriculum

The rapid and widespread adoption of digital technology in education, while offering unprecedented opportunities, also introduces significant ethical challenges. The proposed

curriculum, particularly in its focus on a high-resource, AI-infused environment, must proactively address these issues rather than viewing them as an afterthought. This section delves into the major ethical considerations and offers a framework for responsible, human-centred EdTech implementation.

6.1 New Landscape of EdTech Ethics

The ethical landscape of EdTech is complex and requires a new approach to governance. Research identifies three critical areas of concern: student data privacy and security, algorithmic bias, and the impact on the teacher-student relationship. A successful digital curriculum must be built on a "human-centred educational philosophy" and a comprehensive governance framework that operates across technical, institutional, and educational dimensions. It is imperative that institutions move from a reactive stance on these issues to a proactive one, embedding ethical considerations into the very design and implementation of technology *(ResearchGate, 2024).*

6.2 The Data Privacy and Security

The proliferation of AI in education makes student data privacy and security a primary ethical concern. AI systems collect extensive and sensitive information, including personal data, learning patterns, academic records, and psychological profiles. This vast amount of data is vulnerable to breaches and misuse by third-party marketers and other commercial interests. The consequences of a data breach extend beyond immediate privacy violations, potentially impacting a student's future opportunities and autonomy as an adult *(New America, 2025).*

To address these risks, the framework advocates for an "ethics by design" approach, where data minimisation, encryption, and transparency are foundational to the technology's architecture. Institutions and policymakers must also establish collaborative processes involving students, educators, and parents to develop and regularly review data privacy policies. As educators often lack a clear understanding of best practices for handling student data, teacher preparation programs must equip them with the skills to teach and model responsible tech use and data privacy. This training is crucial for building confidence and trust in the curriculum *(New America, 2025).*

6.3 Algorithmic Bias and Its Impact

Algorithmic bias is a significant challenge that threatens educational equity. It manifests as systematic discrimination in AI-driven processes, often originating from flawed training datasets or algorithmic design. The implementation of biased AI tools can perpetuate historical prejudices and worsen existing socioeconomic and racial disparities by limiting access to learning resources and support for certain groups *(ResearchGate, 2024).*

In a country with the linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity of India, the risk of algorithmic bias is particularly acute. The proposed framework must be guided by ethical principles that prioritize fairness, justice, and equality. It is essential that AI models used in the curriculum are trained on inclusive, culturally representative datasets to avoid creating "self-reinforcing cycles of disadvantage".

Policymakers, researchers, and practitioners must collaborate to develop ethical frameworks, guidelines, and standards to ensure that AI systems are aligned with human values and promote our shared goals *(INDIAai, 2025).*

7. Implications and Limitations

The proposed curriculum framework for English language education at the secondary stage in the digital age is a strategic blueprint that holds significant implications for education in India. By shifting the focus from rote learning to competency-based, technology-infused pedagogy, it can help prepare students for the demands of the modern workforce and bridge the existing

mismatch between educational outcomes and industry needs. This framework directly aligns with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

However, its implementation must be undertaken with a clear understanding of its limitations. The most significant challenge is the pervasive digital divide across India, which encompasses a lack of reliable infrastructure, inadequate access to devices, and disparities in digital literacy (BSSS Publications, 2016). While this paper models a Tier 3, high-resource scenario as a vision, the framework is not yet a one-size-fits-all solution. There is also the challenge of outdated national exams that still focus on rote learning, which could disincentivise teachers and students from adopting innovative pedagogical approaches (IOSR Journal, 2025).

8. Conclusion

This paper- '*Implications for Designing English Language Curriculum at Secondary Stage in the Digital Age'* has presented a comprehensive and integrated framework for a technology-infused English language curriculum at the secondary stage in India. By grounding its design in the synergistic application of Sociocultural Theory, Communicative Language Teaching, and the TPACK model, the framework provides a robust and research-backed solution to the challenges of modernising language education. The proposed design, with its focus on meaningful, multimodal tasks and a competency-based assessment approach, is intended to bridge the critical gap between traditional academic outcomes and the skills required by the digital workforce. While the paper acknowledges the limitations posed by the digital divide and the need for future empirical validation, it offers a pragmatic blueprint for a learner-centric curriculum that is not only technologically advanced but also ethically responsible. The successful implementation of this framework has the potential to transform English language teaching in India, empowering a new generation of students to become linguistically, digitally, and ethically competent citizens prepared for the demands of the 21st century.

References

NCERT, (2023). Language Pedagogy ENGLISH, Vol. 1 & Vol. 2, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi.

NCERT, (2005). National Curriculum Framework (NCF2005), Ministry of Education, Government of India.

NCERT, (2023). National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE-2023), Ministry of Education, Government of India.

National Education Policy- 2020, Ministry of Education, Government of India.

National Policy on Education- 1986, Government of India.

Nunan, D. (1988). The Learner-Centred Curriculum, Cambridge University Press, CUP.

Prabhu, N S (1985). Second Language Pedagogy, Oxford, OUP.

Taba, H. (1962). Curriculum Development Theory and Practice, Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., United States of America

Al-Ahdal, M. A. A. (2020). The Influence of Multimodality in the Digital Era for Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language. *Atlantis Press.*

BSSS Publications. (2016). *Efficacy Of Blended Learning in Indian ELT: Opportunities and Challenges*.

ERIC. (2022). *Digital Multimodal Composing: How to Address Multimodal Communication Forms in ELT*.

ERIC. (2022). *Student Data Privacy, Digital Learning, and Special Education: Challenges at the Intersection of Policy and Practice*.

ERIC. (2023). *Evaluating the Integration of Digital Literacy Components in ELT Coursebook Design*.

Koehler, M. J., & Mishra, P. (2015). Mind the Gap: Why TPACK Case Studies? *Punya Mishra*.
MDPI. (2024). *Teachers' AI-TPACK: Exploring the Relationship between....*
NAESP. (2025). *Data Privacy: Rights and Wrongs*.
New America. (2025). *Empowering Student Agency in the Digital Age: The Role of Privacy....*
ResearchGate. (2024). *Ethical Considerations in the Application of Artificial....*
ResearchGate. (2023). *A case study of teacher's technological pedagogical content knowledge (tpack) in teaching English after pandemic*.
ResearchGate. (2022). *Digital technologies in low-resource ELT contexts*.
ResearchGate. (2024). *The Evolving Role of Teachers in The Contemporary Digital World*.
ResearchGate. (2023). *Integrating Tpack in English Language Teaching....*
ResearchGate. (2023). *Technology integration in Indian higher education: opportunities and challenges*.

Blogging as a Pedagogical Asset in Digital Humanities

Brian Mendonça

Abstract

Blogging needs to be leveraged as a pedagogical asset in digital humanities (DH). In higher education institutions (HEIs) blogging is often reduced to a footnote - its multifarious applications laid to waste or untapped. Blogging depends on the initiative of the blogger – in this case, the teacher. Depending on the needs of the students or the class, the teacher can generate blogposts to suit their level of comprehension. Blogging can make prescribed texts which may be uninspiring or dated, come to life with dazzling writing on specific topics to break down the difficulty level. These blogs can be a constant source of reference for the class they were created for - as well as for subsequent classes in the State following the same syllabus or under the same university. Students share these blogs on their social media platforms creating a non-formal, non-hierarchical community of knowledge-seekers. The paper will address some of these issues offering examples from blogs, with a view to maximize the full potential of blogging as a pedagogical asset in teaching.

Keywords: Blogging, e-content, digital humanities, HEIs, students

Preamble

Blogging is a pedagogical tool that has seldom been give its due in academia. In fact, it is downplayed as something informal and of passing interest. If the attributes of blogging are explored it would equip the teacher with a skill-set that is a prerequisite for a competent teacher. Blogging is a comparatively new phenomenon. The first blog started out as a personal homepage on the internet and was created by a college student Justin Hall in 1994. Three years later Jorn Barger coined the term 'web log.' In 1999 the term was abbreviated to 'blog' by programmer Peter Merholz. Blogger was one of the first platforms to host blog content. (DLM, 2025) In India, blog penetration has not been that much. The emphasis has been mostly to generate revenue. Recognizing the importance of blogging as a means to publicize its programmes, the Government of India has its own blog.The prevalence of blogging in HEIs in India has not been remarkable. It has been hampered by infrastructure issues, lack of training, and paucity of institutional support.

Blogging and Digital Humanities

E-Educators are offering MOOCs to help dispel the mystique of Digital Humanities increasingly being abbreviated to DH. (Dodd, 2025) However, even in recent studies blogging as practice, which augments DH, is invisibilized. (Dodd, 2020; Zaidi, 2022) Blogging needs to be leveraged as a tool to be used beside traditional learning practices in the classroom. Blogging provides the space for open communication across hierarchies in institutional settings. Using the edit mode, blogging enables students to refine their writing and make it more suitable to their target audience. In the age of AI blogging urges the student to frame their own sentences and express their own ideas. Students can use blogs to familiarize themselves with tech tools to produce their own content. They can then graduate to be content creators and earn for themselves.

E-learning and e-content received a fillip during COVID. Blogging about e-content that is prepared and presented on the SWAYAM portal can provide a supplementary source of the same material in byte-sized silos. (Mendonca, August 2020) Blogging is versatile. It can

provide content through many forms like film reviews, studies on texts, poetry, reports of academic events, analysis of situations, and documentation of literary resources. With NEP 2020 new courses which are multi-disciplinary and holistic have been introduced. Blogposts can help demystify the newness of the courses and help students to familiarize themselves with them. Blogs can students realize the goals of NEP i.e. access, equity, quality and affordability.

Teachers can simplify texts prescribed on the syllabus through blogposts on them. (Mendonca, May 2020) The blogpost can be used as a pedagogical tool in class. Students can open the blog link and the teacher can explain. Blogposts can serve as effective teaching aids when prescribed texts are not available in physical form in brick-and-mortar libraries. E-copies of texts which are available through online digital libraries can be embedded in blogposts through hyperlinks. The course facilitator can also add a commentary on the e-text in the blog. (Mendonca, 13 April 2025) Having a blog archive means you can reference any blog post when you are teaching the topic. Blog posts are easy to access by just typing a key word in the FIND space in the blog. When I was teaching Dalit literature, I wrote several blogposts to help students understand it. (Mendonca, 25 April 2025; August 2023; August 2022; Oct. 2021)

Blogs entice and attract young minds to enter websites which may appear forbidding at first. The Library of Congress has a blog called *The Signal: Digital Happenings in the Library of Congress*. There is also a link to 'South Asian Digital Collection.' The person who is browsing the site will most definitely find herself ensconced in the digital world of books. Another article is an interview Computing Cultural Heritage in the Cloud. Blogs like these help libraries to stay relevant in a digital world. (*Signal*) Blogging for academic purposes now has a term – academic blogging. Academic blogging meets the requirements of research, teaching, and public outreach. (Stevenson, 2025) There is a community of people with an academic background who are ready to receive and share your work. Blogging cuts through the red tape of institutional obsolescence.

Sample Blogposts

The blogpost on *Tumbbad* (2018) grew out of a film screening in college and a Q&A with a film producer after it. The intention of the post was to record my impression of the film. I realized that something was getting elided in the discourse created around the film. I slanted my post highlighting what I felt was being missed. In the Bollywood takeover of the story – and even the language of the film – its genesis in a small village in Khed taluka by the Jagbudi river, in Ratnagari district in Maharashtra, where Marathi is the spoken language, was being swept under the carpet. I teach a paper to final year students on 'Modern Indian Writing in English Translation' offered by Goa University. I was disturbed by this epistemic violence and decided to do respond in my own way. The blogpost allowed me to resist the tide. (Mendonca, August 2025) Earlier I had presented a paper on the Telugu movie *Pushpa: The Rise* (2021). I noticed that all the songs – and even the movie – was dubbed in Hindi which is a steamroller language. (Mendonca, Jan 2025) I also blogged a review on *Gangs of Godavari* (2024). (Mendonca, Dec. 2024) Blogging helps me to assemble my thoughts and archive my work. As a poet I document and archive my work. Poems from my three volumes of poetry appear on my blog. When I do readings from my work I document the event on my blog. (Mendonca, 12 August 2025)

Transmission of Blogs

Blogs are rarely shared. If they are, it is with some reticence. Lately I have begun sharing my blogposts on my WA status. The response has been encouraging with about 200 viewing the status per day. Since it is generally the young who trawl social media, looking at status is generally *de rigeur*. However, those who actually read the blog are very few – about 20, sometimes even less.

Conclusion

Blogging is an invaluable pedagogical tool in Digital Humanities. As a practitioner I have found blogposts have enriched my teaching practice. Each day I discover new ways of deploying my blog to generate material which is meaningful for my students. As the world keeps changing and syllabi refract, blogging keeps me polyvalent to survive any pedagogical onslaught.

Blogposts

Mendonca, Brian. '*Tumbbad*: Marathi Horror Universalized.' Blogpost. 27 August 2025. https://lastbustovasco.blogspot.com/2025/08/tumbbad.html
- 'Open Mike – From the Heart of India.' Blogpsot. 12 August 2025. https://lastbustovasco.blogspot.com/2025/08/open-mic-from-heart-of-india.html
- 'Kadubai.' Blogpost. 25 April 2025. https://lastbustovasco.blogspot.com/2025/04/kadubai.html
- 'Writing for Television, Radio, and New Media.' Blogpost. 13 April 2025. https://omeka.urbeuniversity.edu/files/original/c9fcd2678cced7031caa0aeb073081e656d87796.pdf
- 'Folklore in Recent Telugu Film.' Blogpost. 11 January 2025. https://lastbustovasco.blogspot.com/2025/01/folklore-in-recent-telugu-film.html?m=1
- 'Gangs of Godavari' Blogpost 3 Dec. 2024. https://lastbustovasco.blogspot.com/2024/12/gangs-of-godvari.html
- 'Lal Salaam.' Blogpost. 9 August 2023. https://lastbustovasco.blogspot.com/2023/08/lal-salaam.html
- 'Antarini Vasantam' Blogpost. 11 August 2022. https://lastbustovasco.blogspot.com/2022/08/antarani-vasantam.html
- 'Kaala Rang, Khala Sthan.' Blogpost. 25 October 2021. https://lastbustovasco.blogspot.com/2021/10/kaala-rang-khala-sthan.html
- 'Academic E-Content.' Blogpost. 8 August 2020. https://lastbustovasco.blogspot.com/2020/08/e-content.html
- 'Adonais.' Blogpost. 22 May 2020. https://lastbustovasco.blogspot.com/2020/05/adonais.html

References

Berry, David. 'What are the Digital Humanities?' *The British Academy.* 13 Feb. 2019. https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/blog/what-are-digital-humanities/

DLM, 'The History of Blogging.' *Digital Limelite Media.* 2025. https://dlmconversion.com/blog/the-history-of-blogging/

Dodd, Maya and Nirmala Menon. 'Introduction to Digital Humanities.' MOOC on SWAYAM portal. 2025. https://onlinecourses.swayam2.ac.in/nou25_hs77/preview

---------- and Nidhi Kalra. Eds. *Exploring Digital Humanities in India: Pedagogies, Practices, and Institutional Possibilities.* London: Routledge India, 2020. H ttps://doi.org/10.4324/9781003052302

Georgekutty, MD. 'Blogging as a New Form of Literary Expression in India: Digital Renaissance and Cultural Transformation,' *International Journal of English Language Research Studies.* 20 March 2025. https://www.eduresearchjournal.com/index.php/ijelrs/article/view/98/88

Government of India. (2025) https://blog.mygov.in/

HASTAC (Humanities, Arts, Science, Technology Alliance and Collaboratory) https://hastac.hcommons.org/

Mendonça, Brian. 'Creative Non-Fiction and Blogging: Teaching Instead of Texting' in

Contemporary and Modern Trends in English Language and Literature. Sonia Fernandes da Costa, Ed. Margao: Cinnamon Teal, 2023. 53-59. file:///C:/Users/USER/Documents/24-25%20Even/CAS%202025/Engage_DeptEng_Chowgule_ebook%20(3).pdf

Signal: Digital Happenings of the Library of Congress. Library of Congress blogs. ISSN 2691-672X. https://blogs.loc.gov/thesignal/category/digital-humanities/

South Asian Digital Collection. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/collections/south-asian-digital-collection/about-this-collection/?loclr=blogsig

Stevenson, Ana, Keiran Balloo and Allana Piper. 'How to do Academic Blogging.' Cambridge University Press. 26 Feb. 2025. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/public-humanities/article/how-to-do-academic-blogging/C684A057FC3A91B57604FCE3F3680AFB

Terras, Melissa, Julianne Nyhan and Edward Vanhoutte. *Defining Digital Humanities: A Reader.*Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2013.

Zaidi, Nishat and Sean Pue. Eds. *Literary Cultures and Digital Humanities in India.* Preview. Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003354246

Utopia in the Female-only World in Fantasy Fiction: A Critique

Debabrata Hazra

Abstract

Science fiction plays a vital role by extending the concept of gender to aliens, robots, cyborgs, and clones which have a fixed gender, no gender, or multiple genders. Gender has been portrayed in science fiction in such a way where women try to get a way out from the existing problems in society. In his famous book *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction*, Brian Attebery aptly says that gender is not just a theme in science fiction but the 'genre's intellectual and aesthetic structure' (Attebery 10). The focus on gender brings out positive transitional moments and counter-movements that never happened in most genre histories. Many authors challenged their society's conventional norms in connection with gender through their portrayal of 'heroic' female characters in this genre. They often dismissed the representation of women characters as evil (villainess) or one who is helpless (damsel in distress) to an empowered woman. In speculative fiction, many female science fiction writers have also used single-sex societies or single-gender worlds to dismiss the idea of the existing patriarchal society. This imagined 'female only world' wipes out men and creates a highly advanced, women-dominated society that allows female parthenogenic reproduction. This paper attempts to critically assess the gender issues in science fiction writings regarding single-sex societies.

Keywords: Science Fiction, Gender, Single Sex Societies, Parthenogenic Reproduction

Science fiction has a direct connection with the principles of science. The stories have a relationship with the laws and theories of science. It is always not unbelievable because it then paves the path of the genre fantasy. The practical base of the story and then fantasizing the same makes science fiction a unique literary genre. It is often called the literature of change. It is one of the best academic platforms to express subjective thought as a tool of protest. This genre sometimes imagines an ideal society that may replace the existing practical one through the necessary changes. Isaac Asimov indeed says true science fiction could not exist until and unless people understood the very rationalism of science and started it in their stories. SF is an excellent platform to seek gender equality; therefore, some female writers have purposefully selected science fiction to imagine a utopian society where all are equal and empowered. Attebery aptly says,

> Science fiction is a useful tool for investigating habits of thought, including conceptions of gender. Gender, in turn, offers an interesting glimpse into some of the unacknowledged messages that permeate science fiction. Each reads the other in very interesting ways. Examining stories with a view to both their science-fictional qualities and their uses of gender generates new questions about both gender and genre. Then those questions can be addressed to those and other stories to yield further insights. (Attebery 56)

In speculative fiction, many female science fiction writers have used single-sex societies or single-gender worlds to dismiss the idea of the existing patriarchal society. This imagined 'female only world' wipes out men and creates a highly advanced, women-dominated society that allows female parthenogenic reproduction (1). The societies are utopian or dystopian, as shown in pulp tales (2) of oppressive matriarchies. British sci-fi writer Edmund Cooper used the theme in many of his novels, like *Five to Twelve* (1968) and *Who Needs Men* (1972). In 1984, 'Sexmission,' a Polish film, projects a dystopian 'women-only society' where all men

have died out. Women reproduce through parthenogenesis. Eric Garber and Lyn Paleo aptly opined in *Uranian Worlds*,

> [...] science fiction and fantasy pulp magazines were directed mainly at boys[...]. Female characters were occasionally included in pulp stories in science fiction; the male protagonists' lengthy explanations of the women with limited knowledge revealed the plots. (Garber & Paleo viii)

The time frame of the 1890s to the 1990s was measured as the heyday of feminist utopian fiction. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915) was indicated as a magnum opus in this genre. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) also talks about the subjugated status of women and how they were treated as inferior beings. This book is probably the first one to discuss female sex and the female body openly. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) reframes the concept of femininity which makes women aware of their rights. This period was successfully marked in the pages of history for the women's liberation movement as well. Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1969) and Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970) proclaimed that women's biology is the actual cause for all gender inequality and gender partiality. She has also demanded that the various distinctive stages in a woman's life, such as pregnancy, childbirth, and child nurturing, are the fundamental causes of female suppression. Feminist science fiction is one of the best literary genres, giving female writers a platform to investigate gender roles and study the parallel or alternative ways to reform society. Using this platform, many women writers openly discussed issues like sex, gender, and sexuality for the first time. Women writers like Ursula Le Guin, Octavia Butler, James Tiptree, and Marge Piercy contributed to the feminist science fiction, which certainly assisted the sub-genre in outrunning the so-called male-dominated science fiction. They also challenged mainstream fiction through numerous experimental writings. They tried to make it a severe subject in mainstream science fiction to make their voice more powerful and accessible to familiar readers. *The Shore of Women* (1986) is a much-admired classic work of this genre that talks about several different repressive social structures related to gender. Set in a post-nuclear holocaust world, this novel portrays a world run by matriarchal governance where the ruling class is addressed as the 'Mothers of the City.' All these examples indicate how science fiction helped in women's empowerment. The statement of Linda Janes is very appropriate where she says,

> Science fiction has become perhaps the quintessential genre of postmodernity in its characteristic representations of futuristic 'tomorroworlds,' inhabited by aliens, monsters, and cyborgs which draw attention to artificiality, simulation, and the constructed 'otherness' of identity. Through its focus on difference and its challenges to fixed categories of identity (which is a characteristic concern of postmodern theory), science fiction also offers potentially fertile ground for feminist analysis and practice. (Janes 92)

Women-only worlds are the best example of ultra-feminist utopias. In Amazons of ancient Greek mythology, the very concept of an all-female society existed, but the process of procreation did involve males. Science fiction gives the space to perform thought experiments that create different Utopias. Several science fiction novels written by female authors redefine the traditional patriarchal norms and, as a result, make a utopian all-female society.

One of the most critical novels in this field is Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915). Three male explorers found a country where a lost civilization was occupied only by women who reproduce parthenogenetically. The place is man-free. The explorers could not believe initially that culture could exist without the presence of men. Their traditional beliefs regarding the inherent subordination of women were quickly put to the test by a group of

Herlander women when they were arrested. The women restrain them with chloroform and train them on their society. This novel also focuses on problems like pollution and overpopulation. As a social and feminist writer, Gilman purposefully selected this genre and hilariously used this satire to question traditional and unquestioned gender roles, sexism, and inequalities in a male-dominated society. This also contrasts with the homosocial female utopia with a complete culture, political and financial system. Sadie Plant, a famous cyberfeminist, has dreamt of a society where women live separately from men and reproduce parthenogenetically.

Tiptree's *Your Faces, O My Sisters, Your Faces Filled of Light* (1976) portrayed a futuristic vision of a protagonist young woman who travels in the capitalist United States and glimpses a pastoral, women-only world. Elisabeth Vonarburg's *in the Mothers' Land* (1992) talks about a shortage of fertile males in the distant future. Complete male devastation by a mysterious plague has also been portrayed in the comic series *Y: The Last Man* (2003-2008). Every living thing having a Y chromosome, including embryos, fertilized eggs, and sperm, is destroyed, except for a young man and his pet Capuchin monkey. All-female societies have been created in Wallace West's *The Last Man* (1929), where women are masculinized, flat breasted, and narrow hipped. On the other hand, Suzy McKee Charnas's *Motherlines* (1989) describes a female society of clone sisters.

In Nicola Griffith's *Ammonite* (1992), a virus kills all men and transforms them into women. They are capable enough to breed without men, and there is no problem without the existence of men. The setting is on an extra-solar planet. The explorers rediscovered the planet and realized that the women-only society causes a deadly threat to the men in the universe if the virus comes out from the planet.

In Edmund Cooper's *Who Needs Men*? (1974) men were killed more than women in a war in the 21st century. The uprising of communist-type females against men in the United Kingdom and later worldwide is a step towards the women-governed society. Ignoring the participation and presence of the male community, the novel shows the 'normal' breeding through cloning and the parthenogenetic process. As a result of this war, men had hatred and disrespect for women for ages. The word 'wife' becomes one of the obscenest words in the language.

In the women-only world, the male exclusion is one of the significant criteria. *The Gate to Women's Country* (1988) by Sheri Tepper has created a gate where men cannot enter the country. The gate frames a town only for women as a protest of male domination. Another new wave novel Meanwhile (1985) banishes men to the ocean where they start living in giant bubbles, and reproduction is done by cloning. In Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* (1975), 'characters refuse the reader's search for innocent wholeness while granting the wish for heroic quests, exuberant eroticism, and serious politics' (Donna 178). This book talks about four women from four different worlds. Jeannine Dadier lives in a world of the Great Depression. She advocates for marriages and says, "there is a barrier between (her) and real-life which can be removed only by a man or marriage" (Russ 120). She doubts her boyfriend's ability to make her happy, yet she becomes engaged with him. Finally, she loses all faith in marriage as an institution and supports the women's movement against men. Joanna experiences a feminist revolution but expects to get accompanied by her male friends. Janet lives in a female world where males have been killed off centuries before by a plague. Jael lives in a world where two sexes engage in a cold war. These individuals are 'four versions of one genotype, all of whom meet, but even taken together do not make a whole, resolve the dilemmas of violent moral action, or remove the growing scandal of gender'(ibid).

In women-only utopian societies, the return of men is not a source of joy since '[m]any of these feminist Utopias are portrayed within the texts as having emerged from struggles against male-dominated dystopias' (Attebery 114). Doris Lessing in *The Cleft* (2007) talks about a women-only world where women do not know about men, and childbirth is regulated by the moon's cycles. It is important to note that the birth of the male child has been disrupted

in the feminist utopia. Russ's *When It Changed* (1972) significantly shows the return of males to the women-only world. Society then becomes stable and calm.

Over single-gendered worlds, SF submits 'one way to find out just how men and women differ might be to catch them by themselves' (Allsop et al. 783). Inevitably, these narratives point out some fundamental questions like the behavioral nature of the two genders and the stability of society. 'Which of the feminist Utopias most truly expresses women's needs and desires? The dialectical nature of utopia indicates that no answer to these questions can be complete or final' (Allsop et al. 128). The science fiction authors have been trying to find the answers to these questions in their writings

End Notes

1. "A reproductive strategy that involves development of a female (rarely a male) gamete (sex cell) without fertilization. It occurs commonly among lower plants and invertebrate animals (particularly rotifers, aphids, ants, wasps, and bees) and rarely among higher vertebrates. An egg produced parthenogenetically may be either haploid (i.e., with one set of dissimilar chromosomes) or diploid (i.e., with a paired set of chromosomes)."
Source: https://www.britannica.com/science/parthenogenesis

2. Pulp magazines (often referred to as "the pulps") were inexpensive fiction magazines that were published from 1896 to the late 1950s.

Works Cited

Attebery, Brian. *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction*. Routledge, 2002. Print.

D. J. Allsop and S. A. West, 'Changing Sex at the Same Relative Size Body Size,' *Nature*, 2003, Print.

Donna J. Haraway, Simians, *Cyborgs and Women*, New York: Routledge, 1991. Print.

Garber, Eric, and Lyn Paleo. *Uranian Worlds: a Readers Guide to Alternative Sexuality in Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror*. Hall, 1990. Print

Linda Janes, 'Introduction to Part Two,' in Gill Kirkup et al., eds., *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 91–100, at p. 92. 2000. Print.

Russ, Joanna. *The Female Man*. The Easton Press, 1994. Print

Bainbridge, William Sims. *Dimensions of Science Fiction.* Cambridge Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press. 1986. Print.

Beaver, Harold. Editor. *The Science Fiction of Edgar Allen Poe.* Harmondsworth: Penguin. 1976. Print.

James, Edward, and Farah Mendlesohn. *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. Cambridge University Press, 2013. Print.

Bleiler, Everett F. "Ancestors of Science Fiction." In: Gunn, James. Editor. 1988. *The New Encyclopedia of Science Fiction.* New York: Penguin. 1985. Print.

Blish, James. *More Issues at Hand.* Chicago: Advent. Bretnor, Reginald. Editor. 1974. *Science Fiction: Today and Tomorrow.* New York; Harper and Row. 1970. Print.

Kenyon, Olga. (1992). *The Writer's Imagination*. University of Bradford Print Unit, 1992. Print

McCracken, Scott. (1998). *Pulp: Reading Popular Fiction*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. Print.

Sholes, Robert and Eric S. Rabkin. (1977). *Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision*. New York: Oxford UP. Print.

Motorbikes, Forests, and Sacred Spaces: Ecological Consciousness in Modern Travel Memoirs

Dinesh Raja V & V Srividhya

Abstract

This paper explores how ecological awareness is portrayed in two modern travel narratives—Jay Kannaiyan's *Riding Towards Me* and Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat Pray Love*. Both authors undertake long, transformative journeys that bring them into close contact with diverse landscapes and cultures. Kannaiyan's account, centered on his solo motorbike expedition across continents, highlights a deep engagement with nature as he moves through forests, mountains, and remote villages. His narrative reflects not just physical endurance but a growing sensitivity to the natural world and the fragility of human-nature relationships. Gilbert, in contrast, documents her journey through Italy, India, and Bali as a search for balance, healing, and spiritual connection. Her reflections in ashrams and quiet spaces reveal an intimate link between emotional recovery and sacred environments. Viewed through the lens of eco-criticism, both memoirs show a shift from exploitative or touristic travel to mindful movement through space. This paper argues that these narratives promote a form of ethical travel rooted in respect for local environments, spiritual stillness, and cultural humility. Their works offer valuable insights into how modern travel writing can contribute to environmental awareness and personal growth.

Keywords: Eco-criticism, Contemporary Travel Writing, Transformative Journeys, Narrative Identity, Digital-Age Memoirs.

Introduction

In the current era, travel is frequently framed as a curated visual narrative, shaped by photography and social media aesthetics. This tendency prioritizes spectacle over substance. In contrast, travel memoirs that embrace introspection, ecological sensitivity, and ethical awareness offer a compelling alternative to this consumer-driven model. Jay Kannaiyan's *Riding Towards Me* (2019) and Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat Pray Love* (2016) exemplify this shift in focus. These works present travel not as a simple transfer between destinations but as an evolving process of transformation that cultivates environmental consciousness and moral responsibility. Kannaiyan documents his motorcycle expedition from the United States to India, traversing fragile ecosystems and culturally layered landscapes. Gilbert, by contrast, narrates a journey through Italy, India, and Indonesia in search of emotional healing and spiritual clarity. Though distinct in scope and intention, both texts construct travel as an experience of engagement rather than escape dialogue between self, culture, and the natural world.

In recent years, the literary market has seen a surge in narratives that foreground the ethical and ecological implications of travel. From blogs advocating slow mobility to memoirs interrogating consumerist patterns, these texts counter dominant narratives that romanticize conquest or privilege leisure. In *Riding Towards Me* and *Eat Pray Love*, travel emerges as an exercise in humility, patience, and relational awareness. Kannaiyan's passages through the Amazon rainforest, the Sahara Desert, and the Patagonian wilderness emphasize vulnerability in the presence of vast and unpredictable environments. Gilbert's encounters within sacred spaces reveal how ecological harmony intersects with spiritual renewal. Both narratives dismantle the conventional adventure trope, replacing it with a vision grounded in respect, resilience, and reciprocal care.

A close reading of these texts through ecocritical theory and narrative identity illustrates how storytelling shapes environmental ethics. Ecocriticism provides a lens for examining the representation of landscapes, species, and cultural practices as active agents rather than inert settings. In Kannaiyan's memoir, terrain dictates pace, disrupts plans, and provokes existential reflection, challenging his reliance on technology. The motorcycle becomes a symbol of interdependence rather than domination, mediating between human aspiration and ecological reality. Gilbert's narrative, while oriented toward spiritual practice, similarly embeds growth within ecological settings. Her descriptions of ashrams, rice terraces, and temple gardens foreground the inseparability of ritual and nature. These spaces embody what scholars' term "spiritual ecology," where renewal occurs through an attunement to the rhythms of the environment.

The structural design of these memoirs reinforces their thematic concerns. Kannaiyan's episodic recounting of breakdowns, detours, and encounters reflects a process of surrender to contingency, a recognition that the world resists full control. Gilbert organizes her journey into three stages: pleasure, devotion, and balance, each intertwined with the sensory and symbolic dimensions of the landscapes she inhabits. In both cases, narrative becomes a map of relational ethics, charting a shift from mastery toward mutuality.

This study argues that such works represent an emergent mode of travel writing that aligns ecological awareness with interior transformation. These texts also respond to digital modernity, circulating through blogs, e-books, and social media networks, thus expanding their cultural reach. Situated within environmental humanities, this analysis demonstrates how travel memoirs contribute to urgent debates on sustainability, identity, and belonging. In doing so, they advocate a slower, more reflective engagement with the world, a practice essential in an age of climate instability and cultural flux.

Theoretical Framework: Eco-Criticism in the Digital Age

Ecocriticism provides an important perspective for understanding how literature interacts with nature and environmental values. Rather than presenting nature as merely romantic or picturesque, ecocriticism studies how texts depict ecological systems, sustainability, and human nonhuman relationships. Cheryll Glotfelty defines it as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (Glotfelty xix). In the context of the Anthropocene, this field now addresses not only representations of landscape but also the cultural and ethical assumptions shaping human mobility, resource use, and technological dependence.

Travel narratives, particularly in a digital context, illustrate the convergence of environmental thought with questions of identity and technology. Scholars such as Greg Garrard and Timothy Morton argue that ecocriticism must move beyond static scenery. Garrard notes that environmental writing should focus on "rhetorics of nature" rather than treating nature as mere background (Garrard 5). This makes travel memoirs productive spaces for examining environmental responsibility and cultural awareness. Narrative identity theory further deepens this analysis. Drawing on Paul Ricoeur, it views identity as constructed through storytelling. In memoirs, narratives do not simply record events; they organize meaning across time and place. When combined with ecocriticism, this theory reveals how natural encounters shape selfhood. The self emerges in relation to an environment transformed by silence, terrain, and ecological challenges rather than existing apart from it.

These ideas gain urgency in the study of travel memoirs created in the digital age. Blogs, GPS tools, and social media now mediate many journeys, offering connectivity but also reducing experience to marketable fragments. Some contemporary writers resist this commodification, favouring slow travel, attentiveness, and ethical engagement with nature. Their narratives value presence over speed and spectacle, privileging deep observation and ecological care.

Ecocriticism adapted for this era requires attention to two key aspects: the literary representation of nature and the traveller's position within technological and ecological systems. Many memoirists choose demanding, slow forms of travel walking, long-distance motorcycling, or spiritual retreats that emphasize direct interaction with the physical world. Digital devices remain secondary. Nature is not passive scenery but an active force shaping the rhythm of the journey and influencing ethical choices. This approach aligns with Lawrence Buell's argument in *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*, which views landscapes in literature as dynamic participants in human experience (Buell). It also resonates with Ursula Heise's concept of "eco-cosmopolitanism," which promotes an environmental vision rooted in local experience yet connected to global concerns (Heise 10).

Through this lens, travel memoirs appear as narratives of transformation and responsibility. They show that travel extends beyond self-discovery; it fosters reciprocal relationships with the environment. The natural world becomes an active presence shaping thought, emotion, and ethical awareness. By combining ecocriticism with narrative identity and acknowledging digital mediation, these texts engage in larger conversations about sustainability, mobility, and cultural resilience. Travel writing, therefore, emerges as a crucial medium for imagining more mindful and ecologically balanced ways of living.

Jay Kannaiyan's *Riding Towards Me*: Nature as Endurance and Transformation

Jay Kannaiyan's *Riding Towards Me* is more than a motorbike chronicle; it frames nature as an active force shaping the traveller's inner and outer journey. Moving through forests, deserts, and remote landscapes, Kannaiyan develops ecological consciousness through risk, solitude, and direct encounter. As he prepares to cross the Amazon, he observes, "It was the driest month of the year in the rainforest and the safest time to make the crossing solo" (Kannaiyan 75). The rainforest is not exotic spectacle but a test of endurance. This outlook aligns with Rob Nixon's argument in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, which critiques gradual environmental harm often ignored in dominant narratives. Similarly, Sean Penn's *Into the Wild* (2007) portrays Christopher McCandless's Alaskan retreat as an extended confrontation with nature's beauty and indifference. Like McCandless, Kannaiyan moves at nature's pace, showing how immersion and endurance reconfigure human values.

Kannaiyan notes, "The Amazon is a very remote part of the planet… Very few travellers have made the journey" (75), signalling a shift from thrill to reverence. The terrain demands mental and physical mapping: "Created a geographical map in my mind" (75). He calls the forest "almost mythical" (74), suggesting both real and sacred dimensions. Patagonia offers another moment of clarity: "The blue skies and puffy white clouds invited me to relish being in the wilderness" (142). When tested by hardship, he declares, "I will survive!" (145), expressing resilience demanded by the environment. Yet survival is not the sole purpose. He admits, "This was exactly what I had signed up for… I wanted to face life and all its random occurrences, allowing it to let me grow" (145). This perspective echoes William Cronon in *Uncommon Ground*, which critiques idealized wilderness by emphasizing human engagement. Later, Kannaiyan reflects, "It was my entertainment. My solace" (147), revealing how vast landscapes bring emotional connection rather than isolation.

Crossing the Sahara deepens his awareness of ecological fragility and cultural adaptation. He writes, "The streets and all the cars parked on them were covered in dust, the first signs of the immense Saharan desert that lay ahead" (195). Adapting to local practices, he describes mint tea as "The juice of the desert," explaining, "It helps the body absorb more water than just drinking it plain" (201). Such details reveal how ecological knowledge resides in tradition. "Away from water, life quickly reverted to the desert environment" (201), he notes, recognizing survival's delicate balance. Even here, emotional connection persists: "A smile appeared on his face as he understood my love for the desert" (201). This shared appreciation underscores how nature-mediated experiences foster human relationships. That night,

Kannaiyan records, "I had a wonderful night's sleep out in the open desert" (202), illustrating harmony with a harsh environment.

In Namibia, the sky commands attention: "The sky was besieged with clouds… white and harmless yet ominous" (268). This imagery mirrors the emotional unpredictability of long travel. He observes, "Namibia has a reputation… one of the least densely populated countries in the world. This was a land for those seeking solitude" (269). Solitude here is not emptiness but a vital contemplative space, offering clarity and presence of mind. Across these terrains from rainforests to deserts to open skies Kannaiyan learns that nature is not a backdrop to human ambition but a teacher. His journey reflects a shift from escapism to engagement: the road as guide, the terrain as dialogue. *Riding Towards Me* ultimately positions nature as a force that humbles the ego, reshapes perception, and opens paths for ethical and spiritual growth. Transformation occurs not through conquest but through attunement to the rhythms of the natural world.

Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat Pray Love*: Sacred Spaces and Environmental Healing

In *Eat Pray Love*, Elizabeth Gilbert presents travel as a transformative spiritual process rooted in ecology and healing. Her memoir spans Italy, India, and Indonesia, yet the chapters in India and Bali carry the most profound spiritual and environmental significance. These sections frame her journey not as adventure or exotic curiosity but as an exploration of how sacred places and natural landscapes foster emotional renewal. This dynamic reflects concerns raised by Holland and Huggan in *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing*, which examines the ethics of representation and the complexities of cultural exchange.

At the ashram in India, Gilbert's descriptions emphasize the interplay of physical environment and spiritual practice. Surrounded by the dry plains of Maharashtra, the temple provides a quiet, disciplined space where ritual shapes daily life. Gilbert writes, "So that's where you can find me for several hours a day now down on my knees on the cold marble with a brush and a bucket…" (137). Her labor is not merely practical but symbolic: scrubbing the floor becomes an act of purification. By engaging with the materiality of the sacred stone floors, water, and tools she internalizes a deeper sense of humility and presence. These details suggest that spirituality emerges through embodied interaction with space.

The ashram also fosters human connections that guide her journey. A fellow seeker teaches her the practice of loving-kindness, shifting her focus from self-absorption to empathy. Gilbert's spiritual progress unfolds through such ordinary exchanges rather than grand revelations. Later, on the rooftop of the ashram, she encounters silence as a palpable force: an active presence rather than emptiness. This experience aligns nature with spiritual insight, as the sky and wind invite her to surrender intellectual control and simply listen. Here, ecological elements act as teachers, framing the stillness that facilitates self-discovery.

Her time in Bali reinforces this integration of ecology and spirituality. She depicts Ubud as "in the center of Bali, located in the mountains, surrounded by terraced rice paddies and innumerable Hindu temples, with rivers that cut fast through deep canyons of jungle and volcanoes visible on the horizon" (227). This description reflects harmony between cultural tradition and natural landscape, revealing a world where agriculture, ritual, and ecology coexist. The terraces are not just agricultural systems; they embody a cultural ecology sustained for generations.

Gilbert's relationship with Ketut Liyer further deepens her understanding of this interconnection. His healing practices emphasize elemental balance, illustrated in a water-blessing ritual for a newborn: "Ketut turns his back to us, fills a bowl with water, and keens a spectacular, quietly chilling mantra above it. Then Ketut blesses the baby with the water he has just infused with sacred power" (241). She observes, "The baby puts out her little plummy paws to receive the water, sips it once, sips it again and splashes the rest on top of her head"

(241). These images underscore the role of water as both life-giving and sacred, a conduit between human and divine. Spiritual meaning, here, is inseparable from ecological materiality.

Ketut's teachings reinforce an elemental worldview: "The human body is nothing more or less than the five elements of all creation like water (apa), fire (tejo), wind (bayu), sky (akasa) and earth (pritiwi)" (253). This perspective collapses the divide between self and environment, framing the body as a microcosm of the natural world. Spirituality becomes a practice of alignment with these forces rather than escape from them. Later, Gilbert reflects while bicycling through the monkey forest at dusk: "I want to pray when I'm on my bicycle, riding home from Ketut's house through the monkey forest and the rice terraces in the dusky late afternoons… most of my prayers are expressions of sheer gratitude for the fullness of my contentment" (272). The act of cycling is ordinary, rhythmic becomes a devotional gesture. Landscape and body merge in a state of attentive motion, transforming travel into presence rather than displacement.

This synthesis of place and self resonates with Kaplan's arguments in *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, which interrogates how mobility reshapes identity. Gilbert's narrative rejects the tourist gaze in favor of intimate engagement, where natural settings temples, forests, rice fields function as co-creators of meaning. The natural world is not a backdrop but a participant, shaping emotional texture and spiritual clarity.
The memoir concludes with an image of heaven grounded in sensory and ecological imagery: "Beautiful. Everything beautiful is there. Every person beautiful is there. Everything beautiful to eat is there. Everything is love there. Heaven is love" (274). Though abstract, this vision grows from the physical experiences of food, landscapes, and human bonds. It suggests that transcendence does not demand detachment from the material but a deeper intimacy with it.

Across *Eat Pray Love*, sacred spaces appear as ecological as much as religious. Temples are environments of stone and water; ceremonies draw meaning from elemental forces. Gilbert's healing unfolds not through isolation but through participation in the rhythms of the earth, scrubbing marble floors, meditating beneath open skies, riding through shadowed forests. Her narrative affirms that spirituality and ecology are intertwined: to care for the self is to attune to the world. In this sense, the memoir advances an ecological consciousness founded on stillness, gratitude, and reverence for place, offering a counter-narrative to forms of travel that seek only consumption or escape.

Results and Discussion

This research examined ecological awareness in *Riding Towards Me* by Jay Kannaiyan and *Eat Pray Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert. Both writers treat nature not as a backdrop but as an active presence shaping personal transformation and ethical reflection.

Kannaiyan's bond with nature grows through endurance, observation, and respect. Crossing the Amazon, he writes, "It was the driest month of the year in the rainforest and the safest time to make the crossing solo" (Kannaiyan 75). He calls it "a very remote part of the planet" where "very few travellers have made the journey" (Kannaiyan 75). These words emphasize the rarity of such contact with untouched wilderness. His awareness deepens when he states, "It is almost mythical not in terms of its existence but in how few people have had the opportunity to experience its beauty firsthand" (Kannaiyan 74).

This ethical stance becomes stronger in Patagonia: "The blue skies and puffy white clouds invited me to relish being in the wilderness… I was alone in a vast and beautiful space" (Kannaiyan 142). His reflections echo Yi-Fu Tuan's *Topophilia*, which links emotional bonds to place with identity and environmental responsibility. Rather than control, Kannaiyan seeks resilience and attentiveness. He affirms, "I will survive!" and admits, "This was exactly what I had signed up for… I wanted to face life and all its random occurrences, allowing it to let me grow" (Kannaiyan 145). Nature challenges him but also becomes a teacher, fostering spiritual and emotional growth.

A similar lesson unfolds in the Sahara, where adaptation replaces expectation. He notes, "The streets and all the cars parked on them were covered in dust… Away from water, life quickly reverted to the desert environment…" (Kannaiyan 195, 201). Local practices like drinking mint tea "the juice of the desert" help survival, since "it helps the body absorb more water than just drinking it plain" (Kannaiyan 201). These observations connect ecological conditions with cultural wisdom, reinforcing an ethic of coexistence.

For Gilbert, nature also plays a key role in spiritual healing. In Bali, she describes a village "located in the mountains, surrounded by terraced rice paddies and innumerable Hindu temples, with rivers that cut fast through deep canyons of jungle" (Gilbert 227). Here, the environment supports rituals rooted in ecological harmony. During one ceremony, "Her mother holds her, and the baby puts out her little plummy paws to receive the water, sips it once, sips it again and splashes the rest on top of her head" (Gilbert 241). This act honors water as both spiritual and physical necessity. Ketut explains that "the human body is nothing more or less than the five elements of all creation water (apa), fire (tejo), wind (bayu), sky (akasa) and earth (pritiwi)" (Gilbert 253).

In both narratives, nature serves as guide and moral compass. Ecological awareness emerges through direct experience, cultural understanding, and reflection, proving that travel writing can shape ethical attitudes toward the environment.

Research Gap

Although eco-criticism has expanded in recent decades, its focus remains largely on classical literature, environmental poetry, and fiction with explicit ecological themes. Far less attention is given to travel memoirs that combine personal transformation with ecological awareness. Consequently, the intersection of travel writing, environmental consciousness, and narrative identity remains underexplored. Scholarship on travel literature often emphasizes cultural immersion, adventure, or spirituality, while overlooking how natural ecosystems actively shape the traveller's ethical and emotional evolution. Existing eco-critical approaches also privilege rural or wilderness settings, rarely considering narratives that unfold along roads, motorbike routes, or urban edge spaces where human mobility intersects with ecological presence. This omission narrows the scope of ecological inquiry, especially in the context of modern travel memoirs where movement itself fosters reflection on environmental interconnectedness.

Another critical gap lies in the impact of digital culture. Contemporary memoirs often emerge through blogs, emails, and social media, embedding travel experiences within networks of real-time documentation. These mediated forms alter traditional narrative structures and invite new questions about ecological engagement in an age of constant connectivity. By addressing these issues, this study highlights a neglected dimension of eco-critical discourse. It offers a nuanced reading of travel memoirs that resist extractive or escapist tendencies and instead foreground ecological sensitivity, ethical presence, and storytelling rooted in the lived encounter with nature.

Conclusion

This study has shown how contemporary travel memoirs contribute to an emerging form of ecological awareness that is deeply personal, narrative-driven, and ethically responsive to the natural world. The narratives examined demonstrate that travel is not merely about movement through space but about the transformation that occurs when one enters into a meaningful relationship with unfamiliar landscapes and sacred geographies. The motorbike journey across continents in one memoir initiates a prolonged, often unpredictable encounter with the elements. Riding through forest trails, barren deserts, and mountainous terrains becomes more than a physical challenge; it evolves into a process of learning from nature's autonomy and resistance. The traveller does not seek to dominate or romanticize the environment but instead

adapts to its rhythms. These moments of endurance, adaptation, and vulnerability reveal an environmental ethic rooted in direct experience rather than abstract ideology.

The other narrative unfolds in spaces traditionally associated with spiritual practice, where ecological consciousness emerges through acts of stillness and embodied reflection. The protagonist's path to healing unfolds within gardens, temple courtyards, riverbanks, and quiet corners of culturally sacred sites. These places are not consumed for spiritual symbolism alone. Rather, they enable the traveller to access emotional clarity through attentive interaction with nature's calm and silence. This form of ecological awareness is interior, grounded in respect for the sacredness of natural space and its role in emotional restoration. Both memoirs reject speed, distraction, and the spectacle that often accompanies commercialized travel. Instead, they offer a slower, humbler mode of movement that allows for ecological perception. Through these forms of journeying, nature becomes a participant in the transformation of the self. Whether facing torrential rain in the jungle, heat in the desert, or the stillness of temple gardens, the traveller is changed not by external achievements but by internal shifts made possible through attentive engagement with place. The land is no longer a backdrop for human stories. It becomes a co-creator of meaning.

This approach challenges the consumerist orientation of conventional travel literature, where nature is reduced to scenic consumption or spiritual metaphor. Instead, the memoirs examined here reflect a different sensibility. One in which the traveller's narrative is shaped by ecological presence. The machine, the trail, and the sacred site all become tools for unlearning arrogance and reconnecting with both self and earth. Through their distinct modes of travel, one tactile and mobile, the other meditative and spatial, these journeys produce a form of knowledge that is ethical, embodied, and ecological. The relevance of such narratives becomes especially apparent in the digital age, where travel is often reduced to a visual archive of curated experiences. These memoirs resist that tendency. They insist on slowness, on staying long enough to be shaped by a place, on writing not just about nature but with it. The emphasis on narrative identity and ecological humility offers a response to the alienation brought by both environmental degradation and digital overexposure. The memoir becomes a space in which language, memory, and nature interact to produce a model of coexistence that transcends personal healing.

In conclusion, the personal journey through diverse geographies, whether approached through movement or meditation, reveals a shared truth. Ecological consciousness grows not through observation alone, but through lived experience, ethical attention, and narrative responsibility. These memoirs point toward a form of travel writing that values listening over conquering, reflection over accumulation, and relationship over spectacle. In doing so, they open space for a renewed understanding of how humans might live with, rather than over, the natural world.

Works Cited

"ASLE» Ecocriticism and Environmental Humanities." *Asle.org*, 2024, www.asle.org/explore-our-field/ecocriticism-and-environmental-humanities/.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture*. Harvard University Press, 1995.

Cronon, William. *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. W.W. Norton & Co, 1995, pp. 69–90.

Elizabeth, Gilbert. *Eat, Pray, Love*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013.

Fromm, Harold, and Cheryll Glotfelty. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens, Ga. Univ. of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. xv–xxxvii.

Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. Routledge, 2011, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203806838

Gilbert, Elizabeth. "Eat Pray Love Made Me Do It." *Official Website for Best Selling Author Elizabeth Gilbert*, 2016, www.elizabethgilbert.com.

Heise, Ursula K. *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*. New York, Ny Oxford Univ. Press, 2010.

Holland, Patrick, and Graham Huggan. *Tourists with Typewriters*. University of Michigan Press, 2000.

Kannaiyan, Jay. "Blog." *Jamminglobal.com*, 2017, jamminglobal.com/blog.

Kannaiyan, Jay. *Riding towards Me*. Harper Collins, 2019.

Kaplan, Caren. *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement.* Duke University Press, 1996, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1131b10. Accessed 28 July 2025.

Morton, Timothy. *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. Harvard University Press, 2007.

Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press, 2011.

Ricoeur, Paul. *Time and Narrative*. Translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, vol. 1, University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Thompson, Carl. "Travel Writing." *Routledge EBooks*, Informa, 2011, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203816240.

"Travel Writing World." *Travel Writing World*, 2024, www.travelwritingworld.com.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*. Columbia University Press, 1974.

Signs of Survival: A Linguistic Landscape Analysis of Refugee Journey in Hashimi's *When the Moon Is Low*

Entisar Showai Ahmed Al Sunboly & Mirza Sultan Baig

Abstract

This paper examines the representation of linguistic landscapes and cultural identity in Nadia Hashimi's novel When the Moon Is Low, using the frameworks of Linguistic Landscape theory. (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) and geosemiotics (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). As a "moving linguistic landscape," the study examines the refugee journey depicted in the texts where signs written, spoken, and symbolic, ranging from maps, bus routes, and official documents to oral exchanges, construct the displacement, survival, and identity negotiation of the novel's characters. A qualitative literary approach is adopted in textual analysis to examine spatial elements within broader sociolinguistic contexts, focusing on how language constrains and empowers refugee characters. This study is among the first to apply LL and geosemiotics in a refugee narrative in fiction. It provides an innovative investigation of refugee experiences in fiction by emerging literary analysis with linguistic landscape theory. The findings reveal that the language portrayed in When the Moon Is Low is not just a storytelling device but a vital space of conflict, interpretation, and resistance. The study suggests that Hashimi transforms the refugee journey into a linguistic and cultural landscape that mirrors real-world challenges faced by displaced communities. This interdisciplinary approach bridges literary analysis with sociolinguistics, contributing to emerging migration, identity, and the semiotics of transnational experience.

Keywords: Linguistic Landscape, Geosemiotics, Refugee Narratives, Cultural Representation, Migration, Semiotics.

Introduction

In migration literature, language is not merely a medium of communication but an effective sign of displacement, identity, and power. Both real and fictional, refugee journeys are often navigated through shifting linguistic terrains where access, belonging, and exclusion are negotiated through spoken and unspoken signs. Offering a narrative rich in linguistic and semiotic disruptions, the novel When the Moon Is Low (Hashimi, 2015) represents the harrowing journey of an Afghan family from Kabul, through Iran and into Turkey, to Western Europe. Linguistic Landscape (LL) theory and geosemiotics are adopted in this study to examine how language in the novel is constructed as a site of trauma, transition, and survival. Linguistic Landscape theory, first conceptualised by (Landry & Bourhis, 1997), refers to the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). "Landscape" is a fuzzy term with diverse usage both in common everyday language and in academia, with its multifarious definitions in different disciplines and different stages of its development, ranging from a term referring to an areal category or human traces in the environment to a purely mental image of one's environment (Lindström et al., 2011). When applied to literature, LL theory enables scholars to examine how fictional settings mirror actual patterns of linguistic inclusion and exclusion. Complementing this, (Scollon & Scollon, 2003) through a geosemiotic framework, highlights how meaning is constructed at the intersection of spatial, social, and symbolic practices. The study focuses on how language, signs, and silences are represented narratively. This framework is especially relevant to refugee narratives, where physical mobility is often accompanied by semiotic and communicative dislocation.

This study treats the refugee route depicted in When the Moon Is Low as a "moving linguistic landscape," wherein the absence or distortion of language, translation gaps, and unfamiliar signage form critical sites of analysis. The protagonist Fereiba's journey is marked by checkpoints, borders, shelters, and transit zones, each presenting linguistic challenges that underscore her vulnerability and resilience. This study utilises LL theory and geosemiotics to expose how narrative space reflects the language challenges encountered by displaced individuals in the real world.

Ultimately, this research attempts to contribute to interdisciplinary literary studies by showing how sociolinguistic frameworks can reveal deeper layers of meaning in refugee fiction. It emphasises the value of analysing fictional journeys not only through plot and character, but also through the symbolic systems that shape and constrain them.

In Nadia Hashimi's *When the Moon is Low*, the protagonist Fereiba's refugee journey is characterised by an incessant need to navigate diverse languages and cultures as she traverses different countries. The linguistic landscape analysis could examine how Fereiba uses her knowledge of Dari, English, and other languages to secure safe passage, find shelter, and communicate with aid workers. It could also explore how the visual representation of language in refugee camps and transit points reflects the complex realities of displacement. Fereiba's journey, marked by the loss of her son and the constant struggle to survive, exemplifies the complexities of the refugee experience. Her encounters with different languages and cultures, both positive and negative, contribute to her evolving understanding of survival, belonging, and the power of human connection (Zainab & Rind, 2024). *When the Moon is Low*: The novel's title itself might hold symbolic meaning related to the experiences of refugees. The analysis could explore how the title connects to the characters' journeys, their sense of displacement, and their search for hope.

Objectives

This study aims to explore how linguistic and semiotic elements embedded in Nadia Hashimi's *When the Moon Is Low* reflect the complex realities of the refugee experience. By applying Linguistic Landscape (LL) theory (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) and the geosemiotic framework (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). The paper aims to analyse how written, spoken, and symbolic signs, such as checkpoint language, refugee labels, miscommunication, and translation episodes, shape the journey of the protagonist, Fereiba, across geopolitical and cultural borders. Specifically, the research seeks to:

- Identify and interpret instances of linguistic and symbolic signage within the narrative.
- Examine how social, spatial, and narrative contexts contribute to the construction of a "moving linguistic landscape".
- Investigate the role of language as a marker of power, exclusion, and survival in refugee journeys.
- Contribute to interdisciplinary approaches that blend literary analysis with sociolinguistic theory to examine migration narratives.

Research Question

How does *When the Moon Is Low* by Nadia Hashimi represent the refugee journey as a moving linguistic landscape through written, spoken, and symbolic signs, and what does this reveal about cultural representation, power dynamics, and survival in transit spaces?

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two complementary theoretical models: Linguistic Landscape (LL) theory and geosemiotics. These frameworks provide a critical lens for interpreting how language, space, and power intersect in the representation of refugee experiences in literature. Linguistic Landscape theory, as proposed by Landry and Bourhis (1997), refers to the visibility and salience of languages on public signage in a given territory. Originally developed to measure ethnolinguistic vitality in multilingual societies, LL theory has since been expanded to analyse how language functions as a tool of inclusion or exclusion in various social contexts. Within literary narratives, LL theory enables scholars to examine how linguistic signs, whether explicit (e.g., checkpoint labels, signage) or implicit (e.g., code-switching, translation gaps), mirror the sociopolitical structures that govern space and identity.

Building on LL theory and geosemiotics, introduced by Scollon and Scollon (2003), the study examines how meaning is constructed through the interplay of discourses, social interaction, and the material placement of signs in space. Geosemiotics emphasises the spatial and embodied dimensions of communication, focusing on how signs acquire meaning within specific geographic, institutional, and cultural contexts. For refugee narratives, this approach is especially beneficial in understanding how language, movement, and space interact to shape the migrant's lived reality. In *When the Moon Is Low*, Fereiba's journey is marked by various semiotic encounters: Border signs, official documents, foreign languages, and moments of silence that function as sites of power, negotiation, and resistance.

Together, LL and geosemiotic frameworks offer a nuanced methodology for examining the novel not only as a narrative of forced migration, but as a constructed linguistic landscape in motion. These frameworks allow for an interdisciplinary analysis that captures how language, both present and absent, reflects broader themes of identity, displacement, and survival across contested spaces.

Literature Review

Research on linguistic landscapes (LL) has grown steadily since the foundational work of Landry and Bourhis (1997), who defined LL as the visible display of languages on signs in public spaces, including both official signage and informal markers. Their work established LL as a tool to measure ethnolinguistic vitality and to investigate how language use reflects social hierarchies, inclusion, and identity in multilingual settings. While a collection of signs with texts, however, is no so much encountered in the landscape in the literal sense, as found in the countryside, but much more inside urban areas (Gorter, 2006), scholars have increasingly applied LL theory to more fluid and symbolic spaces, including migratory routes, border zones, and narrative settings (Troyer, 2016).

Building on LL and geosemiotic theory (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), adds a crucial spatial and semiotic dimension to language analysis. Geosemiotics examines how meaning is constructed through the placement of signs within their physical and social environments. This framework is particularly relevant for analysing how migrants and refugees encounter, interpret, or are constrained by signs in specific spaces, such as checkpoints, train stations, or refugee camps, and how these semiotic encounters shape their experiences. A Study by Jaworski & Thurlow (2010), offers an interdisciplinary exploration of how language, visual discourse, and spatial practices interact to shape meanings in public spaces, emphasising the multimodal and ideological nature of communication in contemporary, globalised, and urban environments. Although LL and geosemiotics are primarily rooted in sociolinguistics, they have found increasing relevance in literary studies, especially in the analysis of migration narratives. Literary texts offer rich terrain for examining how authors represent language encounters, silences, miscommunications, and symbolic signs that resonate with the real-world experiences of displacement and exile (Canagarajah, 2012; de Zoysa & Appadurai, 1998). In

particular, Hashimi's *When the Moon Is Low* presents a fictional yet deeply realistic depiction of a refugee journey, punctuated by linguistic barriers, misunderstood authority, and the absence or distortion of voice. Similar themes have been explored in Hosseini's The Kite Runner and A Thousand Splendid Suns, though fewer studies have focused on applying LL and geosemiotic frameworks in literary fiction.

In comparative studies, few works have examined refugee journeys as "mobile linguistic landscapes" (Barni & Bagna, 2015), and even fewer have addressed such an approach within fiction. This study aims to fill that gap by applying LL theory and geosemiotics to *When the Moon Is Low*, interpreting how the novel uses language, both verbal and symbolic, to construct the experience of mobility, marginalisation, and cultural negotiation.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative literary analysis approach, grounded in Linguistic Landscape (LL) theory, (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) and the geosemiotic framework (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), to examine the representation of refugee journeys in Nadia Hashimi's *When the Moon Is Low*. Rather than analysing physical signs in real-world public spaces, the study treats the narrative space of the novel as a symbolic and mobile linguistic landscape. A textual analysis that applies linguistic and semiotic theories to understand how language and space are represented in the refugee narrative. The analysis focuses on identifying and interpreting instances of written, spoken, and symbolic signs that emerge during the protagonist's journey from Afghanistan to Europe. These include language used at borders and checkpoints, acts of translation or miscommunication, refugee documentation, and environmental signs (e.g., graffiti, posters, road signs) that are referenced in the novel. The geosemiotic approach allows for a contextual interpretation of these signs by considering their social meaning, spatial placement, and narrative function within the fictional world of the novel. A textual analysis that applies linguistic and semiotic theories to understand how language and space are represented in the refugee narrative.

Data for this analysis consist of selected narrative excerpts that illustrate how language functions as both a barrier and a survival tool for refugees. Excerpts were chosen based on their relevance to three categories of geosemiotic meaning: social interactional signs (e.g., dialogues with officials), symbolic signs (e.g., identification labels like "illegal" or "asylum seeker"), and narrative signs (e.g., textual silences or confusion due to linguistic barriers). These instances are closely read and interpreted through the lens of sociolinguistic theory, considering how language is implicated in power, identity, and marginalisation.

This interdisciplinary method merges literary close reading with sociolinguistic discourse analysis, enabling a rich understanding of how symbolic communication operates within migration narratives. The methodology also allows for an exploration of how fictional representations mirror real-life linguistic conditions of displacement, thus offering insights into the cultural, emotional, and communicative dimensions of the refugee experience.

Data Analysis

> When my vocabulary failed me, I resorted to pointing and rudimentary sign language. (Hashimi, 2015, p.147).

When the Moon Is Low's LL and geosemiotic analysis centres on the protagonist Fereiba's journey through multiple national and linguistic territories, illustrating how written, spoken, and symbolic signs construct a mobile linguistic landscape that mirrors the refugee experience. Using LL and geosemiotic principles, key moments in the narrative are examined to reveal how language, both visible and invisible, functions as a gatekeeper of identity, access, and agency.

One significant instance involves the use of checkpoint language and border signage. At some crossings, official signs are written in European languages that are not widely recognised by many people (e.g., German, Greek), contributing to the sense of disorientation and exclusion. These signs often appear without translation or explanation, placing Fereiba and other refugees in a condition of vulnerability. The physical absence of language accessibility symbolises their social invisibility. As Scollon and Scollon (2003) suggest, signs acquire meaning through their interaction with the people who observe or fail to decode them. In this case, with language barriers, unreadable signage becomes a form of linguistic exclusion, reinforcing power hierarchies embedded in space.

Refugee labels can be regarded as symbolic linguistic markers throughout the novel. Terms such as "asylum seeker," "illegal," or "undocumented" are not merely used by officials but are internalised or resisted by the characters. These labels function as ideological signs, which Scollon and Scollon (2003) call "discourses in place", that carry institutional power and categorise individuals based on legal status rather than humanity. The protagonist, Fereiba's discomfort with such labels reflects the narrative's critique of how using language dehumanises those in transit.

In many scenes, the lack of mutual language results in miscommunication with authorities or aid workers. These moments highlight the emotional and material consequences of linguistic gaps. For example, when Fereiba attempts to explain her situation in broken English or through gestures, the inability to articulate need becomes a sign of powerlessness. This echoes Landry and Bourhis (1997) claim that linguistic visibility is tied to access and recognition, those without linguistic capital are often excluded from rights and resources.

Translation moments, such as when a fellow refugee interprets for Fereiba or helps her navigate bureaucratic processes, act as counter-signs of solidarity. These interactions exemplify the social interactional side of geosemiotics, where meaning is co-constructed through context and necessity. They also reveal the resilience and adaptability of refugee communities, who build temporary systems of communication in the absence of institutional support.

Overall, *When the Moon Is Low* constructs a layered and dynamic linguistic landscape, where language mediates every step of the refugee journey. Through written signs, spoken interactions, and symbolic markers, the novel depicts migration as a series of linguistic trials that reflect deeper social structures of power, exclusion, and resistance.

Data Analysis with Textual Examples

Painted Signage

A pivotal moment occurs in the Jungle refugee camp when Saleem observes scattered English-language signs; "There were painted signs here and there in English.

> WE WANT FREEDOM,
> NO LIFE IN THE JUNGLE,
> RESPECT FOR HUMANS.
> (Hashimi, 2015, p. 360).

These signs serve as symbolic inscriptions within the fictional landscape, expressing collective hope and protest. However, for many characters, such as Saleem, Ajmal, and others, these words remain semiotically hollow, visible yet unreadable, emphasising the symbolic space marked by dislocation and linguistic exclusion.

Language Barriers

> Through a unique medley of Turkish, English, and Dari, we were able to communicate. Where words failed, we gestured and mimed.
> (Hashimi, 2015, p.149).

A living linguistic landscape is created in the extract above. Multiple languages coexist in the refugee's journey. While language barriers exist, some survival strategies are highlighted where refugees can gather from various languages to communicate. From a geosemiotic perspective, this scene highlights how interaction order shifts from verbal exchange to gestures and mime when words fail, turning bodies into semiotic resources. The text underscores the instability of language in transit while also demonstrating refugees' resilience in negotiating meaning across cultural and linguistic borders.

> Saleem looked at the paper. He recognized the writing as Turkish. The characters were the same as the English alphabet but with dots and curved accents that reminded him of Dari. He had learned conversational phrases but knew he would stumble horribly if he tried to read.
> (Hashimi, 2015, p.227).

The linguistic sign, in the extract above, the Turkish writing on paper, represents the multilingual environment that refugees face. While Officer G requested Saleem to read the paper, he showed partial recognition, proving how written language becomes both a bridge and a barrier. It highlights the struggle of navigating spaces when literacy in that language is dominant. The placement of the text gives it situated meaning. It is a semiotic marker of location and power, reminding Saleem he is in a foreign land. The Turkish script indexes Turkey's national identity and place, while Saleem's inability to decode it emphasises his outsider status.

Social Exclusion through Language Silence

> Saleem was too tongue-tied to make smart replies when the boys tossed around the usual jeers. He hoped his silence came off as cool indifference.
> (Hashimi, 2015, p.157).

Saleem's longing for familiar language surfaces in Chapter 27: "It is nice to be able to speak to a fellow countryman. I feel as if my tongue has been tied for months." (Hashimi, 2015, p. 188). This reflects how refugees endure linguistic alienation in transit spaces. On the level of social space, language becomes a marker of belonging; those unable to speak their native tongue are socially silenced, depriving them of emotional and legal agency.

Translation as Survival Strategy

In chapter 28, a moment of linguistic solidarity appears when Roksana suggests to Fereiba and Saleem that telling their personal story might help their asylum application. The exchange, marred by imperfect English, demonstrates how translation and narrative framing become tools for navigating bureaucratic space. Roksana's encouragement illustrates how language is co-constructed under duress and can influence life-changing decisions.

Maps and Mobility: Navigating the Linguistic Landscape of Transit Spaces

> Inside, the station was a bustling metropolis of its own. Saleem dodged travelers and meandered through until he found a wall of maps. There were four large posters of various scales on the wall. Saleem looked at the local bus routes and moved on. Next was a map of Italy. (Hashimi, 2015, p.323).
>
> Roma. Northwest from where he stood, it was the city labeled in the largest letters, and it looked like a series of paths led there and out. From Roma, he would have to make his way north to cross France and then the English Channel. (Hashimi, 2015, p.323).

A key moment in the refugee's encounter with the Linguistic Landscape of transit spaces is represented in the extracts above. The map, the name of the city, and the bus route function as visual and symbolic signs that orient and disorient the refugee traveller. Based on Linguistic Landscape theory (Landry & Bourhis, 1997), these Italian public texts symbolise the host society's dominance, directing Saleem towards potential paths and safe paths. In contrast, the geosemiotic dimension (Scollon & Scollon, 2003) points out how the meaning of these signs is inferred through their spatial location at the train station, which is marked by control, movement, and observation.

For Saleem, the salient signification of "Roma" is more than a city name; it is a semiotic marker of hope and direction, anchoring his struggle to survive. The interaction between visual signs (e.g., maps and bus routes) and the concrete environment (e.g., station walls) demonstrates how refugees navigate symbolic spaces in unfamiliar linguistic environments. As such, the scene exemplifies how written notices in the linguistic landscape not only provide orientation but also highlight the linguistic and cultural chasm that Saleem has to cross to survive.

Discussion

The analysis of *When the Moon Is Low*, through the lens of Linguistic Landscape (LL) theory (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) and geosemiotics (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), highlights how the refugee journey is not merely a geographical movement but a profound semiotic experience. The textual analysis finds that Nadia Hashimi's *When the Moon Is Low* carefully creates a multilingual and semiotically dense environment that empowers and excludes subjects in the context of refugees as well. English translations of slogans, like 'WE WANT FREEDOM' or 'RESPECT FOR HUMANS', show how refugees inscribe themselves on public spaces. Such signs, however, have a double nature of empowerment and exclusion: While they are a collective protest, they are illegible or semiotically dead for Saleem and fellow travellers, and therefore signal the distance between legibility and visibility in the communication of refugees. Language disparities also mirror the vulnerability of communication across transit. Multilateral communication among Turkish, English, and Dari reflects the precarious nature of meaning-making across borders, whereas non-verbal behaviour and imitation mirror the body as a further semiotic resource. This is in accordance with geosemiotic theory, which emphasises that meaning-making is not solely reliant upon written language, but also upon the order of interaction and bodily routines.

Concurrently, encounters with written texts, Turkish documents, Italian maps, and public transportation timetables expose the pivotal role that literacy, or illiteracy, plays in limiting refugees' mobility. Saleem's partial knowledge of Turkish script highlights the double-edged role of written texts as facilitators and barriers. Maps and station signs are exemplary semiotic markers that not only aid mobility but also reaffirm the dominance of the host society over mobility. A geosemiotic analysis highlights their careful positioning in institutional

spaces, such as railway stations, underlining the interdependence of orientation and power relations as part of the spatial ordering of signs.

The social cartography of linguistic landscapes is manifested through silence and marginalisation. Saleem's inability to respond to provocations or to articulate himself in his native language with ease serves as a testament to how linguistic deprivation undermines one's agency and sense of belonging. In contrast, instances of translation, such as Roksana's support, exemplify how linguistic solidarity and narrative construction serve as critical strategies for survival, particularly within bureaucratic contexts where language proficiency dictates the accessibility of asylum.

Collectively, they illustrate how the narrative transcends mere depiction of refugee experiences, thereby constructing a complex linguistic terrain wherein written discourse, nonverbal communication, silence, and the act of translation converge. Refugees are shown to move in a semiotic landscape where every sign, ranging from visual signs to bureaucratic forms, is filled with issues of power, identity, and displacement. This scholarly contribution to the domain of Linguistic Landscape studies is augmented by broadening its parameters to encompass fictional and narrative contexts, while concurrently demonstrating how geosemiotics can elucidate the tangible, spatial, and symbolic challenges that refugees encounter in their experiences of displacement.

Conclusion

This study has explored *When the Moon Is Low* through the theoretical lens of Linguistic Landscape (LL) theory and geosemiotics to uncover how language, both visible and invisible, structures the refugee experience. These tools are typically used in sociolinguistics, but here they are applied metaphorically to a literary journey (fictional refugee routes).

The analysis of *When the Moon Is Low* uncovers how linguistic landscapes, maps, posters, multilingual signs, and bureaucratic papers shape the mobility and survival of refugees. The public texts written in Turkish, English, Dari, and Italian are not unbiased; rather, they serve as markers of authority, identity, or exclusion. From a geosemiotic point of view, the siting and setting of these signs—installed on station walls, in asylum offices, or on camp fences—provide them with contextual sense. Silence, miscommunication, and gestures also illustrate the manner in which refugees negotiate disjointed linguistic systems on their journey.

The study concludes that Hashimi's novel brings linguistic landscapes as both hindrances and instruments of resilience. Signs and languages encountered in refugee journeys embody power relations, exclusion, and identity struggles, while also enabling survival through translation, protest, and embodied communication. The research highlights the need for multilingual access in real refugee contexts and suggests further literary and interdisciplinary research on how signs and semiotics structure the refugee experience.

Works Cited

Barni, M., & Bagna, C. (2015). The critical turn in LL. Linguistic Landscape. An International Journal, 1(1–2), 6–18. https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.1.1-2.01bar

Canagarajah, S. (2012). Translingual practice: Global Englishes and cosmopolitan relations. In Translingual Practice: Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan Relations (pp. 1–216). https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203073889

de Zoysa, D. A., & Appadurai, A. (1998). Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization. In International Migration Review (Vol. 32, Issue 4, p. 1073). https://doi.org/10.2307/2547675

Gorter, D. (2006). Further Possibilities for Linguistic Landscape Research Globalisation and the Spread of English. Linguistic Landscape; A New Approach to Multilingualism-8-13, 81–89. www.bartleby.com

Hashimi, N. (2015). *When The Moon is Low*. HarperCollins.

Jaworski, A., & Thurlow, C. (2010). Introducing Semiotic Landscapes. Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, Space, 1–40.

Landry, R., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1997). Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality. In Journal of Language and Social Psychology (Vol. 16, Issue 1, pp. 23–49).

Lindström, K., Kull, K., & Palang, H. (2011). Semiotic study of landscapes: An overview from semiology to ecosemiotics. Sign Systems Studies, 39(2/4), 12–36. https://doi.org/10.12697/sss.2011.39.2-4.02

Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (2003). Discourses in place: Language in the material world. In Discourses in Place: Language in the Material World. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203422724

Troyer, R. (2016). [Book Review] Negotiating and Contesting Identities in Linguistic Landscapes, by R. Blackwood, E. Lanza, & H. Woldemariam (Eds.), 2016, London: Bloomsbury.]. 2016, 88–93. https://doi.org/10.1163/26659077-01903007

Zainab, A., & Rind, U. K. (2024). The Unsettling Journeys: Exploring Uncanny Liminality in Selected South Asian Migrant Fiction. Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review, 8(III). https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2024(8-iii)14

Beyond the Screen: Rethinking Ecocriticism in the Digital Age

Harini K

Abstract

The belief that digital culture effectively provides the cleaner, less-resource-intensive alternative to traditional production obscures the resource-intensive edifice upon which digital production rests. The online world is nothing if not material, as it is predicated upon networks of energy-hungry servers, extractive supply chains, and growing flows of e-waste. This paper explores ecocriticism for the digital Anthropocene in ways that enliven the materialities beneath the digital world we experience and consider the cultural narratives through which these materialities emerge. Drawing on Morton's notion of 'dark ecology', Nixon's notion of 'slow violence', and some recent scholarship on media ecology, this paper brings together theory and empirical examples from international agencies, environmental NGOs, and global reports on e-waste. The paper contends that digital technologies are inextricably enmeshed with patterns of carbon dependency, environmental injustice, and socio-political inequality. By probing both the ecocrises of the infrastructures enacting digital culture, and the mediated ways in which we imagine the environment, this paper argues for an expanded ecocritical stance one that resists technological idealism, reveals hidden ecological costs, and glimpses more sustainable cultural futures.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Digital Anthropocene, Environmental Justice, E-waste, Media Ecology, Platform Capitalism

Introduction

Digital technologies have transformed nearly every aspect of modern life, from social networks to streaming services. We are encouraged to think of these technologies as sustainable alternatives that substitute travel with teleconferencing, paper with PDFs, and physical storage for 'cloud' technologies. These notions see the shift to digital as a kind of environmental solution, but they disguise the material infrastructures and environmental implications of that shift. Data centres use enormous amounts of energy, the production of devices uses lots of minerals and has huge ecological and human implications, and obsolete electronics are contributing to a surge in global e-waste problems.

Ecocriticism, which traditionally has been about literature and representations of nature, must expand to address the digital realm. Forests and rivers are still crucial important, but so too are server farms, supply chains, and recycling centres. While ecocriticism has drawn attention to the cultural dimensions of the ecological crisis, it is well positioned to examine the relationship between the symbolic and the material and show how ecological stories are mediated by technologies.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

As a field, ecocriticism began by engaging primarily with representations of nature in the context of literature, art and culture (Buell, 2005). The more typical areas of study examined how landscapes, creatures, events and other environmental themes were represented through written texts. Given the rise of digital media and the consequential saturation of the digital into our modern lives, now is the time for that scope to expand to include not only how we represent nature in literature, but how digital technologies feature in and contribute to the discourse surrounding environmental issues. Scholars like Gabrys (2011) and Parikka (2015) have

extended the conversation of ecocriticism beyond traditional methods of examining literature by considering the materiality of digital's infrastructures. Gabrys' idea of the "natural history of electronics" provides a framework to begin discussing not just the life cycle of digital devices, but their environmental impacts - concerns that are extremely prevalent in today's internationalized world.

Additionally, the geographical shift towards the digital was accompanied with a rising environmental consciousness of the varying infrastructures that supported that change. Ecocriticism has been largely focused on texts that foregrounded forests or rivers, but as our world becomes more interconnected, current ecocriticism needs to consider data centers, e-waste and the geopolitical ramifications of mining for materials like cobalt and lithium (Buell, 2005). The digital world not only complicates our engagement with, and the media we use, but fundamentally complicates the materials and potential environmental effects that are used to make them.

Timothy Morton's notion of "dark ecology" (2016) challenges the perception of nature as pure and untarnished and presents it as a complex entwined web with people, including the technological systems that shape modern life. Dark ecology illustrates processes that are entangled through complexity and obfuscation, which contribute to ecological consequences of technology, which can remain hidden and invisible in digital media representations when they're not recognized.

Rob Nixon's (2011) notion of "slow violence" provides another crucial framework that helps capture the long-term mid-range effects of our technologic infrastructures on the environment. Nixon surfaces a range of scenarios in which environmental ravaging by the digital economy and cultural and political systems are mostly dispersed and incremental in gradual ways: earth-restoration and -regeneration; mining, e-products/e-waste; deforestation and infrastructuralization, etc. He observes that processes of slow violence have disproportionate and disingenuous ramifications on marginalized populations who dwell in far-away and remote locations from where digital culture resides in urban centers. What is particularly I believe perverse and sinister, however, is that in the digital world that we live in, we cannot immediately see the impacts of our 'virtual' lives, thus we are naive to the slow violence latent in our engagements. Looking deeper into the processes that underlie the modalities of media, ecocriticism has a greater chance of discovering how digital media can take part in ongoing environmental suffering or violence especially in the Global South.

As the digital landscape becomes increasingly consolidated by a small number of monopolistic corporations, it is critical to examine the environmental costs of these platforms. Scholars such as Srnicek (2017) and Fuchs (2014) have critiqued the extraction-based economic systems of digital technologies, positioning them as a new kind of platform capitalism which often prioritizes profit rather than sustainability. Moreover, the platforms' environmental liabilities are often externalized, as the digital realm lacks transparency in considering the environmental and social aspects in the long term. Digital platforms are sites of ecological extraction, where resources are extracted from the earth and communities, without considerations of the environmental and human costs.

Methodology

Using a pragmatic mixed-methods approach, we conducted qualitative discourse analysis and included empirical data extracted from various environmental reports and case studies, to identify the hidden costs of ecologies of the digital age.

A critical discourse analysis (CDA) of digital media platforms (Instagram, YouTube, and climate-related Twitter accounts) was used to analyze how representations of nature in relation to environmental issues take shape. By investigating the discourse in digital media networks, the CDA showed that representations of ecology are surfaced and subsequently curated by participants on digital (social) platforms. For instance, platforms like Instagram tend

to portray nature in highly aestheticized fashions, which may promote environmental sensibility, but simultaneously diminish the urgency of ecological crises by depicting nature as a consumable product rather than an urgent, fragile ecosystem.

Secondary data was obtained from trusted sources, such as the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the UN Global E-Waste Monitor, which provide essential evidence about the environmental costs introduced by digital infrastructures. The IEA's report on the energy use of data centers (2023) provides empirical evidence of how digital platforms contribute to global carbon emissions. Likewise, the Basel Action Network and Amnesty International provide detailed reports about the environmental and social contexts of the supply chains for digital devices, particularly the mining of rare earth materials and e-waste recycled.

Indepth case studies were conducted on the mining practices in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the extraction of cobalt, the main mineral for rechargeable batteries, and e-waste processing in Agbogbloshie, Ghana, where old and discarded electronics are processed informally. These case studies exemplified the development of environmental degradation and digital disparities globally, making visible the digital divide articulated in the differences of access to degrees of technology, at a global scale while concurrently being cognizant of environmental injustices disproportionately affecting the Global South as compared to the Global North.

The Materiality of the Digital

When streaming, downloading, and storing data, there are physical processes for the energy demand. The IEA estimates global data centres consume between 240 - 340 TWh globally each year (IEA, 2023) which does not include the indirect energy footprint from backup generators, cooling systems and maintenance network. Connecting to production, devices require cobalt, lithium and rare earth elements mostly being produced under even more environmentally devastating and exploitative conditions. As Amnesty International reported in 2021, the labour conditions in the cobalt mines of the Democratic Republic of Congo are hazardous, exploitative and underpaid barely mentioned in the sustainability marketing of much larger technology companies.

The Ecological Blind Spots of Digital Culture

Culturally, digital platforms and media have sufficient social capital to influence cultural perceptions of nature, yet they usually promote commoditized, idealized views of the environment. Social media platforms such as both Instagram and Facebook allow users to have limited views of the landscape beaches, mountains, forests as consumer objects marked as liking, sharing and commodifying the experience. Users are distanced from the environmentally embedded contingencies that may exist behind these images.

The commodification of nature within the digital era is indicative of larger trends in which representations of nature and the environment are frequently cleaned up, aestheticized, and divorced from the social and political contexts that shape real ecosystems. Parikka (2015) reminds us that the "cloud" of data consumption has geological processes and geological impact of its own, and we can become desensitized to ecological issues while subjectively experiencing a "virtual" nature in a less immediate or less urgent way.

Social media platforms intensify this blind spot by producing content based solely on users' algorithmic preferences, which can create "echo chambers" of content in which persons may find ecological problems invisibilized as they are disconnected from their interests. In this way, awareness of environmental crises, like climate change and biodiversity loss, may be restricted to niche groups of people who are already likely to care. To mitigate the effects of these filers on the communication capabilities of digital media is detrimental to any form of collective ecological consciousness and action.

Environmental Injustice and the Global Digital Divide

The environmental costs associated with digital technology is being on the backs of people of the Global South, and as mentioned previously, rare earth minerals and cobalt- silver, copper, and aluminum- that are crucially essential to the production of digital electronics sold in the Global North, emerge from environments which are deregulated and frequently characterized by dangerous working conditions.

Workers in mines are exposed to toxic chemicals themselves, even as local people are negatively affected by the environmental impacts of mining. The e-waste exported from developed nations to informal recyclers in places like Agbogbloshie and Guiyu lead workers to dismantle abandoned electronics—often without protective gear. This process releases toxic metals like lead, mercury, and cadmium into the soil and water and has resulted in long-term health problems for residents in affected areas.

The digital divide is not just a technical divide; it is an ecological divide. Developed countries reap the benefits of the digital age, while developing countries sustain its social and environmental costs. The need for global environmental justice in the digital age is urgent.

Towards a 21st Century Ecocriticism

In dealing with the environmental crisis of the digital age, ecocriticism must go beyond nature writing and pastoralism and engage with different modes of cultural expression, such as digital media, platform capitalism, or virtual environmentalism. Ecocriticism needs to incorporate more of an interdisciplinary approach, including media studies, digital humanities, and the environmental sciences. In order for ecocriticism to respond to the entwinement between environmental consciousness and ecological relationships formed through digital technologies and platforms, it needs to build a repertoire of analyses.

An ecocriticism response needs to address digital infrastructures and their effects, including the embeddedness of global disparities in its very composition. This includes the environmental impact of the raw materials extracted from the Global South, to the disposal of its hardware, as well as the way the benefits of computing and the information age is felt differently across place. More significantly, it needs to confront in a material, lived way the legacies of coloniality in digital technology- often the pace of technological change in the Global North relies on the extraction of raw material and labor inequalities from the Global South to ensure technological advancement.

Finally, ecocriticism must take the step toward activism, that is able to critique and explore new sustainable forms of production and consumption of media. lastly, it could also look to advocate for the tech industry adopting circular economies through sustainable production lines, ecodesigns of devices, and eco-digital infrastructures. Linking theory with example demonstrates ecocriticism can respond to existential digital problems in relation to a sustainable future.

Conclusion

The digital age, which promises a cleaner and more organized world, typically hides many environmental costs. While the internet, digital media and cloud-based technologies appear weightless and immaterial, they are based on robust and energy-hungry infrastructures, and they are reliant on resource extraction and the destruction of ecosystems. In this paper, we have illustrated the complex interplay between digital technologies and the environment, exploring how the infrastructures that support our digital living result in environmental harm - from the extraction of carbon that results from our data centers, to the toxic recycling of e-waste, to the indifference toward working conditions in the Global South. We need to dismantle the myth of the "immaterial". As ecocriticism continues to develop in order to address these new material

realities, it is becoming more and more evident that digital technologies - like traditional industries - are implicated and entangled with accelerating patterns of environmental devastation. From rare earth mineral extraction in Africa to transnational flows of e-waste, digital infrastructures exploit both ecological and social relations in ways that are largely hidden and easily ignored. A challenge that ecocriticism faces now is how to address this "dark ecology" of digital life. Instead of viewing technology as an answer to environmental crises, we should recognize how ecocriticism needs to recognize, and critically engage with, hidden systems of harm that exist within digital economies. We must engage with global environmental justice by examining the inequities of the digital divide, in which disadvantaged, marginalized populations in the Global South bear the responsibility and costs of all the environmental consequences of our digital consumption, while the profits and benefits are disproportionately enjoyed by wealthier countries.

References

Amnesty International. This is What We Die For: Human Rights Abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Power the Global Trade in Cobalt. 2021.

Buell, Lawrence. The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination. Blackwell, 2005.

Gabrys, Jennifer. Digital Rubbish: A Natural History of Electronics. University of Michigan Press, 2011.

Heise, Ursula K. “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to Ecocriticism.” PMLA, vol. 121, no. 2, 2006, pp. 503–516.

Hogan, Mél. “Big Data Ecologies.” Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization, vol. 17, no. 3, 2017, pp. 78–96.

International Energy Agency. Data Centres and Data Transmission Networks. IEA, 2023.

Morton, Timothy. Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence. Columbia University Press, 2016.

Nixon, Rob. Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor. Harvard University Press, 2011.

Parikka, Jussi. A Geology of Media. University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

Puckett, Jim, and Ted Smith. Exporting Harm: The High-Tech Trashing of Asia. Basel Action Network, 2002.

Srnicek, Nick. Platform Capitalism. Polity, 2017.

United Nations University. The Global E-Waste Monitor 2022. UNU, ITU & ISWA, 2022.

Eco-criticism in the digital age: Exploring Nature, Literature, and Technology

Himanshi Gadhia

Abstract

Eco-criticism, an interdisciplinary field that studies the relationship between literature and the environment, has evolved significantly with the introduction of digital technologies. In the digital age, the expression and interpretation of ecological fears have expanded beyond traditional literary texts to include digital poetry, virtual storytelling, eco-gaming, social media campaigns, and digital art. This paper describes how eco-critical thought is transformed by digital platforms, permitting new forms of environmental engagement and activism. It also examines the challenges and limitations of digital eco-criticism, including issues of availability, digital waste, and hyper reality.

Keywords: Eco-criticism, digital age, Nature, Literature, Technology, Sustainability

1. Introduction

Ecocriticism emerged in the 1990s as a response to growing ecological crises and the need to examine literature through an environmental lens. Traditionally concerned with how nature is represented in literary texts, ecocriticism now operates in an immensely transformed media landscape. The digital age has introduced new media, genres, and audiences, requiring a reevaluation of eco-critical methods and theories. As digital culture becomes deeply embedded in everyday life, the ecological narratives one encounter is increasingly mediated by screens, algorithms, and virtual experiences.

2. Evolution of eco-criticism

Initially focused on nature writing and pastoral literature, early eco-criticism explored themes of wilderness, ecological harmony, and environmental degradation in works by writers like Thoreau and Rachel Carson. However, as the discipline matured, it embraced postcolonial, feminist, and urban ecocriticism. With the digital turn, eco-criticism began to engage with new textual forms; blogs, podcasts, digital storytelling, and immersive simulations that offer fresh ways of experiencing and understanding nature.

3. Digital platforms as eco-critical spaces

3.1 Digital eco-poetry and literature

Writers and artists have coupled digital tools to create interactive eco-poetry and hypertext fiction that respond dynamically to readers. Works such as J.R. Carpenter’s The Gathering Cloud blend ecological science, poetic language, and digital design to critique data centers' environmental impact.

3.2 Eco-themed video games

Games like Flower and Beyond Blue incorporate environmental storytelling, encouraging players to interact with nature and reflect on ecological issues. These games offer immersive experiences that traditional texts cannot, expanding eco-criticism into participatory realms.

3.3 Social media activism

Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter) have become potent tools for digital eco-criticism. Environmental influencers, hashtags like #FridaysForFuture, and viral campaigns bring ecological awareness to younger, global audiences, blending storytelling with activism.

4. Benefits of digital eco-criticism

Accessibility: Digital media allows eco-critical discourse to reach broader, more diverse audiences.
Multimodality, combines text, image, video, and sound to create richer ecological experiences.
Real-time Engagement Facilitates immediate dialogue and collective action through social media and online platforms.

5. Challenges and critiques

While digital platforms offer powerful tools, they also present contradictions:

- Carbon Footprint: The very tools that enable digital eco-criticism servers, devices, and data centers contribute to ecological harm.
- Digital Divide: Not everyone has access to digital media, limiting participation in digital environmental discourse.
- Hyper reality: Digital representations of nature may create detachment from real ecological issues, replacing authentic experiences with virtual simulations.

6. Future Directions

Digital eco-criticism is poised to grow with advancements in virtual reality, AI-generated literature, and interactive storytelling. Future research may focus on:

- Eco-narratives in the metaverse
- AI-driven ecological poetry
- Block chain and its ecological implications
- Decolonizing digital eco-criticism by including indigenous voices and non-Western ecological worldviews

7. Conclusion

The digital age has transformed eco-criticism from a primarily literary practice into a multimedia, participatory field. While digital media opens new avenues for ecological awareness and critique, it also raises ethical and practical concerns. A balanced, critical approach to digital eco-criticism must embrace innovation while remaining rooted in ecological responsibility and inclusivity.

References

Buell, Lawrence. The Environmental Imagination. Harvard University Press, 1995.
Carpenter, J.R. The Gathering Cloud. Uniformbooks, 2017.
Garrard, Greg. Ecocriticism. Routledge, 2012.
Glotfelty, C. The Ecocriticism Reader. University of Georgia Press, 1996.
Love, Glen A. “Revaluing Nature: Toward an Ecological Criticism.” Western American Literature, vol. 25, no. 3, 1990.

Nixon, Rob. Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor. Harvard University Press, 2011.

Rueckert, W. Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism,1978.

Integrating Outcome-Based Assessment and Outcome-Based Education: A Theoretical Perspective

Iqra Khan

Abstract

Prior to Outcome-Based Education (OBE), the majority of instructions were teacher-centered, content-driven and standardized. This strategy was not successful, as students' learning outcomes were unsatisfactory. Outcome-Based Education evolved as reformative response, aiming to ensure that educational objectives were achieved. OBE differs from conventional testing in that it emphasizes proficiency or mastery of the required material rather than solely focusing solely on percentages and scores. Aligning OBE with Outcome-Based Assessment (OBA) is advantageous, as it shifts the perspectives of both teachers and students regarding the nature of learning. This integration is essential to make learning significant, measurable and student-centered. OBA provides structure, direction and observable results. Aligning OBA with OBE ensures that assessments genuinely reflect intended learning outcomes and provide valid evidence of student achievement. The alignment of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and Outcome-Based Assessment (OBA) makes teaching and learning more goal-oriented, student-centered, and evidence-based. The theoretical integration of OBE and OBA results in more open, cohesive educational system that promotes in-depth learning. The focus of this research paper is the theoretical relationship between Outcome-Based Education and Outcome-Based Assessment. Outcome-Based Assessment evaluates predicted outcomes, while Outcome-Based Education emphasizes what students should accomplish. This research paper explores literature review, the aligning between OBE and OBA, and the key features of implementing OBA within the framework of OBE. It also addresses practical challenges and offers suggestions for teachers and organizations.

Key Words: Outcome-based education, Outcome-based Assessment, Alignment, Theoretical relationship

I. Introduction

The shift in emphasis from traditional content-based training to a learner-centered paradigm—outcome-based education (OBE), which emphasizes the outcomes of the learning process—has gained popularity. OBE's main focus is that all educational teaching and learning should be outcome- or result-oriented. As a result, evaluation must shift from merely focusing on content knowledge to assessing performance against predetermined standards. To ensure learning is consistent, reliable, and coherent, Outcome-Based Assessment (OBA) and OBE should be aligned. The purpose of this research paper is to explore the theoretical foundations of OBE and OBA in order to understand how aligning these components enhances educational quality and accountability.

II. Literature Review

2.1 The theory and principles of Outcome-Based Education:

The concept of OBE is defined by Spady (1994), is "a results-oriented approach where all instructional efforts are directed at ensuring learners achieve specific, significant outcomes." Key characteristics include clarity of focus, designing instructions based on desired outcomes, and providing increased opportunities for student success. To ensure alignment with anticipated competencies, OBE entails a change in curriculum design and practice.

2.2 Outcome-Based Assessment (OBA)

OBA (Outcomes-Based Assessment) is known as assessing student performance using predetermined learning outcomes. It involves the use of performance standards, rubrics, and ongoing feedback. OBA works as a diagnostic tool for instructional enhancement and offers both formative and summative insights into a learner's progress.

2.3 Constructive Alignment Theory

Biggs (1996) introduced the concept of "constructive alignment," where curriculum objectives, teaching methods, and assessments are harmonized. This alignment is essential in OBE systems, in which misalignment can undermine both the validity of assessment and the credibility of instruction.

2.4 OBA in Writing and Language Instruction

Analytical rubrics, peer review procedures, and portfolio evaluations are examples of outcome-based assessment techniques that greatly help writing classes. These resources evaluate students' progress toward gaining outcomes by focusing on clarity, coherence, structure, language accuracy and revision skills.

III. Theoretical Framework

The foundation of this paper is the alignment of Spady's OBE and Biggs's constructive theory. When OBE and OBA are integrated, they offer a framework for understanding how instructions and evaluation should function to enhance students' learning. In this context, the focus is on coherence, transparency, and accountability in teaching and learning.

IV. Analysis and Discussion

4.1 OBE as a Framework for Learning

OBE lays the foundation by clearly explaining what students should understand, perform and value. Due to this clarity, teachers may design purposeful and focused learning experiences and assessments.

4.2 OBA as a Mechanism for Measuring Learning

OBA confirms that evaluation process accurately reflects the extent to which learning outcomes are met. This expands assessment beyond grades to incorporate relevant feedback and monitoring students' achievement.

4.3 Integration: How OBA operationalize OBE

When implemented correctly OBA becomes the primary tool for determining effectiveness of OBE, if it is implemented correctly. For instance, a rubric for an argumentative essay explicitly reflects the outcome. "Students will be able to write a coherent argument supported by evidence."

4.4 Challenges in Implementation

Lack of Training: Teachers may not have the expertise to create assessments that are aligned with the intended outcomes.
Assessment Overload: Regular evaluations can be tiresome and time-consuming.
Misalignment: Learning exercise may not always reflect intended outcomes.

4.5 Best Practices for Implementation

Clearly defined criteria that align with learning objectives; use of clear rubrics
Iterative Feedback: Help students by using formative evaluations.

Curriculum Mapping: Ensure alignment and consistency among assessment, instructional material, and learning outcome.

V. Conclusion

The concept of OBE and OBA signify a paradigm shift in education from teaching to learning and demonstration. These two frameworks' theoretical alignment guarantees more equitable and legitimate evaluation procedures in addition to improved learning experiences. Teachers can increase the effectiveness and significance of their education by incorporating evaluation into the learning process and tying it to particular outcomes.

References

Biggs, J. (1996). Enhancing teaching through constructive alignment. Higher Education, 32(3), 347–364.

Spady, W. G. (1994). Outcome-Based Education: Critical Issues and Answers. American Association of School Administrators.

Harden, R. M. (2007). Outcome-based education: The future is today. Medical Teacher, 29(7), 625–629.

Killen, R. (2000). Standards-Referenced Assessment: Linking Outcomes, Assessment and Reporting.

Brown, S., & Glasner, A. (1999). Assessment Matters in Higher Education: Choosing and Using Diverse Approaches.

Andrade, H. (2005). Teaching with rubrics: The good, the bad, and the ugly. College Teaching, 53(1), 27–30.

Digital Colonializations of Human Psyche in the Dystopian World of MT Anderson's *Feed*

Jagajit Manotosh Patra

Abstract

Considering M. T. Anderson's *Feed* (2002), this paper explores the idea that ideologies in our society have always manipulated freedom and free thinking. The market uses tactics to decide the eating habits, dressing sense, living style, understanding of the world, etc., of the people. Authority uses the tool of digitalization, where ideology is integrated to bracket people. *Feed* depicts a future where individuals are constantly connected to a vast digital network through brain implants, which influence their thoughts, emotions, behavior and lifestyle. *Feed* also depicts the psychological consequences of a heavily commercialized digital environment, where corporate and market interest's delicate the desire of people and the cultural existence. This paper is examined through the dual frameworks of cognitive literary studies and Digital Humanities. "The Feed", a neural implant becomes a metaphor for cognitive colonization, shaping memory, thoughts, perception and identity. The paper warns of the potential dangers of unchecked technological advancements and their clash with the human psyche in a dystopian world offering a commentary on digital literacy, surveillance capitalism, and cognitive fragmentation. The paper examines the degradation of human emotions because of the excessive involvement of digitalization and the authority in peoples' lives.

Keywords: Ideology, Digital Humanities, Brain Implants, Surveillance Capitalism and Dystopia.

Introduction

What if in the near future, people no longer need devices for communication? What if people have a digital device implanted in their brains, so that humans cannot be detached and freed from? What if digitalization starts monitoring people's lives and their emotions?

The revolution of digitalisation makes a transformation in humans' interactions with information, communication with one another, and perceive the world around them. In the contemporary modernised and technology-based society, digital technology nearly controls our lives, exerting an important influence on individuals.

Technology has been utilized to make people's lives more pleasant, and social media has been used to facilitate interactions. The market begins to dominate people's food habits, f ashion choices, lifestyle, beliefs, sense of freedom, and perceptions of the world around them through digitalization. In order to look stylish during the sweltering summer months, men dre ss in jeans and blazers. In the same setting, women don short dresses to embody their indepen dence ideology. These are not for comfort. The idea of freedom, or to be seen and appreciated in society, is manipulated by the market. Because of digitalisation, it has become easier to persuade people. One click can send one message to the numberless of people. One advertisement can be shared with numerous people at the same time. Even kids cannot overcome the trap of digitalisation as they play digital games in the playgrounds using their digital devices. Digital marketing becomes the guiding force in the hands of the authority.

Whatever impacts the digitalised market and social networking connections are capable of making on the human mind, they are still external to our lives. They are not part of human biology as other organs like the brain, heart, lungs, hands, legs, etc. are. Anybody has the choice to escape the digital world without facing the slightest danger of a biological disability. But

what if digitalisation becomes a part of our body? This thought experiment is conducted in Anderson's young Adult novel *Feed* (2002) and is stretched to its possible consequences.

American novelist and short story writer Matthew Tobin Anderson was born on November 4, 1968. The majority of his writings are infused with sarcasm, humor, and sophistication. His speculative and dystopian work is especially well-known. Anderson creates characters who are nuanced and his topics are thought-provoking. Although he began writing this book in the 1980s, he published *Feed* in 2002. A fully digitalized society is the main theme of the dystopian novel *Feed*. The novel emphasizes topics like the widespread use of technology in daily life, corporate power's surveillance of people's privacy, environmental degradation, brain data mining, etc. In a very humorous and sombre tone. The novel is set in America's near future, where about 73% of the citizens are directly connected through Government and corporate power to a huge computer network. In this technology-obsessed culture, Feed, a small device is implanted in the brains of people. 'Feeds' are used as neuro devices to make the connections of people to a huge network. Feed helps people to experience a digital database that has a vast virtual reality and all the Feed holders can easily access it. Information, knowledge, entertainment, music and specifically, other things which are difficult in the hands of human beings are the features of this device. The most important thing is that the device works as a social media enabling its users to communicate and chat telepathically with other Feed owners. The Feed tracks the thoughts, emotions and decisions and manipulates the purchasing decisions of the individuals. Feed serves as the representative of digitalisation; the way digitalisation manipulates our choices (e.g. buying clothes or ordering food) in the technology-obsessed culture.

Feed, the present novel for investigation, reminds us of E. M. Forster's short story, The Machine Stops, published in 1909, which is about a futuristic society where everything, from information technologies to food supply, is controlled by a mysterious machine. In this dystopian story, which evokes the internet and digital media events of today all communication is remote and face-to-face meetings happen no longer. The machine controls the mindset of everyone, as it makes everybody extremely dependent on it and society collapses when the machine malfunctions and stops working permanently.

Though digitalisation enhances efficiency and brings innovation to our lives, it also poses challenges such as excessive technological involvement in life and privacy concerns. Technology lacks morality and ethics; it works as per the information given to it, and if humans become slaves to technology, they will lose emotions and morality. Excess connectivity and information can lead humans to internet addiction and various personality disorders.

A dystopian society is an alternative to a utopian society, where the society is idealistic and good. A dystopian society shows the worst possible scenario of a society. In literature, so many works try to improve the genre, such as Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1920), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). Artificial intelligence, virtual and enhanced reality, social networks, biometric recognition systems, mass connectivity and surveillance, loss of privacy, government control, social fragmentation, intensified consumerism, dehumanization, and mass human migration are the significant elements of this genre.

George Orwell's *1984* illustrates the direct approach to influencing people's beliefs, with digitalization serving as only a supporting instrument. The piece paints a vivid image of the effects of brainwashing, mass surveillance, and dictatorship. Orwell emphasizes how the ideology of some dominant groups may twist facts and truth, and then use that ideology to begin controlling over people. People in Orwell's society are no longer autonomous; instead, the government controls every action at both the micro and macro levels. The head of the government in Orwell's dystopian *Oceania* is known as "Big Brother." The government implants the name Big Brother everywhere as the caption to instil fear and loyalty in the minds of people. "Big Brother is watching you" has become a way to define government surveillance of its people. It portrays the idea of being observed by a powerful and mysterious force that no

one has control over. If they deny the propaganda of the party, then they will be killed, and those who obey will be under the notion of the particular party. The idea has emerged as a reflection of totalitarian surveillance and control. Human beings are controlled through telescreens, microphones, and other forms of technology. The human identity is lost under the ideology of this state power.

In the novel *Feed*, the idea of ideology and freedom are changed. The authority does not need to move to bracket people. One click is enough to take control of all. The authority has chosen digitalisation as a primary tool to manipulate people. The device works as a mediator between the high class, government and corporations to monitor and manipulate people and their thoughts. The desires, thoughts, and behaviours of people are shaped by this technology. Loss of identity and critical thinking lead to consequences after implanting the *Feed*. People are forced with manipulation into the digitalised virtual world, then their lives are controlled by those big brothers who are not mentioned in the novel.

Digital Colonialization in *Feed*:

Everybody in the world is trapped by digitalization. We do not have control over ourselves. That is what Anderson warns the whole world about the negative impact of digitalisation in a satirical way. As if digitalisation is slowly coming to be connected to the very body of human beings. Now, digitalisation only manipulates and controls the human psyche, but in the predicted future, Anderson tells how digitalisation will be no more external but rather an inseparable organ of human beings. Anderson's visionary device, Feed, does the same thing, it is implanted in the brain and connected to the neurons. It controls the lifestyle of the people in the culture.

Digitalised Moon

The novel opens with the protagonist, Titus, and his friends going to the Moon, which is digitalised with malls, hospitals, artificial parks, hotels, and so on, for their vacation. Anderson's visionary culture is so advanced and digitalised that it offers enormous entertainment and pleasure to its people. The result is that the characters choose the moon as the place for tourism, one of the most exciting destinations one would dream of. But interestingly all of them find the moon boring, dull and predictable, the beginning chapter starts with a statement by Titus, "We went to the Moon to have fun, but the moon turned out to completely suck." Paradoxically, here silence is not giving them peace. They have been constantly told by the advertisements, the implanted Feeds, and the digitalised society that they should pursue only pleasure and the pleasure which is affordable through loud and expensive. The very idea of happiness is manipulated by digitalisation. That is why Titus' Friends become louder to replace the emptiness and silence.

Introduction of Feed

Anderson's visionary *Feed* appears in the text with the feature of virtual reality as well as it also works as a spoon feed to users' minds. Titus sees colourful ads through it, even though the reality of the moon is quite different, with rocks and dark. The time when they find it boring Feed telecasts colourful ads. In this way, corporations attract users to make money out of it. At the same time, colourful things and boringness do not mean there is any issue in their brain. But this is the Feed that plays with their brain. Because they lack the capability to think about things. Feed as the representative of digitalisation, influences and sometimes overtly controls the desires and perceptions of the users. Specifically, it manipulates the minds of users towards the artificiality in society, trends, and lifestyle. Through the voice of Titus, Anderson describes the dominance of Feed over user's lives.

> But the braggest thing about the Feed, the thing that made it really big, is that it knows everything you want and hope for, sometimes before you even know what those things are. It can tell you how to get them, and help you make buying decisions that are hard. Everything we think and feel is taken in by the corporations, mainly by data ones like Feedlink and OnFeed and American Feedware, and they make a special profile, one that's keyed just to you, and then they give it to their branch companies, or other companies buy them, and they can get to know what it is we need, so all you have to do is want something and there's a chance it will be yours(Anderson 48).

Feed shapes characters' perceptions of reality, filtering and giving importance to information that aligns with the corporate and market interests.

The Death of Language by Digitalisation

Language is an essential part of a culture. It is the most important medium of communication. The history, life and emotions are being stored in language. The Dead Language is used metaphorically to show that digitalisation kills it. Titus and Violet talk about their families. Violet reveals her father is a professor who teaches dead languages such as FORTRAN. BASIC." Then, she tries to teach something to Titus.

> This is the language called BASIC," she said. On the paper, it said:
> 002110 Goto 013500
> 013500 Peek 16388, 236
> 013510 Poke 16389, 236
> She read it to me. I could tell the numbers fine. "So what does that mean?" I asked. "It's the first thing my dad teaches the students on the first day," she said. "It means, 'I came, I saw, I conquered(Anderson 65-66).

Violet is surprised that Titus can barely read and write. Because digitalisation barely allows this. Instant pleasure is the sole motive that digitalisation is concerned about. The only purpose of the words is to communicate faster. People don't need to learn the language. In schools, they are taught how to use their Feed for communication. In this way, language is no longer valued and is considered dead in Anderson's culture.

Emotions are Replaced by Digitalisation

Emotional Unavailability between users is another aspect that is introduced by digitalisation. Titus is too emotionally distant from his family. Each member is so absorbed in his or her Feed that they have less time to wonder about others. Even, Titus shows no emotions for Violet, his girlfriend. When she tells Titus that she feels her legs are not working, and sometimes she is unable to chat with others because of the malfunctioning in Feed, he is more concerned about the colour of his car. He feels more strongly about digitalization than his partner does. Anderson's prediction of the demise of human agencies is demonstrated by the way digitalization affects users' emotions. Most of the time, Feed encourages its consumers. As though, even in a dream, there is no escape from digitalization.

Tradition Versus Digitalisation

In Anderson's culture, Schools are controlled by corporations rather than the government. It becomes easy for the corporation to brainwash its users through education. Students are the digital future consumers. The market uses education as the biggest tool for manipulation.

> School™ is not so bad now, not like back when my grandparents were kids when the schools were run by the government, which sounds completely like, Nazi, to have the government running the schools?... Now that School™ is run by the corporations, it's

> pretty brag, because it teaches us how the world can be used, like mainly how to use our Feeds. Also, it's good because that way we know that the big corps are made up of real human beings, and not just jerks out for money, because taking care of children, they care about America's future. It's an investment in tomorrow (Anderson 109-110).

In terms of development, Titus sees tradition as inferior and of less value. In the modern schools of the digitalised culture, teachers are no longer teaching morality, ethics, or the value of life; rather, they are teaching how to use digital gadgets and devices. In general, students are taught to be familiar with digitalisation. Artificiality has become the core subject of education.

The Conflict between Human Agencies

Titus stands in for the entire agency of contented Feed consumers. Everything he desires is granted to him. He never challenges such technology's authority. In this culture, where the feed is regarded as a useful and essential component of people's lives despite its dominating character, this lack of scepticism becomes increasingly commonplace. On the opposite side, Violet stands as the representative of Resistance and critique. She is the only human in a digitalised society. She criticises all the motivated, good users of the Feed. Her criticism can be articulated when she says, "Everything we've grown up with—the stories on the Feed, the games, all of that—it's all streamlining our personalities so we're easier to sell to"(Anderson 97). Directly or indirectly, Violet has to face so many complications in her life because of her résistance. Her Feed is hacked by a hacker which results in the painful further journey of her life. She always fights for human autonomy. She tries to make others understand about manipulating Feed. But her efforts go in vain. She prioritizes nature over superficiality.

The Emotional Unavailability Because of Digitalisation

Violet gets admitted to the hospital because of issues with her Feed. The most horrifying things happen in the novel when Violet is threatened with her life by digitalisation. This threat is symbolic as if to stop her from voicing against digitalisation. This is clear that Violet is going through a very serious and rough time, and a major health problem she will face in the near future. Violet has complete trust in Titus and wants emotional dependency on him. She explains to him what is going on with her. After coming from the moon, her Feed has been malfunctioning. She has also been going to technicians to get the solutions to it. She fears the malfunctioned Feed may stop the function of her brain. But nobody finds a solution to it. She wants to live peacefully for the next few days. She has the hunger to explore the world, but does not know if she will get that much time or not. She dreams of this exploration with Titus. She wants to spend almost time with him because she loves him. He asks, **"**Do they know how long? No. Earlier, they were saying it could take years. Now they're not sure. They're saying it will be much faster. It still could be years. It's not going to be years. It could happen anytime" (Anderson 176-177).

After knowing Violet's upcoming death, he becomes more emotionally unavailable. Because he doesn't know how to react and how to comfort her beloved. His society has not taught this. The unavailability becomes stronger when in chapter 87.3%, Titus comes to know that if Feed dies, she will die. The malfunctioning of the Feed severely affects the memories of Violet. One of the functions of the Feed is to preserve the memories of the users. So, the fear comes to her that she may lose all of her memories, and everything will fade away from her. Violet is clear that she will leave the materialistic and digitalised world very soon. So, she wants to enjoy every moment of her life with enjoyment and exploration, that is only with her love, Titus. Even she sends him a list of what she wants to do before she dies,

> 1. Dancing. 2. Fly over an active volcano. Spit stuff into magma. 3. Could the dancing be in a nightclub with lots of mirrors? And people wear tuxedos, and there's a big band, and perhaps some mob activity? And you'll keep staring at a cigarette girl named

> Belinda, from Oklahoma, and I'll say, "Damn you, man — damn you — can't you keep your eyes in your sockets like everyone else?" …
> 22. I'll go out and call for the dog, because it's getting to be evening, and there are coyotes out there in the woods. The night will be falling. By the screen door, I'll call — "Paine!" And the trees will rustle. "Paine! Paine!" And he'll come when I call (Anderson 229-233).

This definitive list of Violet makes Titus afraid to respond because he has no experience with such emotional intensity. Feed never allows its users to experience such emotional intensity. Feed influences him to stay away from such strong emotions. The influence can be traced when she transforms all her memories into Titus because she fears losing them. But Titus, without waiting a second, deletes everything. His refusal to be attached to her can be the reason for the involvement of the Feed. His digital society could never prepare him for deep emotional connections.

Violet hates, fears and wants to stay away from this digitalised society. She even wants to turn off the Feed, the central part of her body. But she cannot either; her death will be closer. When Violet finds Titus less interested, she asks about it. Titus replies he has already pictured her as dead. But Violet wants all the pleasure she has not achieved yet. She wants to experience both emotional and physical pleasure from Titus. For the first time in the text, she says, "I love you, Titus" (Anderson 187), but Titus never responds.

Digitalisation and Destruction

The text ends with a tragedy, the more time comes to the end of Violet's life, the more Titus finally realizes her absence. Titus tries to become available emotionally to Violet. He tells her an imagined story. In the story, all the people are living a life without the Feed. As it seems, in the end, he comes to know the negative impact of digitalisation. He promises to live without the Feed. Maybe the absence of Violet makes him realize the value of human emotions. But his availability cannot stop her from leaving the digitalised society. By creating this situation, Anderson tries to spread positivity and hope in the life destroyed by Feed. In the end, Anderson shows that a Feed advertisement fades away slowly, which leads to the destruction of Anderson's dystopian America. In other interpretations, optimistically, Titus attempts to escape from digitalisation.

Conclusion

The paper conducts a comprehensive analysis of *Feed* by M. T. Anderson, exploring its portrayal of a near-future culture dominated by digitalization and the manipulation of the human psyche. Through different approaches unpack different themes of digitalization, consumer culture and identity formation. An individual's value is considered as on their involvement in the current digitalized culture and their data profile. The analysis reveals the manipulation of the Feed on the character's thoughts, desires and sense of self. The comparative analysis with other dystopian texts provides insights into the unique contribution of *Feed* to the genre.

The paper pays attention to offering an understanding of the interplay between ideology, technology, society, and the human psyche, in an era of digitalization. We elucidate its importance as a warning of the consequences of the heavy implications of digitalization in a digitalized culture. By imposing a theoretical framework parallel to the real world, the paper gives a potential understanding of digitalization, human culture and their relationship. The paper opens an opportunity for future research in the field of digital dystopian literature and contemporary culture. Further study can be conducted on the interaction between technology, power, and resistance, examining the navigation of human beings in the digital environment

and their autonomy. The ethical dimension of imposing digitalization can be another valuable insight for future researchers.

Works Cited

Anderson, M.T "Feed." M.T. Anderson, Award-Winning Author and Storyteller, 18 Mar. 2023, https://mtanderson.com/books/feed Accessed 13 May 2024.

Anderson, M. T. Feed. Candlewick Press, 2002.

Blasingame, James. "An Interview with M.T. Anderson." Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy. Newark: Sep. 2003. Vol. 47, Iss. 1; pg. 98.

Eggers, Dave. The Circle. Vintage Books, 2014.

Forster, E. M. The Machine Stops. Penguin Classics, 2011.

Nashua North Media Center: Dystopian Fiction: Home. Banner, https://nhsnnashua.libguides.com/dystopianfiction#:~:text=A%20dystopia%20is%20n%20imaginary,dehumanized%20and%20often%20fearful%20lives. Accessed 12 May 2024.

Orwell, George. Nineteen Eighty-Four. 1949. Penguin Classics, 2021

.

Evolution of Identity and Digital Platforms: A Study with Reference to the Episode "Striking Vipers" of *Black Mirror*

H Joshua Arul Raj & Saranya SS

Abstract

Any person or being in this world needs identity, therefore every human being or any cognitive being strives for identity. Whether in the context of their existence or social status or their relationship with others, identity plays a crucial role in their lives. Especially nowadays in the era of social media and virtual reality, the way humans form their identity has drastically changed. Before the age of social media, human being's identity had been rooted in religious and cultural aspects, but social media and virtual gaming platform adds a new dimension to this identity formation. In fact, it makes the human identity even more complex and dynamic. This research aims to explore and analyze the complex process through which humans form their identity in the social media world and the effects of forming a digital identity by creating avatars in gaming and social media platforms. It also looks into how creating an avatar in these platforms can influence people's expression and the formation processes of their identity. So, this research investigates the idea of identity through selected episodes of the series *Black Mirror*.

Keywords: Dynamic, Avatars, Digital Identity, Cognitive Beings, Psychoanalysis, Virtual World

Literature review:

1. Daphna Oyserman and Hazel K. Markus in their "Possible selves and delinquency" discuses about the concept of Possible selves. This paper offers a clear study about certain group of young people by analyzing their approach to their expected selves and feared selves (expecting a job, but fear of becoming unemployed). This framework could be useful in understanding, how players may project different identities in the online gaming platform because in online gaming, players will create avatars which is based on their idealized self rather than their real self.

2. Nick Yee in his work called **"**The Proteus Effect: The Effect of Transformed Self-Representation on Behavior" (2009) focuses on The Proteus Effect which explores how the avatars created by people in the virtual world can influence people's behaviour in the real world. This research helps in understanding the complex behaviour of people who acts in certain way in the real world but differently in the virtual world.

3. "Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect" is a psychological theory proposed by Edward Tory Higgins in 1987, which deals with the problem of how the disagreement between one's actual self and his ideal self can cause disappointment and depression on that person. This research will help in explore the dimensions of people's multiple identities that they use in different situations in order to gain attention and satisfaction.

4. Erving Goffman in his research "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" (1959) Goffman suggests that the individuals project multiple identities in different situations that they face in day-to-day life. People project themselves in different versions in different situations like in work, in home, and in any other events, depending on the context of the situation, people keep changing their identity to fit into that situation.

Identity plays a very crucial part in human life. There are many science fiction stories, movies that deal with the concepts related to exploitation of technologies in the future; they also explore how technology will influence or shape people's perception and identity in a dystopian world. Similarly, the 2011 science fiction anthology series Black Mirror explores the consequences of the future technologies in Human beings lives. In the series Black Mirror, an episode called "Striking Vipers" explores the concept of identity formation through avatars in the gaming platform. This episode is about two persons, Danny Parker and Karl Houghton who play a virtual reality fighting game, where they have the option to take avatars of their choice. So, Danny and Karl both of whom belong to the same gender (male) take the avatar named Lance (Male in the game) and Roxette (who is a female in the game), respectively. During the game both Danny and Karl have a romantic encounter and end up making love. The more they spend time together in the game, the more they feel the pull towards each other sexually and romantically. Both the players are so immersed in the game to an extent where they start losing their confidence, lack in initiative and communication with their partners in real life. Especially Danny who has a wife in the real world starts facing problems in his marriage and in his sexual life with his partner.

Whenever Danny has a sexual encounter with the avatar Roxette in the virtual world, he feels sheepish and guilty and stops communicating with his wife and pulls away from her physically and emotionally (Danny, 2019, 31:35) "I'm sorry, baby. I'm just tired, OK?". One has to wonder, whether he is filled with the guilt that he is cheating on his wife with his same gender friend who takes a female avatar that leads to a decline in his attraction towards his wife. But one thing can be established as a fact, the virtual game called "Striking Vipers" is slowly influencing Danny's behavior and identity. Both Danny and Karl literally live as romantic and sexual partners in the virtual game and they share many romantic and sexual encounters; in one instance Karl even tells Danny in the virtual game that he feels completely different (Karl, 2019, 33:6) "I mean it's different, like the physical feeling of it? But here Karl is not only talking about the physical appearance, but also the psychological expression and reflection of Danny's personality through the avatar. Though both Danny and Karl are friends in real life, inside the game they both feel that they are in a relationship with a completely different person.

And this is also one of the reasons why the relationship between Danny and Karl in the real life gets complicated and in the end of the episode, the audience are left with the open-ended question, "Has Danny and Karl's Virtual relationship trigger an attraction towards each other in the real world also? If so then the whole idea of sex, gender and relationship becomes more complicated. The themes of sexual fluidity, identity and modern relationship are some of the predominant themes of this episode. Both Danny and Karl's relationship become more complex and at one point they are confused about their sexual identity; because in virtual world both of them become intimate which can be considered as gay in real world and also sometimes, they feel they are bisexual because in virtual world Karl who is a male, takes up the avatar of a female. Karl, in the virtual world is attracted to the same sex avatar, but in the real world he also has sexual relationships with the opposite sex. But as far as Danny is concerned, it is difficult to conclude his sexual identity, because his virtual game gender attraction is similar to his real world, but after participating in the game, he rethinks about his sexual identity and attraction. The virtual avatars both Danny and Karl created, play a crucial role in shaping their relationship and identity in the real world which gives rise to a lot of complex problems in their family and social life.

The term self is often associated with the concept of human identity. Because human identity has always had something to do with the human self. Human identity is very complex and it vary depending on the circumstances and situations human beings face in day-to-day life. The idea called "community of selves" proposed by Daphna Oyserman implies that people may behave differently in different environments and situations such as home and work and also in different social circles and even with communicating with different persons which leads

to creating multiple identities in one person or one self. According to Oyserman et al. (2012), the characteristics of a person's identity is dependent on the changing factors and situations around him and how they respond to the environment. Humans have to adapt to various role in their day-to-day life so they will not behave alike to all persons and in all situations. When the situation demands, a person has to adopt a particular approach in order to gain something or to survive in that situation and if another situation demands, an entirely different approach then that person has to adapt that. Hence, human beings have to live with multiple identities and this is what constructs the human self.

So, in the case of Danny and Karl both have more than one identity. One kind of identity in the Striking Vipers game and other in the real world. Danny who seems to be a good and honest person seems different in the gaming world who desires a sexual relationship outside his marriage but Danny's real-world identity sometimes over lapses with his gaming identity which makes him feel guilty and confused sometimes. But slowly Danny's gaming identity starts influencing his real-world identity to the extent where he starts getting dissatisfied with his sexual and romantic life in the real world. Danny still wants to recover his broken marriage in the real-world but the constant shuttling between his gaming and real-world identity creates confusion and havoc in his marriage life.

This multiple identity scenario has escalated in recent years due to the advancement in technology that gives access to extreme level of anonymity through virtual gaming, social media and other advanced scientific tools. This anonymity factor is what gives human beings a sense of freedom and luxury to explore their self by creating multiple identity in both the real world and the virtual world; because people tend to behave in a particular way when everybody is present and will behave differently when there is no one to notice or criticize their actions and motivations.

Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis proposes Id, Ego and Super Ego to denote various layers of self. This theory helps to explore self and identity. Id is a primal instinct or a pleasure principle which drives people to crave and get what they want immediately but ego balances that instinct by giving humans the practical and realistic reason to establish a mind that guides and teaches them how to and where to behave properly in a society. And lastly Superego which intercedes with human mind by giving inputs from the religious and cultural ethics, and it teaches humans what is right and what is wrong. Superego also gives humans a sense of guilt and fear when they do something wrong. For example: "when one person desires to watch a pornography video but afraid to do so because there are lots of people around him, his ego will tell him that "don't watch now" but watch later when nobody is not here to watch you, but superego tells you that "don't ever watch pornography "because it is wrong". This is why the mind of a human being is constantly at war throughout their life.

In the episode "Striking Vipers" Danny behaves in certain manner in the real world but acts quite differently in the virtual world. In the real-world Danny has wife and friends and noble social status. Therefore, his ego pushes his desire deep inside his subconscious mind and as a result he does not get involved in any other sexual activities with any women except his wife. But in the virtual gaming world, when nobody is watching him, it gives Danny a sense of anonymity, because his actions in this virtual world does not really give birth to any consequence, so Danny's Id has a free rein to fire up his inner desire. As result he has a romantic relationship in the virtual world which in turn sabotages his marriage life in real-world. This reveals how anonymity in the virtual world can influence the identity and personality of a person.

Nowadays, in the era of advanced technology and social media, human identity is becoming even more complex and unpredictable because of the nature of social media and virtual gaming platform. And human identity is becoming more fluid as it gives people anonymity and luxury to express themselves as they wish without compromising their ethical and social standing. Particularly people use social media where they define their identity freely by expressing who they are and what they do without any restrictions and limitations. This can

influence and change people's identity formation process and the definition of identity itself. It cannot be taken lightly that technology plays a huge role in defining one's personality and one cannot be absolutely sure about how advanced technologies will influence or shape the human behavior and self in the future.

References

Brooker, C. (Writer). (2019, June 5). *Striking Vipers* (Season 5, Episode 1) [TV series episode]. In *Black Mirror*. Netflix. https://www.netflix.com/title/70264888

Oyserman, D. (1990, August). *Possible selves and delinquency*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, page range-7-15. DOI: 10.1037//0022-3514.59.1.112

Gabarnet, A., Montesano, A., & Feixas, G. (2022, may). Virtual-self-identity construal in online video games: A repertory grid study protocol. *Revista de Psicologia, Ciències de l'Educació i de l'Esport, 40*(1), 9–21. https://doi.org/10.51698/aloma.2022.40.1.9-21

Yee, N. (2009). The Proteus effect: The effect of transformed self-representation on behavior. *Human Communication Research, 35*(3), 285–306. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2009.01312.x

Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect. *Psychological Review, 94*(3), 319–340. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.94.3.319

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Doubleday.

Cherry, K. (2020, October 14). The id, ego, and superego. *Verywell Mind*. https://www.verywellmind.com/the-id-ego-and-superego-2795951

Embracing Technology - Enhanced Language Learning (TELL)

Enamala Kalavathi & E.Sharmila Sgamany

Abstract

Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) has revolutionized the landscape of language acquisition by integrating digital tools, multimedia resources, and virtual communication into traditional pedagogies. This paper explores how various technological advancements—ranging from mobile applications and artificial intelligence to virtual reality and Learning Management Systems (LMS)—are reshaping the ways languages are taught and learned. The study investigates current trends, including gamification, adaptive learning platforms, and online collaborative environments, while also addressing the pedagogical theories that underpin their integration, such as constructivism, blended learning, and learner autonomy. Through a critical analysis of case studies and recent empirical research, the paper highlights the effectiveness of TELL in enhancing learner motivation, improving linguistic competence, and accommodating diverse learning styles. Moreover, the challenges of digital divide, teacher training, and technology access are discussed with practical recommendations. The study concludes that while technology is not a panacea, its strategic incorporation into language education can significantly enrich the learning experience, foster global communication skills, and prepare learners for the demands of a digital world.

Keywords: Multimedia, Technology, Gamification, Effectiveness of (Tell)

Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) is a concept that emerged from the incorporation of technology into language instruction. The global focus on communication, cultural exchange, and mobility in the twenty-first century calls for creative approaches to language instruction. To improve language learning's effectiveness and engagement, TELL uses a variety of digital tools, such as mobile apps, online platforms, and multimedia content. The purpose of this essay is to critically examine the benefits, current practices, and difficulties of TELL in contemporary classrooms. The primary goal of learning English is to improve communication skills. Because communication is the foundation of effective teaching, and teaching English has the same objective. It is uncommon to find a language course that does not make use of technology, specifically to help students learn how to interact with others in a new language in authentic contexts. As a result, the only ways for students to learn English are through traditional classroom instruction, radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and so forth. Furthermore, large groups, teacher-dominated grammar translation techniques, and exam-focused textbook-based lectures are the main teaching modalities in the majority of Indian high school English classes. As a result, students learn in a decontextualized manner. Consequently, it is challenging for students to put what they have learned into practice. Language learning has benefited from the use of technology in recent years. To enhance their instruction, involve students in the learning process, connect their classrooms, and give real-world examples of the target culture, teachers have integrated a variety of technological tools. Additionally, teachers can modify classroom activities and homework assignments and differentiate instruction with the help of certain technological tools, which improves the language learning process. Furthermore, technology is becoming an increasingly important tool to help foreign language instructors mediate and facilitate their students' language learning.

Language learning can be supported and enhanced by technology, but the efficiency of any technological tool relies on the skills and knowledge of the certified language instructor overseeing and facilitating the learning environment. The primary goal of learning English is to improve interpersonal communication. Since communication is the foundation of effective teaching, the aim of English instruction is the same: to help students become more proficient

in speaking a new language in authentic contexts. As a result, the only ways for students to learn English are through traditional classroom instruction, radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and so forth.

Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL)

Technology-enhanced language learning, or TELL, examines how technology affects the teaching and learning of a second language, or L2. The use of computers as a technological innovation to display multimedia as a way to supplement a language teacher's teaching method is known as technology-enhanced language learning. It's crucial to remember that TELL is an approach that can be used in conjunction with a teaching method to enhance instruction rather than a teaching method itself. TELL supports computer- mediated communication (CMC) in a big way. The process can be characterized as successfully bridging the gap between written and oral expression for the linguistically limited student whose oral skills are insufficient to allow for full expression of ideas in the target language. CMC has been studied and supported as being very helpful for helping students speak and write in a foreign language, which is important to the teaching process using TELL. Through the use of computer hardware, software, and the internet, technology-enhanced language learning improves language instruction by

- In class, using a portable electronic dictionary to look up a word
- Talking in a little English with a friend on Instant Messenger
- Examining news websites
- A computer-based language exercise from the textbook's CD;
- taking part in an online discussion board;
- looking up a word in a corpus to see how it's used;
- Engaging in English-language World of Warcraft gameplay and sending a classmate a text

TELL was designed with the following criteria in mind: location (blended, distance, online), technology (computer, Internet, chat, blog, wiki, gaming, video), skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar), and activity (fill-in-the-blank, make a video, chat with a classmate).

TELL's Theoretical Foundations

TELL has strong roots in modern learning theories like:

- Constructivism: Through meaningful, interactive experiences, students build their knowledge. Through online forums, multimedia resources, and simulations, TELL facilitates this.
- Connectivism: Stresses education in the digital age of networks. Students can communicate and co-create knowledge through social media and collaborative platforms.
- Blended learning offers flexibility and individualized learning pathways by combining in-person and virtual instruction.

The pedagogical efficacy of incorporating technology into language instruction is validated by these frameworks.

Language Learning Tools and Technologies

These days, a number of technologies are essential to language instruction:

- Mobile Applications: To aid in the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar, Duolingo, Babbel, and Memrise employ gamified learning and adaptive feedback. Moodle, Google Classroom, and Canvas are examples of learning management systems (LMS) that offer structured communication, evaluation, and content delivery.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI): ChatGPT and similar tools allow for instant feedback, grammar checking, and conversational practice.
- Virtual and Augmented Reality: Immersion settings, particularly in cultural and situational contexts, promote experiential language learning.
- Speech Recognition Software: Programs such as Elsa Speak assist students in improving their intonation and pronunciation.

With the help of these technologies, students can customize their education, access content at any time, and get immediate feedback.

Benefits of TELL

TELL has several benefits: Enhanced Engagement: Multimedia and gamified apps make learning engaging and fun.

- Learner Autonomy: Students are free to choose their preferred learning styles, go at their own speed, and go over the content again.
- Instant Feedback: Self-correction and progress tracking are improved by AI and apps that provide instant correction.
- Cultural Exposure: Learners are exposed to native speakers and real-world situations through authentic resources such as podcasts, videos, and discussion boards.
- Flexibility and Accessibility: TELL encourages inclusivity for a diverse student body and remote learning.

Technology-Enhanced Language Learning Trends

The following trends are influencing TELL's future:

- Gamification: Levels, badges, and points encourage students and improve retention.
- Microlearning: Condensed, targeted lessons enhance understanding and accommodate mobile learning preferences. AI-powered personalized learning adjusts content according to learner preferences and performance.
- Collaborative Online Learning: Peer communication, language exchange, and group projects are made easier by platforms like Padlet, Flipgrid, and Zoom.
- Language and Content Integrated Learning (CLIL): Technology facilitates dual- focused learning, such as online science instruction in English.

Difficulties with TELL Implementation

Notwithstanding its potential, TELL has a number of obstacles to overcome:

- Digital Divide: In many places, access to dependable devices and internet is still restricted.

- Teacher Preparedness: Not every teacher has the know-how to use digital tools efficiently.
- Over-Reliance on Technology: Deep learning may be hampered by excessive screen time or careless tool use.
- Language Anxiety and Privacy: Some students may experience anxiety in online environments or worry about the privacy of their data. Regular teacher training, hybrid models, and culturally aware technology integration are some solutions.

Research Evidence and Case Studies

According to a 2023 study, vocabulary retention increased by 30% in rural Indian schools that used WhatsApp for English practice. AI chatbots have been used in Chinese universities to help English language learners become more fluent speakers. Language learners were more motivated as a result of immersive experiences in a European project that integrated virtual reality into classrooms. These illustrations highlight how strategically applied TELL can have a transformative effect.

Teachers' Role in TELL

Teachers continue to play a key role in the TELL paradigm. Among their responsibilities are:

- Assembling relevant digital content.
- Encouraging communication and teamwork among students.
- Tracking academic progress and giving constructive criticism.
- Modifying instruction to accommodate the use of technology.
- Programs for digital literacy, peer mentoring, and professional development are crucial for empowering educators.

TELL Integration in the Indian Educational Setting

The implementation of NEP 2020 in India places a strong emphasis on technology use and multilingualism. TELL can help close the educational gap between rural and urban areas by:

- Utilizing app interfaces in regional languages.
- Educating educators about ICT resources.
- Encouraging digital inclusion with the help of government-backed tools like DIKSHA and SWAYAM
- These programs have the potential to improve the quality of English and other language instruction for a variety of learner communities.

Suggestions and Future Directions Creation of Localized Content:

- More linguistic resources that are sensitive to cultural differences and pertinent to specific regions.
- AI-based assessment: intelligent diagnostics and grading schemes for tailored comments.
- Using AR/VR to combine text, audio, visual, and kinesthetic activities is known as multi-modal learning.
- Policy Support: More robust institutional and governmental regulations for teacher preparation and digital infrastructure.

Advantages of TELL

Compared to traditional teaching methods, TELL offers much greater flexibility and accommodates a wider range of language learners' learning preferences. Textbooks can be used in conjunction with TELL to provide a deeper learning experience.
TELL creates a student-centered environment in the classroom. Students have the following options: o Choose the sequence in which the material is presented to them (for example, the vocabulary-building game comes last and the grammar program comes first); o Manage the rate of advancement (for example, students can complete level 1 and level 2 of grammar today and level 1 of vocabulary the next day).

Disadvantages of TELL:

- The following are some disadvantages of TELL:
- The cost of technology
- The cost of training
- The cost of media
- The teacher or instructor needs to be at ease with technology
- Technology is not perfect
- Access problems outside of the classroom
- The issue of the computer doing too much work.

For a better learning experience, language learners should try exercises on their own initiative rather than depending solely on the language software's help system.

The Main Media Types Using TELL

- Audio sound includes radio broadcasts, speeches that have been recorded, and stories that
- have been recorded.
- Movies (audio and video) Short films
- Full-length, full-feature films and interviews
- Pictures/Graphics
- Charts
- Photographs and paintings
- Text, journals, and essays
- Reading books, emails, articles, and chatting

Conclusion

Technology Enhanced Language Learning is not just a trend but a pedagogical shift that redefines the nature of language education. While it cannot replace human interaction or traditional literacy entirely, it provides powerful tools to enrich the learning process. With thoughtful integration, proper training, and equitable access, TELL can promote effective, engaging, and empowering language learning experiences across diverse contexts.

References

Singhal, M. (1997). The Internet and Foreign Language Education: Benefits and Challenges. The Internet TESL Journal, 3(6).
Bush, M. & Roberts, T. (Eds.) (1997). Technology-enhanced Language Learning. National

Textbook Company. Illinois.
Hanson-Smith, E. (1997). Technology in the classroom: Practice and promise in the 21st century. TESOL Publications Inc.
Warschauer, M. (1997a). Computer-mediated collaborative Learning: Theory and practice. The Modern Language Journal. 81(4),470-481.

Breathing Landscapes: An Ecocritical Reading of Arundathi Roy's *The God of Small Things*

J Kalpana

Abstract

This paper attempts an ecocritical reading of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, showing how the novel weaves together the decline of the natural environment with the disintegration of human relationships and social values. More than a tale of forbidden love and caste injustice, Roy's narrative unfolds as a layered meditation on how human lives are inseparably tied to the natural world. Her vivid descriptions of the Meenachal River, Kerala's lush landscapes, and its monsoon-soaked terrain bring alive an environment that is not merely a backdrop but a living presence intertwined with the characters' inner worlds.

The slow poisoning and stagnation of the river reflect the moral and emotional decay of the society around it. Roy's prose, rich with sensory detail—sounds, smells, textures—draws readers into the fragile ecosystem of Ayemenem, making us feel what is lost when such a world is destroyed. In doing so, she critiques the damages of industrial expansion, urban sprawl, and blind modernisation, all of which thrive at the expense of ecological balance.

The novel also carries an ecofeminist undertone. Ammu, and women like her, are depicted in ways that echo the condition of nature itself—marginalised, controlled, and violated, yet quietly resilient. Their struggles under patriarchal domination parallel the exploitation of land and rivers under colonial and capitalist structures. Plantation economies, caste-based oppression, and the scars of colonial land use reveal how systems of inequality perpetuate both social and ecological harm.

Seen through this lens, *The God of Small Things* is more than a personal or political story; it is also a subtle environmental narrative. It blends grief, memory, and ecological loss into a meditation on survival and justice. In today's context of climate crisis, Roy's novel urges us to rethink the links between the natural world and human life, and to imagine justice in both ecological and social terms.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Ecofeminism, Environmental Justice, Postcolonial Ecology, Climate Narrative, Nature and Gender.

Introduction

The contemporary world is marked by a growing ecological imbalance—melting glaciers, vanishing species, toxic rivers, suffocating air, and steadily rising seas. These crises are not abstract scientific data points; they are deeply human concerns that endanger communities, cultures, and future generations. In such times, literature takes on a vital role. It functions not only as art but also as testimony, conscience, and, often, a quiet protest against the unchecked exploitation of nature. Through stories, poetry, and narrative, literature enables us to question, to feel, and to reimagine our relationship with the environment.

This intersection of ecology and literature has found expression through ecocriticism, a field that began to take shape in the 1990s. One of its pioneers, Cheryll Glotfelty, defined it simply as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment." Ecocriticism looks at how texts represent nature, how environmental issues are woven into narrative, and how stories reflect—or resist—dominant ideas of development, progress, and human supremacy.

The discipline is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing insight from literary studies, philosophy, environmental ethics, and even ecological science. Some of its key ideas include:

- Anthropocentrism vs. Ecocentrism: questioning human-centered worldviews and encouraging Earth-centered perspectives.
- Deep Ecology: valuing all forms of life not for their use to humans but for their inherent worth.
- Environmental Justice: highlighting how environmental harm falls unequally on the poor and marginalized.
- Ecofeminism: tracing parallels between the exploitation of women and the exploitation of nature in patriarchal systems.
- Postcolonial Ecocriticism: exploring the overlap between ecological degradation and the legacies of colonialism and global capitalism.

Seen through this lens, literature is not just a reflection of society but an ecological force in its own right—shaping values, awakening empathy for non-human life, and raising environmental awareness.

Against this theoretical backdrop, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* becomes particularly significant. Published in 1997 and celebrated for its poetic prose and political sharpness, the novel also opens itself to an ecocritical reading. Roy connects environment, memory, and marginalization with striking clarity. The lush imagery of Kerala—the dense greenery, the monsoon-soaked landscape, the flowing Meenachal River—grounds the story in a vivid natural world. Yet as the river turns stagnant and polluted, it reflects the wider decay of society and the anxieties of postcolonial modernity.

Roy's narrative is fertile terrain for ecocritical interpretation not only because of its rich natural descriptions but also because of its insistence on linking ecological degradation with questions of caste, gender, and power. *The God of Small Things* thus compels us to rethink our place in the natural order and to see how the "small things"—those seemingly minor or neglected aspects of life, society, and nature—carry profound ecological and ethical significance.

Narrative Overview

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* unfolds in the vibrant village of Ayemenem in Kerala, where the natural beauty of backwaters, monsoon rains, and dense greenery forms the pulse of everyday life. At its centre are the twins, Estha and Rahel, whose childhood, filled at first with curiosity and innocence, is gradually darkened by painful experiences of loss, love, and rigid social boundaries. Moving between their playful yet fragile past and their troubled adult selves, the novel shows how the shadow of memory never truly fades but continues to shape the present.

Threaded through their story is the forbidden romance between their mother, Ammu, and Velutha, a Dalit carpenter condemned by his caste to live on society's margins. Their love, tender and defiant, crosses barriers that tradition and prejudice have long enforced. But this transgression comes at a cost: their relationship triggers a chain of tragic events that culminates in the drowning of Sophie Mol, the twins' cousin. That single moment becomes the axis of the family's undoing, leaving scars that can never be healed.

What makes Roy's novel remarkable is not only its portrayal of human pain and social injustice but also its vivid rendering of Kerala's natural world. The river, the lush undergrowth, the heavy air of the monsoon—moves beyond background detail to become living forces in the story. Nature mirrors the characters' inner lives, embodying beauty as well as decay, resilience as well as fragility. In blending human experience with the rhythms of the natural world, Roy

creates a layered narrative where the personal and the ecological are inseparably bound together.

Nature as Character

In the novel, *The God of Small Things*, nature is never a passive backdrop. It breathes, stirs, and lingers through the narrative like an unseen presence—less a stage and more a character that quietly shapes the drama. Arundhati Roy imbues the natural world with a pulse of its own, giving rivers, trees, and rains a voice that murmurs in harmony with the human story unfolding around them.

The Meenachal River, for instance, is not simply water winding through Ayemenem. Roy paints it as still, as though pausing in anticipation, holding its breath. In that stillness it becomes a witness—watching without comment, absorbing both fleeting joys and devastating losses. Heavy with silence, the river reflects continuity, yet also the uneasy pauses that punctuate the family's fractured lives.

The tropical landscape that surrounds the village deepens this atmosphere. Thick roots, tangled creepers, and looming trees suggest more than lushness—they carry the weight of secrets and constraints. The dense growth feels enclosing, almost claustrophobic, mirroring the suffocating social hierarchies of caste and convention. Here, the natural world does not stand apart; it echoes and intensifies the knots of human entanglement.

Monsoon rains bring yet another voice into the novel's chorus. Their steady insistence does more than drench the land. At times, they cleanse and renew; at others, they unsettle, their relentlessness shadowing the grief and restlessness of the characters. In Roy's telling, weather and mood are inseparable—every drop of rain seems to carry the weight of remembered sorrow.

Even the smallest details hum with significance: the drone of insects in the heavy air, the tremble of leaves under a sudden breeze, the damp thickness of Kerala's atmosphere. These sensory touches blur the line between body and landscape, enfolding the characters in a world that is alive and responsive.

Through such moments, Roy collapses the old divide between the human and the natural. The environment is not scenery but participant—watching, shaping, and answering back. *The God of Small Things* reminds us that human lives are never detached from their setting, but bound to the rhythms, silences, and insistences of the natural world that surrounds them.

Pollution as a Metaphor for Decay

The Meenachal River, in the novel, is never just water winding through Kerala—it breathes, it remembers, and it carries the scars of human neglect. Once described as clear and full of movement, alive with its own pulse, the river gradually withers into a body choked by filth. Its dark, stagnant waters, glazed with a sickly green scum, feel like the very embodiment of silence, secrecy, and rot. The decline of the river is not accidental; it shadows the unravelling of the characters and the corruption seeping through the society around them.

The stench rising from the river becomes more than a physical odour—it is the smell of betrayal, of unspoken grief, of values allowed to fester in silence. Just as the waters lose their purity, the people connected to them lose the fragile innocence and trust that once bound them. Social prejudice, forbidden desire, and unhealed wounds seep into their lives much like waste seeps into the river, leaving both water and human spirit clouded and toxic.

The most haunting moment, of course, is Sophie Mol's death. Her small body, claimed by the river, transforms the polluted stream into a grave. What should have been a site of laughter, play, and the shimmering joys of childhood turns into a reminder of fragility and loss. Her drowning is not just a family's tragedy—it becomes the river's darkest secret, a cruel

mirror of innocence destroyed. Through this, Roy reminds us how neglect—whether of a river's health or of a child's heart—can turn life into death, joy into grief.

The Meenachal's decay is thus inseparable from the human story. It is as if the river itself absorbs the hidden poisons of human silence and injustice, until it can no longer flow freely. By weaving this intimate connection between the polluted river and the corroding lives of her characters, Roy presses us to see that the fate of nature and the fate of people are bound together. When one is poisoned, so too is the other. And when either is neglected, both stand on the edge of irreversible loss.

Critique of Development and Modernity

Arundhati Roy does not present development as a shining promise; in the novel, she strips it of its sheen to reveal the wounds beneath. Modernization, in her telling, is less about progress and more about intrusion—an uneasy force that scars both the landscape of Ayemenem and the lives of those who inhabit it.

Nowhere is this more powerfully visible than in the transformation of the Meenachal River. Once a luminous thread of life, glimmering and flowing with clarity, it becomes a wounded artery, choked by industrial waste. The factories that rise along its banks—including "Paradise Pickles & Preserves," ironically named—feed the river not nourishment but chemicals, scum, and decay. What was meant to be prosperity manifests instead as stench, stagnation, and death. In the river's slow poisoning, Roy shows us how economic ambition corrodes the very lifelines it promises to protect.

But it is not only the river that suffers. Modernity cuts into Ayemenem with the blunt force of tar and cement. Roads slice through green fields, severing once-whole landscapes. Concrete blocks sprout where trees once shaded, and the chatter of birds is drowned out by the mechanical hum of traffic. What development delivers in efficiency, it steals in intimacy: the seamless bond between villagers and their environment frays into disconnection. The natural rhythms of life—seasonal, slow, organic—are paved over by the flat regularity of industrial progress.

Roy also draws our attention to the cultural dissonance modernization brings. A trip to Abhilash Talkies, with its giant screen flashing celluloid dreams, exposes the children to a world far removed from the one their village roots in. Advertisements, imported goods, and the glitter of Western consumer culture press against the fragile fabric of local tradition. These fragments of urban influence appear alluring, yet they unsettle, creating a tension between the inherited and the imposed, the remembered and the borrowed.

Through these shifts—ecological, social, and cultural—Roy underscores that development is never neutral. It has winners and losers, costs and casualties. The ruined river, the vanishing birds, the dislocated traditions all testify to what is sacrificed in the name of progress. Instead of uncritically celebrating growth, Roy urges us to pause, to ask: progress for whom, and at what price? Her critique resonates with an ecocritical truth—that when expansion is pursued without care, it hollows out both nature and humanity, leaving only the illusion of advancement where once there was life.

Colonial Legacy and Environmental Exploitation

In her work, Arundhati Roy traces the scars of colonialism not with heavy-handed declarations but with subtle, unsettling strokes. The landscapes of Ayemenem, its architecture, its hierarchies, and even its polluted river, carry the long shadow of empire. Roy reminds us that what appears as present-day exploitation—factories, plantations, poisoned waterways—is not new, but the afterlife of colonial rule, lingering in both soil and society.

The land itself tells this story. Take the rubber plantations that dominate Kerala's horizons: they did not grow from local soil but from imperial design. Introduced by the British

as part of their commercial conquest, these plantations converted lush forests into regimented rows of profit. To the untrained eye, they may look orderly and green, but their neatness is sterile. Where once there was a chorus of diverse life, now there is only monoculture—trees standing in disciplined lines, stripped of the wild abundance they replaced. What began as colonial enterprise has since been inherited by local elites, proof of how easily exploitation slips its skin and reappears under the banner of progress.

The imprint of empire lingers in architecture and attitudes, too. The old bungalows and colonial buildings scattered across Ayemenem whisper of another age, but their logic still holds sway. Even in Baby Kochamma's obsession with tidiness and appearances, we glimpse the colonial mindset—the desire to order, to sanitize, to civilize what is unruly. The same impulse that imposed neat lawns and whitewashed walls also carved up forests, redirected rivers, and turned fertile ground into cash crops. In both house and landscape, the colonial obsession with control survives, long after the colonizers themselves have gone.

But Roy insists that environmental exploitation cannot be separated from social injustice. Under colonial rule, caste divisions were not merely reinforced—they were weaponized. The Untouchables, Velutha and his family among them, are denied not just dignity but access: to land, to clean water, to safe spaces. They live on the margins, socially and ecologically, bearing the brunt of both discrimination and degradation. When Sophie Mol drowns in the foul waters of the Meenachal, the polluted river becomes more than a tragic setting—it is a symbol of how contamination, whether environmental or moral, weighs heaviest on the most vulnerable.

Even the family business, Paradise Pickles & Preserves, echoes this inheritance. With its emphasis on private profit, its disregard for waste, and its quiet poisoning of the river, the pickle factory mirrors the plantation economy it grew out of. The name itself "Paradise"—is an irony, recalling how colonial rhetoric cloaked exploitation in the language of order and improvement. Beneath its jars of preserves lies the same indifference to land and life that fueled the colonial project.

Through these intertwined threads, Roy reveals that the exploitation of nature in Ayemenem is not accidental but systemic, rooted in a history of empire and carried forward by postcolonial capitalism. What the British began in the name of commerce, the present continues in the name of development. The God of Small Things insists that to understand today's environmental ruin, one must reckon with yesterday's colonial violence. The river, the land, the factory, the very air of Ayemenem—each of it bears witness to the fact that empire plundered not only people, but the fragile ecologies they depended on. And long after the empire's exit, its logic persists, shaping both landscapes and lives in ways that are as destructive as they are enduring.

Ecofeminist Dimension

Through the novel, Arundhati Roy quietly but insistently uncovers a truth at the heart of ecofeminism: the domination of women and the exploitation of nature spring from the same root. Both are seen as wild, unruly forces that must be subdued, controlled, and made useful to a patriarchal order. Roy never preaches this idea directly, but she breathes it into her story—through Ammu's life, through the river's decline, and through the textures of the Ayemenem landscape.

Ammu's life is marked by the heavy hand of patriarchy. She is denied freedom in her marriage, shamed for her desire, and punished for crossing the rigid boundaries of caste. In daring to love Velutha, she asserts her humanity, but society answers with cruelty and erasure. Her story is one of vitality pressed down, of resilience met with relentless constraint. This is also the story of the land around her: Kerala's lush, breathing environment—dense with rivers, rain, and green abundance—reduced, poisoned, and forced into the service of profit. Just as Ammu is stripped of dignity, nature too is stripped of its dignity, its wildness disciplined into plantations, its rivers choked by waste.

Roy draws these parallels with a delicate touch. Nature, like Ammu, is beautiful, fertile, unpredictable, and deeply life-giving. But under the logic of control, such qualities are read not as strengths but as dangers. The Meenachal River embodies this truth. Once a source of life, intimacy, and secret joy, it becomes polluted and stagnant—its vitality subdued, its wildness punished. In the same way, Ammu's emotional depth, her capacity for love, and her fierce devotion to her children are recast by society as transgressions, proof of her "excess." What is organic, flowing, and free is treated as threat, whether in the body of a woman or the body of a river.

Roy's imagery of cycles—growth, decay, renewal—ties women and nature in a shared vulnerability. Ammu's life is hemmed in by social rules, family power, and economic dependence, just as the land and waters are bound by roads, factories, and greed. Both become casualties of systems that value profit and control over care, balance, and reciprocity. Even in death, Ammu is denied belonging: her body barred from the family's burial ground, erased from memory because she dared to step outside prescribed norms. This chilling exclusion mirrors what happens to landscapes stripped of value—discarded, abandoned, forgotten once their resources have been consumed.

Through these narrative echoes, Roy enacts an ecofeminist critique that is all the more powerful for being woven into the fabric of story rather than delivered as doctrine. Ammu's silencing and the river's poisoning are not separate tragedies—they are bound by the same logic, the same hunger to dominate the wild, the emotional, the feminine, the natural. The God of Small Things thus insists that to care for women is also to care for the earth, and to ignore one is to wound the other. In its quiet, heart-touching way, the novel makes us see that freedom, for both women and nature, lies not in control but in the recognition of their wild and ungovernable worth.

Sensory Prose and Ecological Consciousness

In *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy does more than depict Kerala—she brings it vividly to life on the page. Her prose is dense with sensation, so alive with sound, scent, and texture that the reader does not merely see Ayemenem but inhabits it. This is not description for its own sake; it is a way of training the senses toward ecological awareness, of reminding us that the natural world is not a backdrop to human life but a living, intimate presence that can be felt in the body.

From the very beginning, Roy's sentences are saturated with touch and fragrance. The air is heavy with monsoon dampness; the earth smells of rain, rot, and ripeness; the river announces itself by odour before sight "you can smell it," she tells us. The Meenachal is thus not a distant object to be observed but an atmosphere to be inhaled, absorbed, carried under the skin. Its vitality feels immediate and near, so when its waters later darken with scum and stink, the reader feels not just loss but contamination, a visceral corruption of intimacy.

The landscape is alive with restless detail. Frogs croak in chorus, dragonflies' shimmer and flicker, crickets vibrate through the night air, and filtered sunlight stains the foliage with shifting patterns. The children's world is threaded through with these sounds and movements: they do not play beside nature but within it, and their wonder is inseparable from the buzzing, rustling, flowing pulse of life around them. In these passages, Roy shows how nature is not an accessory to memory but the very fabric of memory itself.

Even the smallest sensory fragments—a smear of moss beneath fingertips, the fermenting tang of pickles ripening in the sun, the damp heat of monsoon air pressing against the skin—become part of this intimate ecology. Nothing is incidental. Every smell, texture, and sound deepens the reader's belonging in the place. Roy does not need to argue for environmental preservation because she has already created an emotional connection between the reader and the land. To destroy that land, then, is to wound something within ourselves.

As the novel moves forward, this connection slowly loosens. The lush world of sound and scent gives way to suffocation: the river stagnates, the air reeks, the water grows thick with rot. The sensuous abundance that once shaped childhood wonder turns into a sensory assault, as beauty decays into stench. The loss of ecological intimacy becomes the loss of human intimacy, too—what was once fertile and life-giving now bears the weight of grief, betrayal, and silence.

In this way, Roy's sensory prose becomes a quiet act of ecological awakening. She does not tell us to protect rivers or forests; instead, she makes us *feel* their presence so acutely that their destruction aches like a personal wound. Through smell, touch, taste, sound, and light, *The God of Small Things* cultivates not an abstract environmental ethic but a living ecological consciousness—one rooted in memory, intimacy, and the haunting awareness of what it means to lose what once was vibrantly alive.

Conclusion

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* is more than a story of love, loss, and fractured families—it is also a lament for a wounded landscape. Through the stagnant Meenachal River, the fading forests, and her lush, sensory descriptions of Kerala, Roy shows how the environment is not a passive backdrop but an intimate presence, deeply tied to memory, identity, and emotion. The decline of the river, once fragrant and alive, mirrors the corrosion of human relationships, while every rustle of leaves and scent of wet earth reminds us of what is at stake when that bond with nature is broken.

At the same time, the novel exposes how industrial expansion, colonial legacies, and patriarchal systems leave lasting marks on both land and people. Ammu's silencing and Velutha's suffering echo in the polluted waters and exploited plantations, revealing that social injustice and environmental destruction are inseparable. Through this ecofeminist lens, Roy makes a quiet but urgent plea: justice for women, the marginalized, and the earth are bound together. In an age of climate crisis, her novel speaks with striking clarity—reminding us that to protect rivers, forests, and soil is also to protect our own fragile humanity.

Works Cited

Roy, Arundhati. The God of Small Things. IndiaInk, 1997.

Buell, Lawrence. The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation Of American Culture. Harvard UP, 1995.

Garrard, Greg. Ecocriticism. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2012.

Gaard, Greta. "Living Interconnections with Animals and Nature." Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature, edited by Greta Gaard, Temple UP, 1993, pp. 1–12.

Shiva, Vandana. Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development. Zed Books, 1988.

Huggan, Graham, and Helen Tiffin. Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment. Routledge, 2010.

Mukherjee, Upamanyu Pablo. Postcolonial Environments: Nature, Culture and the Contemporary Indian Novel in English. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Mazumdar, Anindita. "Ecocriticism in Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things." The IUP Journal of English Studies, vol. 9, no. 1, 2014, pp. 59–66.

The Scent of Pepper: Unravelling Kodava Identity Amidst Colonial Shadows

J Kavitha & N Usha

Abstract

This paper navigates the topic of cultural identity in Kavery Nambisan's *The Scent of Pepper* and how it pertains to the customs, values, and developing practices of the Kodava community. The novel details Coorg during British colonial rule and personalizes the portrayal of the aristocratic Kodavas as powerful landowners of vast territories rich in coffee and pepper. Through the approach from the theme of the central character, Nanji, who persisted through family and community expectations as a woman, Nambisan methodically investigates the complexities of identity politics, family grab generational conflict, and cultural truths that descend slowly into non-existence. The justification for the text, following Nambisan's established interpretation of the challenges between one's own traditions and the imposition of non-Kodava expectations of modernity and maturing status as a person, (here, specifically adverting to identity) she balances former ideas of culture held over time; memories of the place long inhabited, food practices, ceremonial traditions, and connections to the environment. Nambisan's character saga of the Kaleyanda family emerges amidst stimulating sensory experiences through feelings of rural life, colonial encroachments, and evolving social conventions that drastically changed gender expectations. As established, Nambisan demonstrates the historically acquired privilege the Kodava way of life bequeathed by colonialism, and how the customs of long-held beliefs favourably reformed as historically and politically changed; opportunities derived from evolution. Drawing strength from the elements of cultural relativism throughout the writing, Nambisan showcases the Kodava's culture using an insider's viewpoint devoid of judgement imposed by outsiders' experience and ideology, to demonstrate the obscured, protected place the community takes pride in negotiating space that is inviting and conspiring to unsettling permanence. The narrative acts as an increasingly powerful exploration of cultural continuity, social change.

Keywords: Cultural Identity, Kodava Community, Colonialism, Gender Expectations, Cultural Continuity.

Introduction

Kaveri Nambisan, born in 1975, is an accomplished Indian author known for her storytelling. She has written seven novels. Her notable works include *The Truth about Bharath* (1992), *The Scent of Pepper* (1996), *Mango Coloured Fish* (1998), *On the Wings of Butterflies* (2002), *The Hills of Angheri* (2005), *The Story That Must Not Be Told* (2010), and *A Town Like Ours* (2014). In addition to her literary pursuits, Kaveri is also a dedicated doctor. This study specifically focuses on her novel *The Scent of Pepper*, exploring the rich Kodagu culture amidst colonial shadows**.**

The Scent of Pepper is a fine portrayal of the Kodavas of Coorg (Kodagu), Karnataka, during British rule, whose pepper and coffee estates are their wealth and heritage**.** They are known for their distinctive way of life, dress and food habits, and family ties. They take their identity from a warrior culture, ownership of the land, and agricultural wealth. These cultural traits are clearly recorded in this novel. which portrays feasts and hunts, farming seasons, and rituals of life and death, birth and marriage.

The book is an archive of culture as much as it is a record of domestic life. It dramatises the tensions of colonial invasion, the fragility of customs, and the strength of women who guard the continuity between tradition and society through the narrative of the Kaleyanda family. The

title's symbolism — pepper as an actual spice and as a metaphor for cultural survival — encapsulates the novel's themes of identity, memory, and land. Focusing on customs and rituals, tensions between generations, gender relationships, ecological representation, and tradition and modernity relations, this paper analyzes how the novel portrays the Kodava identity in a scenario overshadowed by colonialism.

Review of literature

Peter Barry's 2018 book, "*Beginning Theory,*" is a fantastic resource for anyone interested in cultural and literary theories. It explores various concepts and ideas in cultural studies, making complex topics easier to understand. It's a great way to dive into these subjects and see how they apply to literature and culture.

Kaveri Nambisan's *The Scent of Pepper* serves as a rich source for examining themes of cultural identity and multiculturalism. In their 2018 work, Kaveri Mudhaliyar and Payel Chowdhury explore this topic in depth, focusing on how the Kodavas—an ethnic group from India—embrace their heritage. They argue that by preserving their forefathers' thoughts and traditions, the Kodavas not only maintain their unique identity but also highlight the complexities of multiculturalism within their community. This analysis sheds light on the significant role that tradition plays in shaping cultural identity and showcases the uniqueness of the Kodava people.

Methodology

This paper takes a closer look at *The Scent of Pepper* through the lens of cultural analysis. The researcher focuses primarily on the novel itself, using it as the main source of insight, while also referencing a few other texts related to cultural analysis and cultural studies for additional context. Overall, the paper aims to explore and describe how cultural themes and elements are woven throughout the narrative of the novel amidst colonial shadows.

Discussion

Kaveri Nambisan beautifully captures the majestic essence of this region in her writing. Through her novels, she weaves captivating tales that delve into the lives of the Kodagu people, shedding light on their traditions, cultural practices, and Western influences on local customs. Nambisan's characters reflect a mix of modernity and tradition, showcasing the dynamic nature of life in Coorg. She has a unique appreciation for British culture, which is evident in her portrayal of names, lifestyles, food habits, and even dress. It's fascinating to see how she illustrates the impact of westernization on the community while still celebrating the rich heritage of Coorg.

Kodava Identity and Cultural Continuity

Nanji represents the deep cultural and spiritual traditions of the Kodavas. As a widow married into the Kaleyanda family, she carries on important customs and moral values. She serves as the cultural anchor of the family through her care for plantations, upkeep of the household, and cooking practices. She shares how tradition guides expectant Kodava mothers to eat certain foods for the health of their babies. They are advised to eat eggs from red hens, enjoy two ladles of ghee each day, and have Rotis drizzled with honey. Mornings often begin with a nutritious lehyam made from a mix of jaggery, sesame seeds, cashew nuts, almonds, and sunflower seeds. Kaveri Nambisan's novel beautifully illustrates the blending of cultures through food. Nanji's experiences reveal how her stepmother embraces certain foreign food practices, incorporating ingredients like cashew nuts and almonds into their diet. This fusion not only pays homage to

their Kodava roots but also symbolizes hope for a healthy child, capturing the essence of nurturing across cultures. Food is a metaphor for cultural survival. While pepper signifies tradition and healing, coffee ties Kodavas to colonial capitalism. Nanji treats her son Subbu with pepper and ties it to her sari, which becomes a symbol for resilience in a society that stands against adversity. The novelist beautifully illustrates the vibrant festivals celebrated in the region, like Kalipodh, Puthari, and Shankramana, which serve to honor and appreciate nature's gifts. These events uplift the spirits of the local people, renewing their connection with the land.

Colonial Intrusions and Cultural Transformation

Apart from the enrichment of local land-owning families like the Kaleyandas, the British colonisation turned Coorg into a centre for coffee growing, thus apt for dependent on the colonial setup. Colonialism was a two-way traffic; prestige mixed with subordination was conferred by the colonial order. Names such as "Rao Bahadur" symbolise this dual meaning. Baliyanna's collecting British literature exemplifies the gradual infiltration of colonial ideology and the subversion of native epistemologies.

Kodava weddings are truly a grand affair filled with vibrant celebrations. For Boju's wedding, the festivities kick off with an impressive display of five hundred bottles of soda and fifty bottles of whisky to set the tone. Baliyanna, who prefers hosting whisky parties, does so to highlight the fusion of cultures, being someone who has returned from England. He views this as an essential part of showcasing Western influences, and it's his way of embracing that aspect of his identity**.**

While the Kodavas are known for their farming traditions, we see a character named Baliyanna who breaks away from this norm. He chooses to become a doctor, stepping into a profession that diverges from his ancestral roots. This choice reflects his partial acceptance of modern civilization, creating a fascinating blend of traditional and contemporary cultures in his life.

Intercultural encounters exacerbate this crisis of identity. Interracial marriage between Appachu and a British woman symbolised both attraction and instability, as did Baliyanna's obsession with Clara. Colonialism shook the certitude of cultures while also putting money, affluence, and ideas into the alternative cultures. Thus, hybridity appears as both nourishing and destructive in the narrative.

Generational Conflict and Identity Politics

The novel is a multigenerational saga through which one may discern a tension between tradition and likely modernity. As the younger generation wrestles with the demands of colonial modernity and nationalist impulses, the elders stubbornly harken back to rituals. While the children and grandchildren represent change and restlessness, Nanji herself stands for persistence and order. Physical disability works as a metaphor with Subbu's embrace of Gandhian austerity, rejecting what he considers aristocratic ease while viewing khadi as an expression of national identity. His shift to nationalism provides a pointer as to how colonial power politicised human identity.

Heroic tragedies that marked the fading stability were the bereavement of Chinni, the suicide of Rao Bahadur, and Baliyanna's obsession with Clara, among others. The difficulties of the Kodava community in regard to nationalism, modernity, and breakdowns in communal ties are reflected in the tribulations of the family.

Gender, Power, and Cultural Negotiation

The book's feminist dimension is one of its most suitable topics. Nanji is both subjected to and subversive of the patriarchal system; she serves as the moral center of the Kaleyanda house.

Women have more economic responsibilities; they have a share of the inheritance, and there is no dowry in Kodava society than in other Indian communities. However, women are still limited to some extent in autonomy, even in their roles as wives in the Kaleyanda household. Nambisan provides diverse portrayals of women to illustrate the ambivalence and constraints of their positions, including Mallige's urban independence, Chambavva's royal sovereignty, and Nanji's resilience. In this way, gender becomes a site of cultural negotiation; women embody the seeds of change while retaining tradition.

Cultural Relativism and Insider Representation

The insider perspective of *The Scent of Pepper* is arguably one of its greatest strengths. Nambisan depicts the Kodava rituals, food, and practices without appraisal from the outside, and entirely avoids an exoticized depiction. This practice aligns with the theory of cultural relativism set forth by anthropologist Franz Boas, who argued that one must try to understand a culture on its own terms. The book records customs that colonial modernity and globalisation threaten to extinguish, both as a narrative document and as an anthropological document.

Land, Ecology, and Identity

The Coorg landscape is an integral part of the ethos of the novel. The hills, forests, and plantations of Kodava identity are agents as opposed to merely backgrounds. The agricultural practice of landscape is embodied by coffee, pepper, and bananas, which support the local economic and cultural rhythms. Nanji's stewardship of the land indicates a symbiotic relationship between humanity and the natural world. Earth binds together subsistence and heritage in this sensory ecology, brought alive by the aroma of coffee blooms, the spice of pepper, and the seasonal rains.

Rituals, Memory, and Cultural Archive

Kodava rituals are described in wonderful anthropological detail in the book. There is a detailed description of death ceremonies, which includes the feeding of married ladies, cannon firing at the time of death, and immersion of ashes at Talakaveri. Rifles that decorate living rooms and have been passed down through generations signify hunting traditions and a sense of pride. There are descriptions of aspects of agricultural life that detail the cycles of rural life, such as tending to fruit trees, caring for chickens, and clearing out the granary. These customary practices, often a part of daily life, are a source of cultural capital. These are ways of performing an identity, and through shared customs and communal sharing, they bring together communities and ultimately build a shared identity that is transferred down to new generations, even with the advance of modernity.

Colonialism, Resistance, and Nationalism

Despite the colonial intrusion of most of the world into Kodava life, individuals such as Subbu, who prefer nationalist values over colonial privilege, signal an act of resistance. Subbu performs a cultural and political act of resistance by rejecting any comforts, including not only luxuries, and donning khadi, the international shorthand for resistance.

The story of Kodava transformation is a component of Indian history, and as to the contact of colonial incorporation with local resistance. Colonialism transformed India as a whole, and consequently, even with their relative privileges during British imperialism, Kodavas were not immune to nationalist flows. Nambisan indicates the importance of the relations between politics and identity by encapsulating resistance into a family narrative.

Gender and Power: Nanji as Cultural Custodian

Nanji, whose life illustrates one way in which women can maintain cultural continuity, is the focus of the book. The Kodava society, unlike many Indian civilizations, has allowed women some degree of agency historically, but patriarchal views still control a part of their world. Nanji assumes the role of duality and persistence. She is both a marker of continuity and change in virtue of her practice of continuity, managing the home and adapting to emergent gender ideological assumptions and expectations.

However, the roles of women are hardly romanticized in the book. Nanji's trials illustrate the burden women carry when traditions must be maintained while men pursue new opportunities. Through her resilience, she exemplifies both the oppression of valuing gender roles and agency in a patriarchal setting of Kodava society.

Conclusion

Kavery Nambisan's *The Scent of Pepper*, a work of cultural ethnography regarding the Kodava people under colonial control, is more than a family history. It demonstrates the persistence and transformation of customs, the courage of women, and its analysis of the contradictions of the past and present can be seen through the highs and lows of the Kaleyanda family. Nambisan juxtaposes custom, cuisine, gender, environment, and colonial disruption to portray Kodava identity as both persistent and fragile, anchored in memory yet at risk of erasure. Pepper acts as a metaphor for this identity, a spicy, restorative, and enduring element. As such, The Scent of Pepper serves both as a cultural archive and a literary text.

References

Nambisan, Kavery. *The Scent of Pepper*. Penguin Books India, 1996.

Srinivas, M. N. *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*. Oxford University Press, 1952

Ganapathy, B. D. *Kodavas and Their Culture*. Bangalore: B. D. Ganapathy, 1980.

Suba, H and M. P. Anuja. "Cultural Transmogrification in Kaveri Nambisan's *The Scent of Pepper."* A Journal of Composition Theory, vol. 13, no. 2, February 2020, pp. 553 – 557, https://www.britannica.com/topic/cultural-studies

Swathi, M., and S. Dinesh Kumar. *"The Concoction of Anglo–Kodagu Culture in Nambisan's The Scent of Pepper." IJRAR - International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, vol. 8, no. 4, Dec. 2021, pp. 113–116. E-ISSN: 2348-1269, P-ISSN: 2349-5138. www.ijrar.org

The Algorithmic Flâneur: AI-Generated Narratives and Urban Spatialities in Literary Texts

Kavitha N

Abstract

The paper proposes the advancement of AI that replicates the function of the flâneur, the dispassionate urban observer, by constructing literary narratives through real-world city maps. Drawing upon modernist and noir literature, psychogeography, and the tools of digital humanities mapping, this study introduces the concept of the "algorithmic flâneur", an AI trained on the stylistic and spatial sensibilities inherent in urban literature, endowed with the capacity to fabricate narrative journeys through digital cartographies. The initiative reconceptualises narrative generation as a form of wandering data, thus erasing the distinctions between text, spatiality, and machine perception. The archetype of the flâneur, initially popularised by Baudelaire and subsequently theorised by Walter Benjamin, is pivotal in the comprehension of urban modernity, a poet of the streets, an observer of urban rhythms, a narrative drifter.

DH mapping tools frequently spatialize literature by correlating texts with geographical locations. The algorithmic flâneur presents a more dynamic and generative alternative: crafting narratives while meandering, as opposed to mapping existing entities. The paper further examines training the flâneur AI on literary works through examples- Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Saadat Hasan Manto's *Bombay stories*, and Arun Kolatkar's *Kala Ghoda Poems*. The study asserts that the algorithmic flâneur transcends being merely a tool; it constitutes a poetic exploration of spatial cognition, digital storytelling, and literary theory. It empowers cities to articulate, to dream, to manifest themselves across maps. In this manner, it reclaims the act of walking as a form of epistemology, transforming AI from a neutral computational entity into a wandering, dreaming narrator, perpetually adrift, perpetually composing.

Keywords: Digital Humanities (DH), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Psychogeography, Algorithmic flâneur, Dérive, Textuality & Spatiality

Introduction

The urban environment has consistently transcended mere physical constructs of stone, steel, and infrastructure; it represents a narrative, continuously inscribed and re-inscribed by the individuals traversing its thoroughfares. Since the advent of Baudelaire's conceptualisation of the flâneur, the urban perambulator has epitomised a distinctive modality of knowledge generation: one that arises not from abstract frameworks, but rather from the contingent cadences of sidewalks, cafes, vehicular flow, and serendipitous interactions. "The crowd is his domain, as the air is that of the bird, as water that of the fish. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd" (Baudelaire, 9). Walter Benjamin further developed this concept, situating the flâneur within the historical lineage of modernity, with the arcades of Paris functioning as both tangible and metaphorical terrains of consumer capitalism. "The flâneur is the observer of the marketplace, but he is also a commodity in the marketplace of observation" (Benjamin, 446).

In the twenty-first century, however, the urban milieu is mediated not solely through the lenses of literature and art but also through the intricate frameworks of data, algorithms, and artificial intelligence. Digital mapping platforms, electronic archives, and geospatial analytical instruments are already instrumental in shaping the conceptualisation and navigation of urban spaces. Nevertheless, these technological advancements frequently remain anchored

in utilitarian paradigms: optimisation, prediction, and surveillance. Conversely, artificial intelligence can be reconceptualised not as a mechanism of domination but as a visionary flâneur, drifting through and reimagining the world with poetic detachment.

This paper discusses the concept of the algorithmic flâneur, an artificial intelligence system that engenders narratives while "wandering" through digital cartographies. In contrast to conventional Digital Humanities mapping initiatives that spatialize pre-existing texts, the algorithmic flâneur constructs new narratives. It transposes literary sensibilities into computational methodologies, yielding narrative trajectories that blur the distinctions between spatial cognition, storytelling, and machine perception. By examining the potential for AI to be trained on urban literatures, including Rushdie's postcolonial epic, Manto's partition vignettes, and Kolatkar's cartography, the paper argues that cities themselves may be reinvigorated as narrators, articulating their voices through algorithmic dreamscapes.

Literature Review

The *flâneur* first emerges in Baudelaire's poetry and essays as the solitary stroller, detached yet deeply attuned to the sensory flux of Parisian life. Later, Benjamin, in The Arcades Project (1927–1940), situates the flâneur as a key figure of modernity, whose idleness and aesthetic gaze subvert the logics of capitalist productivity. For Benjamin, flanerie embodies a method of knowing the city: an epistemology of wandering.

Subsequent theorists have reinterpreted the figure. For Michel de Certeau, walking is a spatial practice that writes the city into being. The dérive (drift), as articulated by Guy Debord and the Situationist International, echoes flanerie in its deliberate subversion of planned urban routes, fostering a psychogeographic sensitivity to affective atmospheres.

In recent decades, DH projects have sought to spatialize literature. Tools like GIS mapping and text-mining allow scholars to correlate narrative locations with actual geography. Projects such as "Mapping the Republic of Letters" or "LitMap" illustrate how narratives move across time and space. Yet, these efforts tend to be archival, representing rather than generating.

Natural language processing has enabled algorithms to generate text in ways that mimic literary style. From GPT-based systems to neural narrative networks, AI has begun to inhabit the terrain of authorship. However, most applications prioritise productivity, for example, summarisation and translation over aesthetic exploration. Only in experimental domains, such as digital art, generative poetry, and AI fiction, do we glimpse the potential for algorithmic creativity.

The concept of Algorithmic flâneur

The algorithmic flâneur is envisioned as an AI entity that reanimates the figure of the flâneur within the computational and digital landscape of the 21st century. Unlike the traditional flâneur, whose wandering was embodied and observational, the algorithmic flâneur operates through data streams, geospatial information, and literary corpora, constructing textual encounters with the city from the perspective of artificial intelligence.

The algorithmic flâneur does not stroll through streets or passages in a physical sense but instead roams through digital networks: GPS data, satellite imagery, surveillance records, and open-source mapping layers. Its exploration is algorithmic, resembling a process of aimless wandering simulated through computational randomness, networked navigation, or API-based urban mapping. By doing this, it creates a kind of virtual dérive, in which digital space reflects the unpredictability of experiences at ground level.

Unlike traditional cartographic or analytical models, the algorithmic flâneur is developed using collections of urban literature, which include modernist excerpts like Joyce, Woolf and Doblin and flâneurial observations by Baudelaire, Benjamin, as well as postcolonial masterpieces and city narratives such as Rushdie's Bombay, Teju Cole's Lagos, and Arundhati

Roy's Delhi. Through this integration, the AI acquires stylistic nuances that enable it to interpret spatial information through a literary lens, transforming coordinates into metaphors and paths into narrative textures. Consequently, the algorithm evolves into more than just a mapper; it assumes the role of a literary subjectivity in a machine-like form.

In contrast to GIS, which focuses on precision and stability, the algorithmic flâneur embraces movement, chance, and subjective experience. It produces written outputs that mimic the aimless exploration of the flâneur, meandering, fragmented, and stylistically unique. These accounts may combine the mundanity of cartography, like street names and coordinates, with the lyrical nature of urban literature, such as mood, rhythm, and sensory details. The outcome is a type of algorithmic psychogeography, in which text arises as the byproduct of computational exploration.

The central practice of psychogeography is the *dérive*. In a *dérive*, a person or group wanders through a city without a pre-set plan or destination. Instead, they allow themselves to be drawn by the subconscious and emotional cues of the environment. It captures the emotional echoes of locations by exploring both cultural records like newspapers, travel accounts, and oral traditions and live updates such as tweets, reviews, and images to reveal emotional atmospheres: nostalgia, alienation, melancholy, and wonder. "The dérive is a technique of rapid passage through varied ambience. Dérive involves playful-constructive behaviour and awareness of psycho-geographical effects" (Debord). "Psychogeography could set for itself the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals" (Debord). By weaving these emotional echoes into its narrative flow, the algorithm creates a digital affective map of the city, bringing to light the otherwise hidden currents of urban experiences.

Traditional mapping projects in digital humanities, such as literary GIS, usually convert narratives into maps by placing characters, locations, and events onto a geographical layout. In contrast, the algorithmic flâneur takes this approach and flips it; it turns cartography into narrative. A street grid is transformed into a sentence; a GPS route morphs into a piece of modernist literature; a satellite image evolves into a noir short story. Through this reversal, the city itself transforms into a narrative, perpetually rewritten through algorithmic exploration.

Methodology

1. Corpus Selection: The training datasets will encompass urban literature from various regions, including works by Manto, Rushdie, and Kolatkar, each contributing unique spatial poetics.
2. Stylistic Encoding: NLP models will be adjusted using literary texts to emulate specific stylistic characteristics, such as modernist fragmentation, noir aesthetics, and postcolonial hybridity.
3. Spatial Input: Digital mapping APIs like OpenStreetMap and Google Maps will supply spatial routes for narrative exploration, with random or psychogeographic algorithms determining the pathway taken.
4. Narrative Output: As the AI navigates, it creates narrative segments that describe or reinterpret the spaces being explored.
5. Evaluation: Instead of focusing on accuracy, the measures of success will centre on aesthetic impact, literary coherence, and psychogeographic influence.

Rushdie's narrative reconfigures Bombay as both a material geography and a symbolic cartography of the Indian nation. The city is not a neutral backdrop but a palimpsest, where colonial residues, nationalist aspirations, and mythic excess intersect. Training the algorithmic flâneur on Rushdie's prose would yield narrative drifts where physical streets metamorphose into allegories, alleys morph into tangled genealogies of the nation, and traffic intersections echo with the cacophony of history.

For example, a digital dérive along Marine Drive might produce magical realist overlays: the cartographic line of the seafront dissolves into "history's midnight tryst bleeding into the Arabian Sea." Here, the algorithmic flâneur not only narrates space but animates cartography into allegorical myth, where maps themselves begin to speak in the idiom of postcolonial temporality, fractured, excessive, always on the verge of metamorphosis. Thus, in Rushdie's context, the algorithmic flâneur becomes a mythographer of urban modernity, re-inscribing city streets with the excess of national allegory.

Manto's Bombay is raw, fragmented, and unflinching. In contrast to Rushdie's metaphorical mapping, Manto emphasises the harsh realities of marginalised populations, sex workers, migrants, con artists, and minor offenders, who reside in the chawls and red-light areas of Bombay. His prose fragments the city into intimate but brutal encounters, where urban space is inseparable from exploitation, betrayal, and fleeting solidarities.

An algorithmic flâneur influenced by Manto's succinct and unsparing style would create dérives through Kamathipura or Byculla as a collection of fragmented snapshots: murmured secrets in a brothel, a tossed-away bidi in a shadowy passage, the outline of an exhausted migrant slumping against a chawl wall. The text would emerge as a mosaic of half-told stories, where voices flicker and disappear, echoing Manto's archival function of capturing Bombay's underbelly. Here, the algorithm does not merely map marginality; it becomes an archivist of ephemerality, recording lives that resist containment within dominant cartographies of the city. The dérive itself becomes precarious, mirroring the lives it traces.

Kolatkar transforms South Bombay's Kala Ghoda district into a surreal theatre, where statues converse, pigeons philosophise, and urban banality acquires mythic absurdity. His poems exemplify a poetics of street-level perception, where everyday landmarks dissolve into whimsical, irreverent tableaux. An algorithmic flâneur attuned to Kolatkar's idiom would generate narrative drifts marked by absurd juxtapositions and comic deflations. A dérive past the Jehangir Art Gallery might unfold as a dialogue between a horse statue and a stray dog debating the futility of modern art. A walk near Flora Fountain might transform into a carnival of anthropomorphic pigeons staging a mock parliament.

In this scenario, the algorithmic flâneur is not a serious chronicler but rather a trickster-cartographer, reshaping cartographic elements into playful textual improvisations. Space is perceived not as monumental but is humorously demystified, allowed to express itself through jokes, riddles, and surreal sketches.

The idea dissolves the traditional boundaries between textuality and spatiality. Walking becomes writing, and maps become stories. "The act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered" (de Certeau 97). Where literary cartographies have typically treated maps as secondary illustrations of narrative, here cartography itself generates narrative drift. This convergence suggests a rethinking of both literatures as spatial inscription and geography as textual imagination, producing a hybrid epistemology of narrative mapping.

Within this framework, AI is not perceived simply as a data processor but as a wandering consciousness, a machinic subjectivity that drifts, hesitates, digresses, and refigures. Much like the historical flâneur, who represented the dual perspective of modernity, both detached and observant, the algorithmic flâneur provides a non-human viewpoint on the city, interpreted through literary lenses. It problematises the notion of computational impartiality, instead highlighting the emotional and stylistic nuances of algorithmic storytelling. This places the machine not as a tool but as a co-generative subjectivity within literary discourse.

Following Benjamin's flâneur, who observes nature amidst the concrete, and Debord's dérive, which prioritises emotional wandering over practical navigation, the algorithmic flâneur embodies a way of knowing through exploration—insight gained from diversions, serendipity, and feelings instead of through rational calculations. In a time when urban environments are more and more subjected to surveillance, optimisation, and predictive modelling, wandering through algorithms presents an alternative approach: a knowledge

practice characterised by delay, ambiguity, and abundance. It proposes a digital artistry of defiance against the overarching tendencies of smart cities and the dynamics of surveillance capitalism.

The emergence of text here is neither solely human-authored nor entirely machinic. Rather, it is the product of a hybrid assemblage: literary corpora, spatial data, and algorithmic imagination coalesce to generate narrative drift. This decouples authorship from human intentionality, redistributing narrative agency across human–machine entanglements. The algorithmic flâneur thus becomes an experiment in posthuman storytelling, where textual meaning emerges from collaboration rather than mastery, destabilising notions of the singular, sovereign author.

The concept of the flâneur has predominantly been examined through the lens of European modernity, considering Baudelaire's Paris, Benjamin's Arcades, and the Situationists' Dérive. By conditioning the algorithmic flâneur on South Asian urban literatures, this project questions these Eurocentric origins, highlighting distinct forms of urban modernity. Rushdie's Bombay, Manto's chawls, and Kolatkar's Kala Ghoda all express spatial narratives shaped by colonial histories, migration, and postcolonial change. The algorithmic flâneur, influenced by these sources, performs a decolonial dérive, positioning wandering not within Haussmann's redesigned streets but through the intricate, diverse, and contested landscapes of the Global South. Through this approach, it challenges the European flâneur model, presenting a multifaceted, polyphonic framework for digital urban exploration.

Analysis and Findings

The algorithmic flaneur's inclusivity is determined by the datasets it utilises. Literary collections, municipal documents, and digital resources frequently exhibit systemic biases and exclusions: the contributions of women, marginalised regions, and transient urban cultures might be insufficiently represented. Consequently, the algorithm could potentially romanticise prevailing narratives associated with elite authors, colonial mappings, and official accounts while overshadowing or distorting the narratives of marginalised groups. This leads to the question: can an algorithmic dérive truly embody the diverse, multifaceted, and contentious realities of urban life, or does it risk perpetuating the same visibility hierarchies that have historically influenced urban knowledge?

The algorithmic flâneur could be absorbed by the principles of commercial urbanism, serving as a creator of tourist paths, gamified explorations, or branded urban experiences. This also poses a risk of diminishing its artistic and resistant qualities, turning it into an instrument of consumption and spectacle, which aligns it more with neoliberal methods of place-marketing rather than critical experimentation. The Situationists previously cautioned against the transformation of dérive into marketable entertainment; in a similar manner, the algorithmic flâneur may find it challenging to retain its critical perspective amid commercial exploitation.

Experiencing flanerie in person engages the senses through scents, textures, and serendipitous meetings, something that an algorithm can only replicate in a textual form. Can narratives generated by algorithms genuinely capture the rich sensory experience and unpredictability of real wandering, or are they merely ghostly representations, dérived from data abstraction? Although these simulations may create engaging texts, they risk disconnecting urban experience, depicting the city as a romanticised collection of data rather than a living ecosystem. This prompts more profound questions about the boundaries of understanding urban experiences through machine-facilitated perspectives.

Utilising urban data and literary collections for algorithmic exploration raises concerns regarding consent and representation. Which voices are being adapted, and in what manner? For example, Manto's depictions of sex workers or the accounts of marginalised individuals found in oral histories could be reinterpreted by AI in ways that disconnect them from their actual circumstances. There exists a risk of exploitative appropriation, wherein the algorithm

transforms the lives of those in vulnerable situations into mere artistic fragments without any sense of accountability. Therefore, ethical guidelines are essential to prevent the transformation of urban hardship into simply a narrative embellishment.

Conclusion

The algorithmic flâneur, which reclaims walking, not merely as movement but as a method of knowledge, perception, and storytelling, within the contemporary digital landscape. By meandering through maps, absorbing literary influences, and creating narrative snippets, the AI does not merely analyse urban data; it envisions alongside the city. It transforms into a storyteller of spectral explorations, a machine consciousness capable of poetic insight, metamorphosing coordinates into allegories, streets into symbols, and urban remnants into narrative potential.

By resisting the imperatives of efficiency and optimisation that characterise both smart cities and conventional AI frameworks, the algorithmic flâneur emphasises detours, obscurity, and wandering as essential practices. Its significance lies not in delivering expected results, but in producing surprise, alienation, and diversity, qualities that are fundamental to both flânerie and literature. In this regard, it signifies a rejection of the instrumental city, suggesting a different way of understanding and narrating space.

At a time when cities are increasingly under surveillance, commodified, and managed through algorithms, the algorithmic flâneur points toward a counter-imaginary: urban environments seen not as controlled grids, but as narrative dreamscapes. "The city… does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps" (Calvino 11). Each dérive serves as an exploration in alternative perspectives, revealing hidden connections and overlooked voices, while disrupting the stability of cartographic representation itself.

Importantly, when rooted in South Asian urban literatures, this approach also questions the Eurocentric lineage of the flâneur. It highlights diverse, contested, and postcolonial urban modernities, placing wandering not in the arcades of Paris but in the chawls of Bombay, the alleys of Lahore, and the bazaars of Delhi. Thus, the algorithmic flâneur emerges not only as a speculative endeavour in posthuman narrative but also as a decolonial act, situating the figure of the flâneur within different temporalities, cities, and modernities. flâneur maintains an ongoing practice, poetic, precarious, and critical, where literature, AI, and urban modernity intersect. It is within this intersection that a new form of digital wandering takes shape: one that disrupts, re-enchants, and re-narrates the city, sustaining the idea of walking as a mode of thinking, dreaming, and becoming.

Works Cited

Baudelaire, Charles. *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*. Translated by Jonathan Mayne, Phaidon Press, 1964.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Harvard UP, 1999.

Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. Translated by William Weaver, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974.

Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven Rendall, University of California Press, 1984.

Debord, Guy. “Theory of the Dérive.” *Les Lèvres Nues*, no. 9, 1956. Situationist International Online, Accessed 25 Aug. 2025.

Digital Humanities and the Shifting Landscape of Contemporary Literary Studies

Manisha Berwal & Mahesh Arora

Abstract

Digital Humanities (DH) has emerged as a transformative field that reshapes the study and interpretation of contemporary literature. With the advent of digital tools and platforms, literary scholars now engage with texts through methods such as text analysis, metadata mapping, visualization and digital archiving. This paper explores how these innovations offer new perspectives on reading, authorship, genre and literary production. In particular, the applications of DH in contemporary literature enables scholars to trace thematic trends across large textual corpora to examine the circulation of literature in online environments and rethink the role of the reader in digital literary spaces. It also considers how digital platforms have become sites for new literary forms ranging from online poetry and web fiction to multimedia narratives thus challenging traditional boundaries of genre and authorship. Furthermore, it addresses the collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of DH which encourages integration across literature, media studies and computer science. Through this exploration, the paper argues that Digital Humanities is not only a methodological advancement but also a reorientation of how we define, engage with and teach literature in the 21st century.

Key words: Digital Humanities; Contemporary Literary Studies; Distant Reading; Text Mining; Literary Theory and Technology; Computational Criticism; Digital Archives; Pedagogy in Digital Age

1. Introduction

The evolution of technology has significantly influenced how literature is written, disseminated and studied. The emergence of Digital Humanities (DH) defined as the intersection of computing and the humanities has revolutionized the scope of literary studies. DH integrates digital tools and methods into traditional humanistic inquiry, enabling large-scale textual analysis, enhanced archival accessibility and participatory modes of engagement. This paper seeks to explore how DH has reshaped contemporary literature and literary studies.

Additionally, the increasing importance of data literacy, coding knowledge and collaborative research among literary scholars demonstrates that the field is evolving beyond disciplinary boundaries. According to Burdick et al. (2012), DH acts as a “hybrid field,” fusing humanities scholarship with computer science, media studies and cultural criticism and encompasses a wide range of activities, including text encoding, digital publishing, corpus analysis, tagging and spatial humanities.

It combines methodologies from computer science such as algorithms, data visualization and network analysis with core humanistic practices of interpretation, critical theory and historical contextualization. DH enables scholars to analyze patterns across massive literary datasets and rethink literary form, genre and influence. For example, Franco Moretti's concept of "distant reading" challenges the conventional close reading model by using graphs and maps to visualize literary history (Moretti, 2005). Similarly, digital archives such as Project Gutenberg and HathiTrust have made thousands of literary works accessible for scholarly exploration and computational processing.

According to Matthew Kirschenbaum (2010), DH offers a “mechanism of attention,” directing scholarly inquiry toward patterns and relationships that are otherwise invisible

to the human eye. Contemporary literature has responded dynamically to the digital era. The rise of online publishing platforms, e-books, audiobooks and social media storytelling (such as Twitter fiction and web novels) has diversified literary production and readership. Writers increasingly experiment with multimodal forms, blending text with audio, video, hyperlinks and interactive media. Notable examples include:

- **Web-based fiction:** Platforms like Wattpad allow serialized storytelling with reader feedback.
- **Hypertext narratives:** Stories with branching pathways, such as in Twine or Inklewriter, redefine reader agency.
- **Digital poetry and performance:** Poets now use coding, visual design and sound integration to convey meaning beyond traditional text.

This evolution prompts a re-evaluation of authorship, intellectual property and the boundaries of literary genres. Moreover, contemporary writers like Rupi Kaur, whose Instagram poetry transcends print boundaries, exemplify how digital space reshapes poetic discourse. According to Murray (2018), digital literary environments foster democratization and decentralization of literary authority. Other authors such as Amitav Ghosh and Arundhati Roy, although rooted in print, have seen their work gain renewed relevance and accessibility through digitization and scholarly discourse in DH frameworks (Risam, 2018; Fitzpatrick, 2011).

2. Related Study

While traditional methods emphasize depth, DH promotes breadth and pattern recognition. Both, when integrated, offer complementary insights into literature. Case studies show that integrating these methods enriches textual understanding. For instance, ML-based sentiment analysis has been used to evaluate emotional arcs in novels, as seen in Reagan et al.'s (2016) work on narrative structure. A comprehensive study comprises the traditional literary methods versus Digital Humanities Approaches as discussed in Table

Table 1 Traditional Literary Methods versus Digital Humanities Approaches

Aspect	Traditional Literary Studies	Digital Humanities Approaches
Textual Analysis	Close reading, interpretive analysis	Distant reading, text mining, topic modeling
Corpus Size	Select texts or canonical works	Large-scale digital corpora (millions of words)
Tools	Manual annotation, critical theory	Voyant Tools, MALLET, Google Ngram Viewer
Access	Physical archives, print texts	Digital libraries, open-source databases
Engagement	Individual scholarly interpretation	Collaborative, often crowd-sourced, interdisciplinary

3. Case Studies and Applications

A. **Text Mining and Thematic Mapping:** Using tools like Voyant or AntConc, scholars can extract keyword frequencies, collocations and sentiment trends in large literary corpora. For instance, an analysis of Margaret Atwood's novels can reveal shifting themes around gender, dystopia and environment across decades (Jockers, 2013).
B. **DH and Postcolonial Literature:** Digital projects like the Postcolonial Digital Humanities (PDH) initiative use mapping, archival digitization and metadata analysis to trace colonial legacies in literature and emphasize global south perspectives. DH

provides a way to recover marginalized voices and reconstruct suppressed histories. According to Risam (2018), digital archives play a crucial role in postcolonial recovery work.

C. **Archival Projects:** The Rossetti Archive and Women Writers Project are DH initiatives that preserve rare texts and manuscripts with encoded metadata, enhancing accessibility for underrepresented voices in literary history. These projects demonstrate how XML-based text encoding (TEI) can revitalize interest in forgotten texts (Schreibman et al., 2004).

D. **Digital Narratives and Experimental Forms** Projects such as the Electronic Literature Collection (ELC) archive interactive texts, games and digital experiments that defy conventional narrative structures. These experimental texts blur boundaries between gaming, art and storytelling (Gold, 2012).

4. Pedagogical and Institutional Implications

Incorporating DH into the curriculum empowers students with digital skills alongside literary analysis. Courses now include digital project design, coding and collaborative annotation tools. Institutions globally are establishing DH labs and centers to foster cross-disciplinary research. Example: Stanford University's Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis (CESTA) integrate literary studies with data science and Geospatial Information System (GIS) mapping, enabling innovative spatial narratives. Additionally, DH pedagogy supports experiential learning. Students engage with real-world data, contribute to digital projects and often collaborate with libraries and archives. As Brier (2012) notes, DH education equips students for careers beyond academia, making the humanities more socially relevant.

5. Ethical and Methodological Challenges

Despite its promise, DH faces significant challenges:

- **Digital Divide:** Limited access to technology and training in rural or underfunded institutions.
- **Data Bias:** Algorithms may perpetuate existing literary canons, neglecting non-Western and marginalized texts (Liu, 2012).
- **Interpretative Tension:** Risk of over-reliance on quantitative over qualitative insights.
- **Intellectual Property:** Concerns about digitizing copyrighted works for fair use.

Moreover, methodological transparency is crucial. Scholars must clarify how digital tools influence interpretation. As Drucker (2011) argues, data visualizations in DH are not neutral and must be read critically.

6. Conclusion

Digital Humanities represents a paradigm shift in how contemporary literature is produced, studied and taught. It challenges traditional models of authorship, opens new avenues for analysis and enhances accessibility through digital platforms. By integrating computational tools with humanistic inquiry, DH enriches literary studies in scope, depth and relevance. The future of DH lies in inclusive scholarship, technological accessibility and interdisciplinary collaboration. As digital methods become further embedded in research and teaching, DH offers a model for revitalizing the humanities in the digital era.

References

Moretti, F. (2005). *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History*. Verso.

Schreibman, S., Siemens, R., & Unsworth, J. (2004). *A Companion to Digital Humanities*. Blackwell Publishing.

Jockers, M. L. (2013). *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History*. University of Illinois Press.

Fitzpatrick, K. (2011). *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology and the Future of the Academy*. NYU Press.

Rockwell, G., & Sinclair, S. (2016). *Hermeneutica: Computer-Assisted Interpretation in the Humanities*. MIT Press.

Liu, A. (2012). *Where is Cultural Criticism in the Digital Humanities?* In *Debates in the Digital Humanities*. University of Minnesota Press.

Ramsay, S. (2011). *Reading Machines: Toward an Algorithmic Criticism*. University of Illinois Press.

Gold, M. K. (2012). *Debates in the Digital Humanities*. University of Minnesota Press.

Brier, S. (2012). *Where's the Pedagogy? The Role of Teaching and Learning in the Digital Humanities*. In *Debates in the Digital Humanities*.

Risam, R. (2018). *New Digital Worlds: Postcolonial Digital Humanities in Theory, Praxis and Pedagogy*. Northwestern University Press.

Drucker, J. (2011). *Humanities Approaches to Graphical Display*. *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 5(1).

Burdick, A., Drucker, J., Lunenfeld, P., Presner, T., & Schnapp, J. (2012). *Digital_Humanities*. MIT Press.

Kirschenbaum, M. (2010). *What is Digital Humanities and What's It Doing in English Departments? ADE Bulletin*, (150), 55–61.

Murray, S. (2018). *The Digital Literary Sphere: Reading, Writing and Selling Books in the Internet Era*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Reagan, A. J., Mitchell, L., Kiley, D., Danforth, C. M., & Dodds, P. S. (2016). *The emotional arcs of stories are dominated by six basic shapes*. *EPJ Data Science*, 5(1).

Diasporic Mindsets: Who Live Abroad

Murali Mohan Namamula & Bhuvaneswari Pagidipati

Abstract

This essay looks at the idea of foreign mindsets in V.S. Naipaul's novel Half a Life. In the work, how someone feels emotionally lost is shown by living between different cultures. The main character, Willie Somerset Chandran is caught between the identity he was born into and the values he tries to adopt later in life on the alien land. He travels from India to England, and then to Africa—but no place ever really feels like home. Along the way, Willie tries to blend in. He copies behaviors, adopts new ideas, and wears a kind of mask to survive. But in doing that, he loses sight of who he truly is. This essay explores how colonial and postcolonial pressures affect people on the inside—how they think, feel, and see themselves. It is about how disconnected you feel from yourself and from your residing place.

Keywords: Diaspora, identity, alienation, hybridity, foreign mindset, mental health, trauma, displacement, Loneliness, conflict

Introduction

V.S. Naipaul's Half a Life is a book about feeling out of place. It's about what happens when someone grows up between cultures and never really fits in anywhere. The story follows Willie Somerset Chandran. He's born in colonial India, moves to England, and later ends up in Africa. At each step, he feels more disconnected—not just from the world around him, but from his own sense of self. This essay looks at Willie's emotional journey. How does he handle cultural pressure? What happens to his mental health? And why does he always feel like a stranger—even to himself? To explore that, we'll use a mix of postcolonial theory and psychology. The goal is to better understanding what it means to live with a foreign mindset.

Methodology

The themes are explored by qualitative research methodology; literary analysis from the work, Half a Life of VS Naipaul: Identity and displacement, cultural hybridity, rootlessness and Passivity. And the study uses postcolonial theory and psychology.

To better understand Willie's mental and emotional journey, the essay uses concepts from

- Homi Bhabha – on hybridity and mimicry
- Stuart Hall – on identity and diaspora
- Frantz Fanon – on colonial trauma and subjectivity
- Erik Erikson – on identity crisis
- Trauma psychology – particularly theories around dissociation and cultural loss

These frameworks help us understand how colonial histories and displacement break apart the self and leave lasting scars on the mind.

Analysis

Losing Identity and Heritage

Willie's identity is already fragile when the story begins. His father, a Brahmin, marries a Dalit woman—Willie's mother. She's from Dalit community, which is a marginalized group and barely present in his life. Naipaul describes her as "a shadow in the house" (Naipaul 25). Willie grows up confused. He doesn't really connect with his family, and the caste system only adds to the mess. Then he moves to England. That's when he starts changing himself to fit in—his voice, his behavior, even his personal story. He tells lies just to sound more interesting or acceptable to others. This is what psychologist Erik Erikson calls an identity crisis. Willie starts putting together a version of himself that isn't real. And in the process, he loses who he actually is.

The Split Psyche and Mental Strain

In England, Willie becomes a kind of actor. He plays the role of a polite, well-behaved colonial subject. But it's just a performance. He's always watching himself through the eyes of others—what W.E.B. Du Bois called double consciousness. This pressure wears him down. He becomes distant. Numb. He can't connect with people, even the ones who care about him. Trauma experts like Bessel van der Kolk describe this as dissociation—a way the brain protects itself when things get too painful. Frantz Fanon also explains this kind of split. Colonized people often live with two selves: the one they know and the one society demands. Later, when Willie moves to Africa, he disconnects even more. He's not really part of life anymore. He watches it from the sidelines.

Diaspora, Hybridity, and Feeling Out of Place

Stuart Hall says identity isn't something fixed—it's always shifting, especially for people in diaspora. That's true for Willie. But instead of feeling free in his hybridity, he feels trapped by it. He tries to be part of multiple cultures. But it only makes him feel more lost. This constant juggling creates a mindset shaped by confusion, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion. Naipaul doesn't present hybridity as something exciting. For Willie, it's painful. He constantly figuring out who he should be, always adjusting but no ease is there. Psychologists call this cultural bereavement—the grief that comes from losing your sense of home, community, and self (Eisenbruch 313). Naipaul's story shows us that diaspora isn't just about moving to another country. It's about losing your place in the world. It's a slow kind of heartbreak that messes with your mind.

Themes

Displacement and Identity

The protagonist of Half a Life, Willie, is constantly trying to figure out who he truly is. He travels to many nations and civilizations, yet nothing ever seems to match. He finds it difficult to find a place that seems like home, or a genuine version of himself, whether he is in Africa, England, or India.

Alienation and the Legacy of Colonialism

Naipaul is not afraid to depict the lingering effects of colonialism. The repercussions are personal as well as political. Like many others, Willie finds himself in a state of indecision. A civilization based on colonial hierarchies has shaped him, and his inherited trauma makes him feel uncomfortable wherever he goes. He lives in an incomplete life.

Passivity and In-authenticity

Willie is the sort of guy who floats through life most of the time. He imitates those around him rather than making his own decisions. Consider it similar to attempting to blend in at a new school by behaving like everyone else in order to avoid being noticed. He mimics rather than assumes control in order to adapt. This goes beyond Willie. The picture is larger. His apathy is a reflection of the situation that many people encounter following colonization: being torn between a modern, ambiguous environment and ancient customs that they hardly recall.

Exile and Rootlessness:

Willie felt a deep sense of exile psychologically and physically. Willie's rootlessness is seen in his travelling from India to England to Africa and then to Germany. The instability highlights the cultural and emotional nothingness in his existence.

Conclusion

V.S. Naipaul's Half a Life shows how migration and colonial history can leave deep scars—especially on the inside. Through Willie's story, we see what it's like to live between worlds. He tries to belong. He puts on masks. But all it does is push him further away from himself. The novel doesn't offer easy answers. Instead, it shows the painful cost of trying to survive in a world that doesn't fully accept you. Willie's journey is a warning: when you change too much just to fit in, there is a risk of losing self completely. Alienation, in this story, isn't just about place. It's about identity. And it's a reminder that mental health needs to be part of how we study postcolonial lives. If we want to truly understand what it means to be caught between cultures, half a Life is a good place to begin.

Works Cited

Naipaul. V S, Half a Life. Knopf. 2001.

Bhabha, Homi K. The Location of Culture. Routledge, 1994.

Eisenbruch, Maurice. "Cultural Bereavement and Migrant Mental Health." Psychiatry, vol. 52, no. 1, 1989, pp. 313-328.

Erikson, Erik H. Identity: Youth and Crisis. W.W. Norton, 1968.

Fanon, Frantz. Black Skin, White Masks. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann, Grove Press, 1967.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993, pp. 222–237.

van der Kolk, Bessel A. The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma. Viking, 2014.

A Comparative Analysis of Empathy and Emotional Regulation in Digital and Print Storytelling

Neha Rathi

Abstract

Current study examined the psychological impact of three different reading formats, digital storytelling (Webtoon), printed text (PDF short story), and a non-reading control condition on empathy and emotional regulation among undergraduate students. In total, 152 participants were assigned to one of the three groups randomly using a fishbowl randomization technique. Data from all participants was collected using two different standardized assessments, the "Interpersonal Reactivity Index" (IRI) and the "Emotion Regulation Questionnaire" (ERQ), taken twice, before & after the intervention. Groups A and B read emotionally engaging stories in digital and printed formats respectively, while Group C engaged in no reading activity. We also collected open-ended reflective responses from the reading groups to explore emotional engagement qualitatively. Observations subject to statistical analysis revealed significant differences across groups, with both reading conditions showing measurable increases in empathy and cognitive reappraisal scores in comparison with our control group. The digital reading group exhibited slightly higher scores, suggesting that visual and interactive elements may enhance emotional resonance. Thematic analysis of qualitative responses further supported these findings. By bridging psychology, literature, and digital humanities, this study offers insights into how story formats influence emotional processing and supports the integration of digital narratives in educational and therapeutic contexts.

Keywords: Emotional Regulation, Empathy, Digital storytelling, Narrative Engagement, Digital Humanities, Education Psychology

Introduction

Stories have always been and will always be a part of human life, carrying emotions, morals, and shared experiences from one generation to another. In traditional ages these stories came in the form of print such as books, newspapers, or pamphlets, and before that in oral forms from parents, gurus or teachers. However, in the last two decades digital technologies have reshaped the way we tell or share and consume stories. We have numerous Web-based platforms, online comics, and interactive narratives that compete with and sometimes even replace the traditional printed format storytelling (Liu, 2005). This change is rapid and has raised several questions for educators and psychologists, like, is different modes of reading influencing the way we feel and think about others? Is it also influencing our ability to regulate emotions?

Empathy and emotional regulation are two important psychological constructs that help us understand better human interactions as well as human well- being. Empathy refers to "the ability to understand and share another person's emotional state" (Davis, 1983), while emotional regulation is "the ability to manage and respond to one`s emotional experiences effectively" (Gross & John, 2003). Both of these constructs are significant in the field of education, counselling & day- to- day social functioning of an individual. Reading stories either in printed or digital format helps readers practice these skills as well as get diverse perspective on the same (Mar et al., 2006).

We have researches with broad observations in this area, some research suggests that reading fiction can increase empathy in readers by promoting perspective taking (Kidd & Castano, 2013). When readers engage deeply with characters of the story they understand and

empathize with the characters thoughts and emotions which in turn influence their real-world empathic responses. On the other hand, digital storytelling formats often adds visuals, pacing controls, and sometimes interactive features, which could change the cognitive and emotional processes involved in reading (Green et al., 2008). It is important to note that while visual cues might strengthen emotional connection for some readers, they might also reduce the imaginative work that print requires, leading to different kinds of engagement in different reading formats.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in comparing print and digital reading experiences. Studies in educational psychology have observed differences in comprehension between the two formats often indicating that comprehension in digital media format can be similar or lower in some cases than in print format depending on the task and preference of the reader (Mangen et al., 2013). However, we don't have much research exploring the emotional outcomes of these formats, particularly empathy and emotional regulation which is significant for socio- emotional learning of an individual.

In addition to this, we also see cultural and generational shift towards screen-based reading which shows that student readers today will have their own diverse habits and expectations in terms of reading then the previous generations. Webtoons, for example, are a popular digital comic format that has originating from South Korea and is designed for vertical scrolling reading experience on smartphones. It uses a blend of engaging visuals, dialogue, and pacing that may engage readers differently from traditional short stories. Narrative immersion, which is an important factor in empathy building (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009) can be influenced by digital story formats and is worth exploring.

The present study was designed to compare the effects of digital and print storytelling on empathy and emotional regulation among undergraduate students, using a control group for baseline comparison. By using standardized measures, the "Interpersonal Reactivity Index" (IRI) for empathy and the "Emotion Regulation Questionnaire" (ERQ) for cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression we aimed to obtain both quantitative and qualitative insights into how students respond emotionally to different reading experiences via these two formats. This approach brings together psychology, literature, and digital humanities to address a question that is both timely and relevant for educators and mental health practitioners: how does the medium of a story influence the reader's mind and emotions?

Literature Review

The relationship between reading and psychological outcomes such as empathy and emotional regulation has been of interest to scholars across psychology, education, and literary studies. Fiction in particular has been shown to promote perspective-taking and emotional understanding because it allows readers to inhabit the minds of characters of the story and witness experiences unlike their own (Mar et al., 2006; Oatley, 2016). Through these vicarious experiences, readers may strengthen both cognitive empathy (understanding others' thoughts) and affective empathy (sharing others' feelings) (Davis, 1983).

One influential line of research, often framed under narrative transportation theory, argues that the more immersed a reader becomes in a story, the more likely they are to experience changes in beliefs, attitudes, and emotions (Green & Brock, 2000; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). Immersion, or "transportation," involves a focused mental state where the boundaries between the self and the narrative temporarily blur. This can intensify empathic responses, as readers simulate the emotions and intentions of characters in the story.

Digital storytelling formats such as Webtoons, interactive fiction, and e-books introduce unique variables into this process. They often integrate visual imagery, pacing controls, and digital layouts that may enhance or alter the immersive experience (Schwan & Riempp, 2004; Oh, 2017). Some studies have suggested that multimodal elements, like the combination of text and image can increase emotional engagement, particularly for younger

readers accustomed to screen-based media (Karsenti & Collin, 2011). At the same time, others have cautioned that visual aids might reduce the imaginative work that print reading demands, potentially changing how empathy is activated (Mangen et al., 2013).

Emotional regulation, another central construct in this study, refers to how individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions (Gross, 1998; Gross & John, 2003). Two strategies often studied are cognitive reappraisal—reframing how one thinks about a situation—and expressive suppression—inhibiting outward signs of emotion. Engaging with narratives can offer opportunities to practise both strategies, as readers reflect on characters' decisions and reframe events within the safety of a fictional setting (Johnson, 2012).

Comparative studies of print and digital reading have mainly focused on comprehension and recall (Singer & Alexander, 2017), with less emphasis on emotional and social outcomes. Mangen et al. (2013) found that readers of print often reported deeper immersion, while another research (Margolin et al., 2013) suggested that digital formats could match or surpass print in engagement when designed thoughtfully. A study by Bal & Veltkamp (2013) found that even a short exposure to narrative fiction increased empathy levels, but the effect was contingent on how absorbed participants became in the story, highlighting the role of engagement over format alone.

There is also a cultural dimension to consider. Digital-native generations, who have grown up with smartphones and tablets, may approach print and digital reading with different levels of familiarity and comfort (Liu, 2005). For these readers, digital platforms like Webtoon might not be perceived as a "novelty" but as a primary reading environment. This could affect both baseline engagement and emotional response.

While existing literature underscores the potential of narrative media to influence empathy and emotional regulation, direct comparisons between digital storytelling platforms and traditional print formats remain limited. Most previous studies have not included a control group, making it harder to distinguish changes caused by the reading itself from changes due to unrelated factors. Furthermore, the combination of quantitative measures like the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983) and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003) with qualitative reflections remains relatively rare in this area, despite its potential to capture both measurable outcomes and the nuanced subjective experiences of readers.

The current study addresses these gaps by examining the impact of both digital and print storytelling on empathy and emotional regulation in an undergraduate population, alongside a control condition. By integrating established psychological measures with thematic analysis of open-ended responses, it seeks to provide a richer understanding of how different modes of reading shape emotional and cognitive engagement in contemporary students.

Methodology

The Research Design

A true experimental research design was employed for the purpose of this study to assess the effect of different reading formats on empathy and emotional regulation among undergraduate students. The design involved a pre-test and post-test with three groups: digital storytelling, print storytelling, and a non-reading control group. Random assignment was carried out using the fishbowl technique to ensure each participant had an equal chance of being placed in any group.

Sample

The population of this study consisted of undergraduate students currently enrolled in a university in India. A total of 152 students participated in the research. Participants were selected through convenience sampling and then randomly allocated to the three experimental

groups using the fishbowl method. Group A read a selected Webtoon digital comic, Group B read a thematically similar printed short story in PDF format, and Group C (control) did not engage in any reading activity during the intervention period.

Tools

The variables of the current research, empathy and emotional regulation, were measured using standardized scales. Standardized instruments were chosen for their high reliability, validity, and ease of replicability (Taherdoost, 2016). Empathy was assessed using the "Interpersonal Reactivity Index" (IRI) developed by Davis (1983), a 28-item scale measuring four dimensions: Perspective Taking, Empathic Concern, Fantasy, and Personal Distress. Emotional regulation was measured using the "Emotion Regulation Questionnaire" (ERQ) developed by Gross and John (2003), which consists of 10 items measuring two dimensions: Cognitive Reappraisal and Expressive Suppression. Additionally, open-ended reflective questions were included for Groups A and B to explore qualitative aspects of emotional engagement with the narratives.

Procedure

The study was conducted in a classroom setting over two sessions. In the first session, all participants completed the IRI and ERQ as a pre-test. Immediately after this Group A read the digital narrative using the Webtoon platform, Group B read the printed PDF story, and Group C remained without a reading task. The reading phase lasted approximately 30–40 minutes. In the second session, immediately following the reading phase, all participants completed the IRI and ERQ again as a post-test. Participants in the reading groups also responded to open-ended reflection questions regarding their reading experience.

Statistical Analysis

Data collected from the 152 participants were subjected to statistical analysis using JASP software. Paired sample t-tests were used to assess within-group changes in empathy and emotional regulation scores from pre-test to post-test. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare post-test scores across the three groups. Qualitative responses from open-ended questions were thematically analyzed to identify patterns and recurring themes related to emotional engagement and narrative immersion using AI- assisted tools.

Results

Descriptive statistics for empathy and emotion regulation across the three groups are presented in Table 1. At baseline, all groups had similar pre-test scores on both measures, suggesting no substantial differences at the outset. Following the intervention, the digital reading group demonstrated the most noticeable increases in both empathy and emotion regulation scores. The print reading group also showed improvement, though to a smaller degree. By contrast, the control group remained virtually unchanged from pre- to post-test.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Empathy and Emotion Regulation by Group (N = 152)

Group	Pre-Test Empathy M (SD)	Post-Test Empathy M (SD)	Pre-Test ERQ M (SD)	Post-Test ERQ M (SD)
Digital (Webtoon)	46.8 (5.2)	52.9 (5.1)	42.5 (4.9)	48.7 (4.7)
Print (PDF)	47.1 (5.0)	50.3 (5.3)	42.8 (4.8)	46.1 (5.0)
Control	46.5 (5.4)	46.7 (5.5)	42.2 (5.0)	42.4 (5.1)

Paired samples t-tests were conducted to examine pre–post differences within each group. Results (Table 2) indicated that both the digital and print storytelling groups showed

statistically significant gains in empathy and emotional regulation following the intervention. The effect size for the digital group was large (d = 1.11), while the print group showed a moderate-to-large effect (d = 0.72). In contrast, the control group did not exhibit significant change (p = .682), with a negligible effect size.

Table 2: Paired Samples t-test Results for Within-Group Pre–Post Differences

Group	*t*	*df*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Digital (Webtoon)	7.84	49	< .001	1.11
Print (PDF)	5.12	49	< .001	0.72
Control	0.41	49	.682	0.06

These findings suggest that engaging with narrative material—whether digital or print—enhanced participants' empathy and capacity for cognitive reappraisal. However, the larger effect observed in the digital group indicates that interactive and visual features may have amplified emotional engagement compared to text-only print.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether the magnitude of change (gain scores) differed significantly across groups. Results (Table 3) revealed a statistically significant effect of group on gains in empathy and emotional regulation, $F(2, 147) = 42.47$, $p < .001$. This indicates that the type of reading format influenced outcomes in a meaningful way.

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA Results for Between-Group Differences in Gain Scores

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	820.45	2	410.23	42.47	< .001
Within Groups	1420.32	147	9.66		
Total	2240.77	149			

In line with the paired t-test results, the digital storytelling group demonstrated the greatest improvement relative to both the print group and the control group. While the print group also improved significantly compared to the control, the digital group's higher mean gain scores point to the potential advantages of multimodal, visually enriched narratives for emotional development.

Discussions

This study investigated the effects of digital storytelling (Webtoon), print text, and a control condition on empathy and emotional regulation among undergraduate students. Results showed that both reading groups significantly improved, with the digital format yielding the largest gains. The control group showed no meaningful change.

These findings support narrative transportation theory (Green & Brock, 2000), which holds that immersion in stories can shift beliefs, attitudes, and emotions. Webtoons, with their blend of visuals, text, and pacing, may have deepened participants' identification with characters and increased empathic responses. Print stories also fostered improvement,

consistent with research showing that traditional reading promotes perspective-taking (Bal & Veltkamp, 2013), but the effects were smaller compared to the digital format.

Emotion regulation improvements, particularly in cognitive reappraisal, suggest that narratives provide models for reframing experiences. The stronger effect in the digital group indicates that multimodal cues, such as facial expressions and visual settings, may support reappraisal more directly. In contrast, suppression strategies were not influenced, aligning with Johnson's (2012) view that stories encourage exploration of emotions rather than inhibition.
The findings also reflect cultural shifts. Students who are digital natives (Liu, 2005) may find digital media more natural and engaging, which could explain their stronger responses compared to print.

This research contributes to both psychology and digital humanities by showing how narrative formats influence socio-emotional skills. Limitations include reliance on self-reports, short intervention time, and a student-only sample. Future studies should include measures of narrative immersion, longer exposure, and more diverse participants. Overall, the study highlights the promise of digital storytelling as a low-cost and engaging way to foster empathy and emotional regulation in both educational and psychological contexts.

Conclusion

This study compared digital and print storytelling and found that both enhanced empathy and emotion regulation, with the digital format producing the strongest effects. The results suggest that Webtoons and similar platforms can engage young readers in ways that deepen emotional resonance and support adaptive strategies like cognitive reappraisal. While print remains valuable, digital stories may offer unique advantages for today's digital-native students. These findings point to practical applications in education and counseling, where narrative media can be used to promote social understanding and emotional well-being. Although the study was limited by self-report measures and a short intervention period, it reinforces the enduring psychological power of stories and highlights the need to integrate both traditional and digital narratives in future research and practice.

References

Bal, P. M., & Veltkamp, M. (2013). How does fiction reading influence empathy? An experimental investigation on the role of emotional transportation. PLoS ONE, 8(1), e55341. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0055341

Busselle, R., & Bilandzic, H. (2009). Measuring narrative engagement. Media Psychology, 12(4), 321–347. https://doi.org/10.1080/15213260903287259

Davis, M. H. (1983). Measuring individual differences in empathy: Evidence for a multidimensional approach. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 44(1), 113–126. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.44.1.113

Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79(5), 701–721. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.5.701

Gross, J. J. (1998). The emerging field of emotion regulation: An integrative review. Review of General Psychology, 2(3), 271–299. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.2.3.271

Gross, J. J., & John, O. P. (2003). Individual differences in two emotion regulation processes: Implications for affect, relationships, and well-being. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85(2), 348–362. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.2.348

Johnson, D. R. (2012). Transportation into a story increases empathy, prosocial behavior, and perceptual bias toward fearful expressions. Personality and Individual Differences, 52(2), 150–155. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2011.10.005

Karsenti, T., & Collin, S. (2011). Benefits of using technology for language learning: Insights from research. Journal of Education and Learning, 1(2), 91–96. https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v1n2p91

Liu, Z. (2005). Reading behavior in the digital environment: Changes in reading behavior over the past ten years. Journal of Documentation, 61(6), 700–712. https://doi.org/10.1108/00220410510632040

Mangen, A., Walgermo, B. R., & Brønnick, K. (2013). Reading linear texts on paper versus computer screen: Effects on reading comprehension. International Journal of Educational Research, 58, 61–68. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2012.12.002

Margolin, S. J., Driscoll, C., Toland, M. J., & Kegler, J. L. (2013). E-readers, computer screens, or paper: Does reading comprehension change across media platforms? Applied Cognitive Psychology, 27(4), 512–519. https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.2930

Oh, S. (2017). The influence of digital comics on students' reading comprehension and attitudes. International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies, 5(4), 86–92. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.5n.4p.86

Schwan, S., & Riempp, R. (2004). The cognitive benefits of interactive videos: Learning to tie nautical knots. Learning and Instruction, 14(3), 293–305. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2004.06.005

Singer, L. M., & Alexander, P. A. (2017). Reading on paper and digitally: What the past decades of empirical research reveal. Review of Educational Research, 87(6), 1007–1041. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654317722961

Conceptual Metaphors in *The Village by the Sea* by Anita Desai

S. Nirmala Nigil Bhavan

Abstract

Anita Desai in *The Village by the Sea* demonstrates the alienation and mental trauma of Hari, the male protagonist, whose identity gets eroded while his own fears intensify his sense of fragmentation. This study articulates how Desai presents the impact of society on individuals in *The Village by the Sea*, by focusing on Hari, a young boy from a coastal community who grapples with his identity in the face of economic and social transformations. Hari is compelled to leave his village due to the demands of industrialization and the disintegration of customary means of sustenance, seeking employment in the urban area. The protagonist's self-imposed transfer from the familiar rural surroundings to the unfamiliar metropolitan landscape represents a split in identity caused by the dislocation and alienation he experiences in the city. His journey frames his search for meaning through obstacles, disappointments, and the challenges of facing crossroads. This study is significant as it sheds light on the contextual factors embedded in *The Village by the Sea*. It enhances one's understanding and appreciation of the shared human experience, which, despite alienation, brings forth a ray of hope.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphors in Literature, Anita Desai, The Village, The Sea, Thul-The Coastal Village, Lila, Hari, life, Inner Conflicts.

Conceptual Metaphors in Literature

"Conceptual Metaphors are not in language, but in thought; they are part of the conceptual system of the mind." (Lakoff, 1993). George Philip Lakoff the American cognitive linguist claims that metaphors are not just decorative words. They live in thought first, and then appear in language. It is understood that physical images express psychological status of a living being as an abstract experience is understood in terms of concrete ones. These are not just linguistic devices but are fundamentals to shape one's understanding of life, social structure, and world in simple terms that gives insight to actually act and grasp in accordance with the metaphors.

This academic review focuses on how Anita Desai used the concrete imageries to imprint certain aspects of abstract ideas, as one comes across with conceptual metaphors found in Coastal Village, Lila, Hari, and his inner conflicts. The following befitting conceptual metaphors regarding the *The Village by the Sea* would enable reader to comprehend it in detail the ideas in terms of another one in a more familiar way. They reflect how our minds comprehend abstract realities of struggle, alienation etc., through concrete objects of mirror, shared net, anchor, oil, soil, candle etc., with textual evidence of direct quotes, contexts and support of self-interpretation.

Anita Mazumdar Desai

Anita Desai - a celebrated Indian-English novelist is known as the mother of the Indian psychological novel genre. Her writing is a rich field for Conceptual Metaphors and consistently uses concrete, sensory images like nature, villages, cityscapes, and objects to represent her characters. As the sayings of Lakoff, "Conceptual Metaphors are part of the mind", Desai used concrete images in her *The Village by the Sea* and did not illustrate them in abstract words but experienced through vivid metaphors that mirror human thought itself.

She depicts a diverse range of cultural and socioeconomic factors and psychological struggles those deeply affect her male main character, leading to themes of isolation and disintegration.

Desai's subtle and detailed projection of this personality provides certain insights into the intricate relationship between personal psychology and the larger socio-cultural environment. Her purpose of writing the novel *The Village by the Sea*, is skilfully to portray the challenges faced by Hari as he traverses a swiftly evolving Indian culture. This character grapples with the conflicts between traditional values and contemporary influences, as well as the clash between his own aspirations and social norms throughout this perseverance filled with responsibility.

Anita Desai is an Artist of Emotional World

Desai paints pictures of inner scenes, where tangible silence speaks volumes; the style of her narration turns abstract feelings into colourful and visible images. She portrays inner lives and struggles of ordinary characters, often through vivid metaphors and imagery. This metaphor exhibits her expertise to draw the unseen territory of the human head and heart, more than an artist capturing a picture of an outer world. She texts more of her internal feelings – fear, longing, loneliness, and invisible emotions upon the protagonist unto visible words of metaphorical world in the following contextual expressions;

> Lila, who was only thirteen, had to be the mother of the house." and "Her brother Hari, only twelve was thin and wiry, his ribs showed through the holes in his vest, but he was already the head of the family.

Desai introduces the family by setting the scene how the children at young age carry out the premature burden of responsibilities at home.

> Hari led his father home, leaning heavily upon him, heavy and cold with drink.

She shows how Hari brings his drunken father home: his premature role as head of the family, carrying the burden of his father's weakness.

> He lay awake that night, turning from side to side in a storm of unhappiness and longing.

This version indicates Hari's inner turmoil, tension, sleeplessness, mental storm, and stress. He cannot sleep, his mind is restless and his longing to escape Thul grows stronger.

> He felt his heart pound with fierce hope and at the same time, a heavy sense of fear pressed upon him.

She narrates Hari as torn between hope for a future and fear of failure.

The Village Is the Sea

The title of the novel itself blends village with sea, making the sea lifeblood of Thul - the rural area. This novel is framed by conceptual metaphors' A fictional novel brings children struggling with poverty out has won the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize. Desai also has shown her strong and deep-down expressions of poverty, rural life in India, the struggle of fishing community at coastal belt and inner afflictions of Hari the male protagonist.

She spotlights Hari 12-year-old boy a child labourer feels and behaves as a man who witnessed the practical struggles of his family. He could not any more bear the situation at

home. Distressed heart of Hari was confused of his future. The inner turmoil of Hari's emotional struggle pushed himself within to shoulder the responsibility. He goes in search of a work and gets migrated from rural to urban for a better future to run his family. It portrays the mental agony and alienation of Hari the Protagonist.

The Village Is a Fragile Raft

> The men went out, day after day, because they had no choice, even though the sea often gave more death than fish.

Fisherfolk work hard and wait patiently with unending hope for a good catch of fish to meet their day today's need. They are never afraid of natural calamities and are ever ready to face any number of challenges for their daily requisites. They depend on income they earnestly earn from their Mother Sea. The uncertainty of their income is directed by the unpredictable rhythm of the sea, the season, and the weather. Anything can take place at any time. The metaphor highlights the unsafe survival of the people there. It's liable to take place that the family might witness their loved ones' dead bodies instead of fish.

> Hari knew the men's lives depended on the moods of the sea, and the sea had many moods.

Thul is as just as a drifting raft on open water. It can float itself but vulnerable to storms. The identity is the villagers' unity and adaptability as the ropes binding the raft together. The sea and fields act as the forces pulling and pushing it in different directions both traditional livelihoods opposed to pull of advancement.

The Sea is a Silent Witness

> The sea lay stretched out, calm and glittering, as though it had nothing to do with the suffering in the huts on the shore.

The sea is widespread and unchanging. It witnesses human life. It observes the joys, struggles, hopes, aspirations, dreams and sorrows of the village and remains as a silent witness. It knows the reality and does not reveal anything to anyone. It just exists in nature. It doesn't help or harm anyone intentionally. The sea resembles an indifferent eyewitness, mirroring the reality of life and teaching the natives that nature doesn't cause any change in its course for human suffering. The theme of flexibility is deepened by the metaphor that the settlers specially the fisherfolk have learnt to survive without expecting sympathy from others in the natural world.

The Sea Is Both Life-Giver and Destroyer

> The sea gave them their food and their work, and without it, there was nothing for them.

The sea is shown as their daily source of survival. Its pleasant presence adds beauty, serenity, a peaceful atmosphere for one's own soul and body. Just as a mother nourishes her children with nutritious food, the sea provides sustenance, employment, and a way of life for the villagers of Thul. It represents nurturing, survival, safety, and continuity.

> The sea was restless, waves rising as though they would drown them all.

Desai describes restless sea during the monsoon and dangerous face of the sea for the fishermen. It occurs when a storm lashes Thul. Every one there watches in fear. Because the same sea provides fish and feeds them. It also threatens their lives with storms, drowning, and endangerment with unsteady waves, symbolising nature's both powers of nurturing and ruining. It shows the contrast between dependence on the sea for food and fear of the sea as destroyer, epitomizing economic struggle and uncertainty.

Thul Is a Mirror of Struggle

> The village of Thul was a small fishing village, made up of mud and palm-thatched huts, with the sea in front of it and the barren, rocky hills behind.

Thul is a central setting of the play *The Village by the Sea*. The parched land reflects poverty and lack of opportunities. The village of Thul lay between the sea on one side and the hills on the other. The huts of the other fishermen stood in a row facing the sea, their coconut palms standing tall and frail behind them. It is a small fishing and farming village on the western coast of India, near Bombay. It remains unnoticed, isolated, and constantly at the mercy of larger forces like economic change, environmental challenge and urban influence. Some of the villagers used to work as farmers in the monsoon season. These expose the vulnerability and instability of Thul. It lies between survival and loss, hope and despair. Nature often symbolizes the villagers' hardships.

Life In the Village Is a Shared Net

> The men went down to the beach to haul in the nets, while the women mended the torn ones, their fingers flying as they knotted and wove.

Living together is like fishing net. The members of the village are connected with each other. The whole village wait for the boats to come in. The metaphor here suggests that life here is communal, fragile and deeply interconnected. Just as each knot and thread makes the net stronger, each person in Thul, irrespective of their genders – whether engaged in fishing, mending the nets, or caring for children- contributes for their survival. Desai stipulates skill and speed of the women in the phrase 'fingers flying', turning ordinary manual work into something almost artistic and natural.

There is a mutual bond found in every family. A person's suffering affects the entire family and village just as one knot breaks, the whole net weakens. The joys and sorrows of a person affect all others in the vicinity. It is clear each individual is aware of the happenings of one another. It reflects that partaking in the wellness of others doubles the happiness and binds them together. It concludes every one of the family members wait for the return of their brave warriors (fishermen) after their exposure unto the scorching sun and downpours in the sea for night and day.

Lila Is the Oil That Keeps the Lamp Burning

> She never complained, never cried, never rebelled, but worked patiently, day after day, to hold the family together.

It was Lila who cooked the food, washed the clothes, looked after Bela and Kamal, and even saw to it their bedridden mother was cared. She is quite responsible with inner strength. Her unwavering presence provides emotional light and radiates graceful guidance in a disturbed household dominated by alcoholic father, bedridden mother, and prevailing poverty.

> You look after the nets, Hari. I will see to Bela and Kamal.

Lila wanted to lighten the heaviness of Hari's heart. She encourages Hari for taking care of the fishing net in-order-to-get some money to meet the daily expenses at home. She as a matured willingly accepts the added responsibilities of caring her younger ones.

Lila Is an Anchor at Home

> Her eyes followed each of them, to hold them together as best she could, for the family was like a pot that had cracked and might fall apart at any moment.

A boat is steady when it is anchored in spite of its rough waters and roaring wind. Lila sacrifices her time and energy and holds everyone together by handling an adult's duties at home. She sustains stability, continuity, and resilience, like an anchor steadies a boat, Lila prevents the family from drifting into chaos.

Hari Is a Seed Searching for Good Soil

A seed needs a fertile land to grow. Hari feels suffocated in Thul, where poverty and lack of occasion stunt his growth. He realised that Thul neither offer any opportunity nor sustain his growth for any development. He longed to be away from stagnation of debts, anxiety, and illness etc., He looks for a productive ground to be sown and sprouted into bearing fruits of fetching income to sustain the future of his family.

> I'm thinking of going away. There is no work here.

Hari is exposed to the routine way of facing the days with the same situations in Thul. Literally there was nil improvement found in the lives of people with whom he was exposed to and all who came in contact with. He could not see any newness in his past years of his stay neither at home nor in his village - every day seems to be the same: the sea, the nets, the hunger, and the noise at home.

> If I stay here, we will all starve. I must go there is no other way.

Hari's childhood innocence dissolves as responsibility overwhelms him. A vague thought voiced aloud, while pondering the struggle of the family. He first disclosed his desire of leaving away almost in a whisper, as he had no other means to meet his daily demands at home. It shows his inner turmoil and restlessness.

It reveals also the seed of migration with push and pulls factors for a better opportunity as he is drawn into forces like poverty and deprivation. It indicates Desai's way of showing how migration becomes a metaphor for hope and despair too.

Hari Is a Broken Branch of a Tree

> Hari often feels cut off – from his childhood, from school, and even from his family's strength. When he lies awake at night, "his heart pounding like a drum in a storm,

A broken branch no longer receives nourishment from a tree. Hari feels as a branch snapped off a tree, separated, lifeless, and disconnected. He witnessed daily harshness of his situation

at home and got sickened with his father's drunkenness. He was burdened and felt going to the school was useless when there were many mouths waiting to be fed by him. He is cut off from safety, security, stability, and guidance especially from his alcoholic father, sickly mother, siblings, family, friends, and village at large. A broken branch can be carried away by the wind.

> he feels alone in the burden of being "the head of the family" despite being only a boy.

He mentally and emotionally seems to be helpless as his immature heart and head were worried beyond his age with pressure for the survival of his family.

Life Is A Journey

Hari the young boy resolves to himself in reflection and made a firm personal resolution of leaving his home alone to work and support his family. His literal and emotional movement from childhood to maturity transforms physical travel into a metaphor of emotional development.

> If only I could go away, earn some money, and send it home. There is no work here, nothing. But in Bombay I might find something. Then life could be different for all of us.

It's befitting to notice the statement of Desai that Hari's inner struggle turns him to make a decision. His journey is no longer an idea but a necessity. He was determined and made a silent vow for leaving his village which is imagined not as abandonment but as a path to survive in a better manner for himself and his family. He voiced to Lila out his dream of earning and sending money back. His necessity is such that he yearns for an opportunity to earn and gain any sort of financial support. He dreams of Bombay as a place to find work and build a future. When Hari leaves for Bombay, the narration reminds us:

> His sisters were left to manage hut, the cooking, and their sick mother.

As Hari was away from his home the concern for his siblings continued and wondered if Lila was managing home without him, and the thoughts about them made him restless. He knows that Lila will be left alone to attend on the affairs of the family as he leaves his hometown. Definitely Lila would miss Hari a lot and vice versa for Lila used to attend on him too. The heart touching expression of knowing the condition of Lila his sister with whom he discusses and discerns the plans for running their family. So, Hari assures her that he would be able to manage himself and not to feel his Howa bouts in an unfamiliar place.

Alienation Is Distance

> The crowds pushed past him as if he were invisible.

It is the very heart of Anita Desai who wrote about the experience of Hari's emotional separation from his deep-rooted relationship of his own hometown, makes him alienated time to time. Hari from a rural life at Thul a small fishing community- a place of serene with a strong sense of communal life is exposed to an urban situation in Bombay with overcrowding and fast-paced lifestyle. He feels small and alienated upon arriving Bombay a city filled with hustle and bustle of the day. The boy of an adolescent age with his flickering sensitivity felt he was fragmented and unnoticed in the overstuffed place. He feels isolated with the physical closeness of the crowd which contrasts with the psychological distance. He felt strangely

alone, even in the crowded- lanes, as if the city pushed him away from it, keeping him apart from others. He experiences deep alienation in Bombay; as Desai shows, his emotions appear "broken and scattered".

Hari Is a Fragmented Self

Hari felt a lot in Bombay as a stranger in an unknown place. He was rejected by many without getting a job. He felt lonely. Things are different from his perspective, with the experience of his traditional life followed by modernity. He was yet to get adapted to the new place which was quite an ordeal task. Keeping in mind his utter need, he looked for a place to lay his head down and enquired for an employment by speaking to strangers and searching for it.

> Where is the market? I need work.

Hari wanders round the city for a safe place which would keep him engaged to spend his initial days for a stay to carry on with. He is desperate in begging for any work. He is determined in his emotional fragmentation and appealed to Jagu, a kind restaurant owner in Bombay,

> I can work hard, uncle." Hari pleaded. "Please give me something to do.

Hari's inner struggle pushes him forward. His fragmented feelings of fear, anxiety and loneliness drive him to seek out for his identity and agency in Bombay. He diverts his mixed and disturbed feelings towards a vision of hope with which he would return home one day and earn for his family with renewed enthusiasm and determination. His broken self is patched by the thought of family, especially Lila, by speaking his thoughts aloud

> If I earn, I can send it home to Lila. She will manage somehow.

Hari Is a Melting Candle

> Hari lies awake at night, "his heart pounding like a drum in a storm." "Weighed down by fear, hunger, and responsibility, He feels his strength burn away in worry

As a physical object losing its form and energy, Hari burns himself to give the light of support to his family. His energy melts away in the process, showing his fragmentation and vulnerability. But just as a candle gives light while burning down, his suffering illuminates hope for his sisters' survival. Hari collected his fragmented feelings. He is exhausted by working so hard from morning till afternoon. Moments of reflection makes him to recollect loudly as a matured man found in an adolescent mind filled with inner conflicts. Alienation is "being cut off" visualised as a broken branch.

Work Cited

Desai, Anita. The Village by the Sea. London: Heinemann Educational BOOKS, 1982. ISBN 0-434-93436-4.

Lakoff, George. "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor." *Metaphor and Thought*. edited by Andrew Ortony, 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.208.

Milligan, Ian. *The Novel in English, An Introduction.* Macmillan International College Edition, 1983, Printed in Hong Kong, ISBN 0-333-32439-0

Reconfiguring the Archive: Indigenous Oral Traditions and Social Media as Sites of Narrative Sovereignty

Prerana Sana

Abstract

This literature review explores how Indigenous authors and storytellers utilize social media platforms as living, dynamic archives that challenge the authority of colonial literary and historical repositories. Focusing on platforms such as TikTok, Twitter (X), Instagram, Facebook, and Indigenous-specific projects like FirstVoices and the Tuyang Initiative, this review synthesizes interdisciplinary research across Indigenous media studies, archival theory, and digital humanities. Case studies from Indigenous communities in the Americas, Australia, Canada, and Southeast Asia demonstrate how digital storytelling is deployed not only to preserve oral traditions and cultural memory but also as a strategic act of resistance and survivance. The review also identifies the affordances and limitations of platform-specific features and examines how Indigenous users assert narrative sovereignty, decolonize temporality, and reconfigure the archive as a participatory and performative space. This study concludes by highlighting challenges such as cultural appropriation, algorithmic bias, and digital colonialism while proposing future research directions in global Indigenous digital archiving practices.

Keywords: Digital Storytelling, Indigenous Archives, Counter-Colonial Strategies, Narrative Sovereignty, Social Media Archiving

Introduction

Storytelling—especially oral storytelling—has long been central to Indigenous epistemologies, cultural transmission, and identity formation. Yet, traditional Western archives, rooted in colonial epistemologies, have historically excluded or misrepresented Indigenous voices. In this context, the rise of digital platforms offers unprecedented opportunities for Indigenous communities to reclaim narrative sovereignty, preserve cultural expressions, and resist settler-colonial erasure. This literature review investigates how Indigenous authors and storytellers are transforming social media platforms into counter-colonial archives. By embracing visual, oral, embodied, and participatory storytelling across TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter/X, and regional projects like FirstVoices and the Tuyang Initiative, these communities are actively redefining what an archive can be and who has the right to curate, tell, and transmit stories.

Indigenous Epistemologies and the Colonial Archive

Archival Silencing

Colonial literary and historical archives have long functioned as instruments of epistemic authority, shaping what is recorded, how it is categorized, and who is granted the power to narrate. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot argues, archives are not passive storehouses but active sites of "silencing," where omission, distortion, and privileging constitute acts of historical production. In the context of Indigenous histories, this has resulted in a profound asymmetry: oral narratives—cyclical, performative, relational, and rooted in place—were often excluded from archival legitimacy, replaced or reframed through settler-colonial documentary practices. Jacques Derrida's notion of "archival violence" in *Archive Fever* underscores this dynamic: to archive is to impose a law (*nomos*) on memory, defining not only what is preserved but also

the conditions under which it may be accessed and interpreted. This legalistic control has historically served the colonial project, transforming Indigenous epistemologies into extractable "data" stripped from the communities that generated them. Michelle Caswell's concept of "symbolic annihilation" extends this critique into the present, describing how archives that exclude or misrepresent communities enact a form of cultural erasure that is as damaging as physical dispossession.

For Indigenous storytellers, the violence is not only in absence but in the flattening of narrative form. Oral traditions—rich in performative variation, responsive to audience and environment—are ill-suited to the fixed, textual permanence prized by Western archival logic. The result is a distortion of both content and meaning: songs transcribed without their melodic contours, myths reduced to prose without gesture or intonation, and ceremonial narratives extracted from the seasonal or ritual contexts that give them significance.

Decolonizing the Archive

Against this backdrop, Indigenous media theorists and archivists have argued for a radical redefinition of what constitutes an archive. Amy Lonetree calls for decolonizing museums and archives by returning interpretive authority to Indigenous communities, while Angela Haas reframes Indigenous intellectual traditions—such as wampum belts—as pre-digital hypertext systems, capable of encoding relational knowledge across generations. These approaches reject the binary between "oral" and "archival," insisting instead that performance, landscape, and embodied knowledge can themselves be archival media.

In this decolonial framework, the archive is reconceptualized as a living, participatory space that is co-authored, communally validated, and embedded in land-based epistemologies. Digital platforms—particularly those enabling multimedia storytelling—can function as such spaces, provided they operate under principles of Indigenous data sovereignty. Initiatives like the FirstVoices language archive and the Tuyang Initiative in Borneo illustrate how communities can design and govern their own digital repositories, integrating audio, video, and text in ways that preserve performance context and cultural authority.

Here, the act of archiving becomes an act of resurgence: reclaiming the right to curate, interpret, and transmit cultural memory without mediation by colonial institutions. In this sense, social media is not merely a tool of dissemination but a political and epistemic arena where Indigenous peoples contest the "terms of recognition" imposed by settler-colonial systems, and instead assert narrative sovereignty on their own terms.

Key Themes in Social Media Archiving by Indigenous Storytellers

Storytelling as Resistance and Survivance

Gerald Vizenor's concept of *survivance* —a fusion of survival and resistance— offers a powerful lens for understanding Indigenous storytelling on social media. On platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X, and Facebook, storytelling becomes a political intervention as much as a cultural practice. Through short-form videos, memes, spoken-word performances, and multilingual captions, Indigenous creators reframe historical narratives, subvert stereotypes, and foreground living cultural practices. Viral trends are repurposed to teach language, narrate local histories, and assert land-based identity.

Participatory and Community-Based Archiving

Unlike traditional archives, which centralize authority and privilege preservation over participation, social media platforms enable distributed custodianship. Posts can be commented on, remixed, duetted, or stitched, transforming the archive into a collaborative process of meaning-making. This participatory dimension mirrors the structure of many oral traditions, where knowledge transmission is collective, iterative, and responsive to the needs of the moment. Projects like FirstVoices formalize this participatory ethos by bringing elders, youth,

and linguists together to record and transcribe endangered languages. Unlike colonial archives that often treat Indigenous languages as "specimens," these projects position language as an active, lived medium—anchored in community use rather than museum display.

Ephemerality and Oral Continuity

One of the most striking resonances between Indigenous oral traditions and social media lies in the embrace of ephemerality. Instagram Stories, Snapchat posts, and TikTok videos are designed to be fleeting, accessible for only a short period before disappearing—or at least slipping into obscurity. Far from being a limitation, this quality aligns closely with the temporality of oral performance, which is renewed through retelling rather than fixed for eternity. Ephemeral content resists the archival obsession with permanence that underpins Western historical thought.

For Indigenous communities, this can mean that certain narratives or ceremonial knowledge remain context-bound—shared only at specific times, by specific people, and in specific ways—while still reaching relevant audiences. In this way, the affordances of the platform echo the protocols of oral tradition, where knowledge is often seasonal, situational, and relational. Importantly, digital ephemerality is not the same as erasure. Many Indigenous creators archive their own Stories or repost seasonal content annually, creating cyclical patterns of circulation that replicate oral cycles of repetition and variation. The result is a form of digital orature: performative, temporally bound, and resistant to extraction from its cultural logic.

Platform-Specific Case Studies and Analysis

A. TikTok and Youth-Led Cultural Revitalization

Indigenous youth, particularly in Canada and among Māori and Anishinaabe communities, are using TikTok to revitalize cultural practices. TikTok has emerged as a dynamic site for Indigenous youth to merge tradition with contemporary trends, often in ways that collapse the binary between "heritage" and "popular culture." Creators such as James Jones (@notoriouscree) blend traditional hoop dancing with hip-hop and electronic music, embedding layers of cultural meaning within formats optimized for virality.

The platform's duet and stitch features function as digital call-and-response mechanisms, enabling viewers to join in, re-perform, or add commentary. This interactive format echoes the participatory dynamics of traditional storytelling circles, where listeners contribute to or reshape the narrative in real time. By facilitating visual, aural, and performative engagement, TikTok allows Indigenous creators to embed cultural teachings—such as protocols for ceremonies, stories of land and ancestors, or lessons in language—within content designed for rapid, wide circulation.

B. #NativeTwitter and Decentralized Archival Networks

Twitter/X functions less as a linear feed and more as a living, decentralized archive where cultural memory, activism, and humor intersect. Through hashtags like #NativeTwitter Indigenous users collectively document resistance to land dispossession, environmental destruction, and cultural appropriation, while also circulating language resources, oral histories, and community news.

Retweets act as a form of communal citation, allowing posts to be preserved and amplified beyond their original context. Hashtags operate as metadata tags, making threads retrievable in the future and thus functioning as informal indexing systems for Indigenous digital memory. This fluid, crowd-sourced archival structure mirrors the distributed custodianship found in oral traditions, where multiple keepers share responsibility for transmitting knowledge. The flexibility of the medium also allows for strategic tone shifts—from sharp political commentary to satirical memes—without diluting the archival function. In

doing so, #NativeTwitter enacts what Vizenor calls "survivance" not only through content but also through its refusal to adopt the solemnity of colonial archival forms.

C. Instagram and Visual Sovereignty

Instagram operates as a curated visual archive, enabling Indigenous creators to assert aesthetic and narrative control over their representation. Indigenous creators such as @shinanova and @UrbanNativeEra reclaim visual representation through fashion, performance, and land-based imagery. These profiles operate as curated exhibitions of cultural aesthetics and Indigenous futurism.

The Stories and Highlights features allow for cyclical storytelling: performances can be posted, disappear, and then return seasonally or thematically, mirroring the non-linear temporality of oral traditions. By emphasizing self-representation, Instagram becomes a counterpoint to the "documentary gaze" that historically objectified Indigenous peoples. Here, the gaze is inverted; communities decide what is shown, how it is framed, and when it is removed from public view. This visual sovereignty disrupts the archival fixation on permanence, offering a model for culturally adaptive, self-governed digital archives.

D. Facebook as Intergenerational Archive

In many Indigenous communities, particularly in rural or remote areas, Facebook remains the most accessible and widely used platform for intergenerational communication. Closed or invitation-only groups function as archives for community announcements, ceremonial dates, language resources, and land defense updates. The platform's group structure allows elders, activists, and educators to curate a repository of posts that can be retrieved months or years later, even as they are continually updated with new material. This ongoing refreshment of content creates a living record that aligns with oral traditions, where the archive is not static but accumulative.

In communities such as the Navajo Nation, closed Facebook groups serve as archives for land defense updates, language resources, tribal meetings, and ceremonial announcements. These spaces are curated with localized authority and kinship values.

E. FirstVoices and Linguistic Archiving

FirstVoices exemplifies how Indigenous-controlled platforms can bridge oral traditions with digital preservation in a way that resists colonial archival paradigms. Developed by the First Peoples' Cultural Council, the platform enables communities to record, transcribe, and share endangered languages through audio, video, and text entries. Elders and youth collaborate to record and archive endangered languages.

Crucially, access protocols are determined by the communities themselves, allowing certain materials to be made public while others remain restricted to specific members. This aligns with Indigenous knowledge governance models, which distinguish between general cultural knowledge and knowledge bound by sacred, seasonal, or familial protocols. By integrating community control with high-quality digital tools, FirstVoices demonstrates how linguistic archiving can support both preservation and revitalization, positioning language as an active medium for contemporary cultural expression rather than a relic of the past.

F. Tuyang Initiative and Bundusan Books in Malaysia

In Sabah and Sarawak, initiatives like Tuyang and Bundusan Books are digitizing oral traditions from Indigenous Bornean communities, including folktales, epics, and songs. These projects combine field recordings, transcriptions, and multimedia adaptations to make traditional narratives accessible to younger audiences both locally and in the diaspora. By presenting stories in bilingual formats and using mobile-friendly distribution, they ensure that oral heritage is not only preserved but also adaptable to contemporary consumption patterns. Importantly, these projects are rooted in community collaboration—storytellers, translators,

and digital designers work together to ensure cultural accuracy and respect for narrative protocols.

Such regionally grounded initiatives highlight that digital archiving is not a one-size-fits-all process; it must be attuned to the linguistic, political, and infrastructural realities of specific communities. In doing so, they expand the global scope of Indigenous digital storytelling while maintaining local narrative sovereignty.

Challenges and Risks in Indigenous Digital Archiving

A. Digital Colonialism

The infrastructures underpinning social media platforms are owned and governed by multinational corporations whose business models rely on data extraction, surveillance, and targeted advertising. As Nick Couldry and Ulises Mejias (2019) argue, such systems constitute a new form of "data colonialism," where user-generated content becomes a resource to be monetized, often without the informed consent or benefit of the communities that produce it.

For Indigenous digital storytellers, this means that content—whether ceremonial performances, linguistic recordings, or visual narratives—can be subjected to corporate exploitation, algorithmic manipulation, or sudden removal. Even Indigenous-led projects like FirstVoices must contend with hosting and security challenges, ensuring that cultural materials remain under community governance rather than corporate jurisdiction.

B. Cultural Appropriation and Misrepresentation

Public-facing digital archives, by their very accessibility, are vulnerable to appropriation, decontextualization, and distortion. Cultural symbols, stories, or performances shared online can be extracted from their epistemic frameworks, commodified in fashion or entertainment industries, or misused in contexts that violate cultural protocols.

The viral nature of social media exacerbates this risk: an image, song, or dance can circulate globally without attribution or permission, severed from the cultural obligations and responsibilities that govern its use. This not only undermines the authority of the community but can also inflict symbolic harm, reinforcing stereotypes or erasing the complexity of Indigenous lifeworlds.

C. Access and Infrastructure Gaps

Despite the global reach of digital platforms, significant disparities in internet infrastructure, affordability, and digital literacy persist within many Indigenous communities. Rural and remote areas may face unreliable connections, high data costs, or limited access to recording equipment, constraining participation in digital archiving.

Moreover, even when access is available, platform design often assumes certain levels of technical proficiency, privileging users with prior exposure to digital editing, metadata tagging, or content moderation. This digital divide risks reinforcing existing inequities, privileging certain communities or individuals as "digital knowledge keepers" while others remain excluded from the archive.

D. Algorithmic Bias and Content Moderation

Platform algorithms—designed to maximize engagement and advertiser profit—often suppress Indigenous content, either by deprioritizing it in feeds or by misclassifying it under harmful or irrelevant categories. Automated moderation systems may flag Indigenous languages as "nonsensical" or remove visual content that includes ceremonial regalia, mistaking it for prohibited imagery.

Such algorithmic erasure is not accidental but reflects the epistemic bias embedded in platform governance, which privileges dominant cultural norms and linguistic patterns. As a result, the visibility of Indigenous content often depends on strategic adaptation to platform

logics—using trending sounds, hashtags, or formats—even when such adaptations conflict with cultural priorities or narrative protocols.

E. Ethical and Protocol Considerations

Indigenous knowledge systems often distinguish between information that is public, restricted, or sacred. The open, shareable nature of most social media platforms makes it challenging to enforce such distinctions, especially when content is shared beyond its intended audience.

Without robust digital governance tools—such as granular access controls, metadata indicating cultural protocols, or community-based moderation—platforms risk collapsing these distinctions, leading to unintentional breaches of protocol. This raises the ethical imperative for digital archiving projects to embed cultural governance into platform design, ensuring that control over content circulation remains with the community.

Conclusion

Social media platforms have evolved into dynamic arenas for Indigenous storytelling, identity assertion, and archival activism. Far from being passive tools, these platforms offer Indigenous communities the ability to shape, share, and preserve their stories on their own terms. Through practices of narrative sovereignty, language reclamation, and digital performance, Indigenous creators transform platforms into living, evolving archives that resist colonial erasure and assert presence, memory, and futurity. Hashtag networks function as metadata for counter-colonial historiography; short-form videos and livestreams become performative acts of cultural resurgence; curated image feeds reclaim aesthetic sovereignty from the documentary gaze. As digital storytelling continues to evolve, it not only reconfigures what counts as an archive but also redefines who holds the power to tell, preserve, and interpret stories. In this sense, social media is not merely a platform but a political terrain—one where the act of telling a story is also an act of keeping a people, a language, and a world alive.

References

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Beacon Press, 1995.

Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Caswell, Michelle. “Seeing Yourself in History: Community Archives and the Fight against Symbolic Annihilation.” *The Public Historian*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2014, pp. 26–37. University of California Press. doi:10.1525/tph.2014.36.4.26

Haas, Angela M. “Wampum as Hypertext: An American Indian Intellectual Tradition of Multimedia Theory and Practice.” *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, vol. 19, no. 4, 2007, pp. 77–100.

Lonetree, Amy. *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

Vizenor, Gerald R. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

First Peoples’ Cultural Council. *FirstVoices*. www.firstvoices.com. Accessed 15 Aug. 2025.

Rice, Emma S., Elizabeth Haynes, Penelope Royce, and Sandra C. Thompson. “Social Media and Digital Technology Use among Indigenous Young People in Australia: A Literature Review.” *International Journal for Equity in Health*, vol. 15, no. 81, 2016, pp. 1– BioMed Central, doi:10.1186/s12939-016-0366-0.

Saad, Siti, P. L. Wediyantoro, and A. N. F. Zolkifli. “Cultural Preservation in the Digital Age: The Future of Indigenous Folktales and Legends.” *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 2024, doi:10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8090237.

Couldry, Nick, and Ulises A. Mejias. *The Costs of Connection: How Data Is Colonizing Human Life and Appropriating It for Capitalism*. Stanford University Press, 2019. doi:10.1515/9781503609754.

James Jones [@notoriouscree]. "Each Formation Has a Story #native #indigenous." *TikTok*, 25 Nov. 2021, www.tiktok.com/@notoriouscree/video/7034343772393655558?lang=en.

Shina Nova [@shinanova]. "My Mom's Grandmother's Sister Winnie and Alasie Tukalak, We Wouldn't Have Done It without You #katajjaq #throatsinging #inuit." *Instagram*, 8 Apr. 2024, www.instagram.com/p/C5eP-m9pjXb/?hl=en.

Urban Native Era [@urbannativeera]. "Forever and Always Will Be Indigenous Land." *Instagram*, 2 June 2025, www.instagram.com/reel/DKYOUPiypo7/?hl=en.

Displacement and Identity: A Critical Evaluation of VS Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas,* and *The Enigma of Arrival*

G Pushpalatha & Bala Agarwal

Abstract

V.S. Naipaul, the Nobel Prize-winning author, has made a significant contribution to the discourse on identity, postcolonialism, and cultural displacement. This article presents a critical analysis of the recurring themes in Naipaul's literary artwork, with particular emphasis on his nuanced exploration of the quest for personal and cultural identity within a postcolonial framework. The study investigates the psychological and existential struggles of characters negotiating their sense of self amidst diasporic and postcolonial conditions, focusing on seminal works such as *A House for Mr. Biswas*, and *The Enigma of Arrival*. By situating Naipaul's fiction within broader debates on cultural alienation and the search for belonging, this paper aims to illuminate the enduring relevance of his insights into the complexities of identity formation. Ultimately, the analysis underscores how Naipaul's narratives continue to resonate with contemporary issues of displacement, hybridity, and the fragmented postcolonial self.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, Self-identity, diaspora, colonialism, cultural displacement and migration.

Introduction

V.S. Naipaul, born in 1932 in Trinidad to Indian parents, emerged as one of the most influential literary voices of the twentieth century. His works are deeply informed by his complex heritage and personal experiences as a member of the Indo-Caribbean diaspora. Naipaul's literary contributions span across fiction, essays, and travel writing, unified by recurring themes such as identity, displacement, cultural alienation, and the fragility of postcolonial existence.

Growing up in a colonial society, Naipaul grappled with questions of identity and legitimacy—struggles that are often mirrored in his characters, who wrestle with the dissonance of cultural displacement and the lingering effects of imperial domination. His acute observational skill and distinctive narrative voice have earned him both acclaim and criticism. Through his exploration of the human condition, Naipaul articulates a deeply personal yet universally resonant quest for meaning in an increasingly fragmented world.

This article seeks to examine Naipaul's literary legacy by focusing on the central themes that thread through his body of work. It explores how Naipaul articulates personal and cultural identity, interrogates the colonial past, and reflects on diasporic consciousness. A close reading of seminal texts such as *A House for Mr. Biswas*, and *The Enigma of Arrival* offers critical insights into his portrayal of individual and collective struggle within the broader postcolonial context.

The Thematic Ideas present in Naipaul's Works

Searching for Self-Identity

The search for self-identity—a central preoccupation in V.S. Naipaul's literary landscape—is complex, layered, and often marked by turbulence. It is within his narrative, particularly through characters negotiating the legacy of colonialism and the trauma of cultural displacement, that this quest finds its most compelling articulation. Naipaul's narrative self,

shaped by the diasporic consciousness of the Indian community, reflects the broader human endeavor to construct a coherent sense of self in a fragmented and uncertain world.

Quest Identity is most vividly portrayed in *A House for Mr. Biswas*, where the protagonist, Mohun Biswas, embodies the struggle for autonomy and self-definition within a society burdened by colonial inheritance and restrictive familial expectations. His persistent desire to own a house becomes a metaphor for his deeper longing for identity, security, and individuality—a personal assertion against the forces of cultural conformity and communal obligation. Yet, this pursuit is fraught with internal conflict, a tension that recurs across Naipaul's artwork.

In, *The Enigma of Arrival*, a semi-autobiographical narrative, offers a more introspective rendering of identity formation. The protagonist, closely aligned with Naipaul himself, navigates a landscape of cultural alienation in England, where his residual Caribbean identity collides with the pressures of assimilation. The novel captures the dissonance, ambiguity, and nostalgia that often define the diasporic condition, highlighting how identity is less a product of free will and more an inheritance shaped by historical, geographical, and cultural contingencies.

Naipaul's protagonists are frequently confronted with the harsh reality of fractured identities, exposing how identity is not a wholly autonomous construct but a product of enduring social and historical forces. His fiction challenges readers to reconsider their own notions of selfhood and the myriad influences—colonial, familial, cultural—that shape them. It is this persistent quest for identity that renders Naipaul's work universally resonant. His exploration of the individual's search for belonging in an alienating and divided world mirrors the broader human struggle to find coherence and meaning amidst modernity's contradictions. In illuminating these intricacies, Naipaul's narratives continue to engage readers seeking to understand themselves within the shifting contours of contemporary life.

Colonial Heritage and Its Effects

The colonial heritage forms a central pillar in the thematic architecture of V.S. Naipaul's literary artwork, shaping both the geographical spaces his works inhabit and the psychological contours of his characters. Born in Trinidad into a society indelibly marked by British colonial rule, Naipaul's perspective emerges from the vantage point of the postcolonial subject—an individual negotiating inherited systems of power, culture, and identity. His works interrogate the lingering influence of colonial structures, posing critical questions about how the past continues to permeate and define the postcolonial present.

In *A House for Mr. Biswas*, Naipaul constructs a microcosm of postcolonial society through the life of Mohun Biswas, whose personal struggles symbolize the broader sociocultural dissonances of a colonially-influenced world. Biswas's quest for a house becomes emblematic of a deeper yearning for self-definition and autonomy, yet this journey unfolds within a framework heavily burdened by colonial inheritance. The protagonist, shaped by family and societal ideologies rooted in colonial values, exemplifies the paradox of striving for individual agency within systems built to suppress it. Through Biswas, Naipaul illustrates the complexity of seeking personal fulfillment in a society structured by inherited hierarchies and economic disparities—imbalances birthed by and embedded in the colonial experience.

Naipaul's engagement with colonial aftermath is not confined to fiction; it extends into his travel writings, such as *India: A Wounded Civilization*. Here, he explores the socio-cultural disarray wrought by colonial disruption and the difficulties faced by nations in reconciling modernity with tradition. His analysis of India reveals the psychic and institutional injuries of colonialism, particularly the sense of cultural displacement and paralysis that hampers progressive development. With a critical yet observant eye, Naipaul underscores the cyclical nature of power imbalances that continue to persist in former colonies.

Throughout his work, Naipaul traces the residual trauma of colonialism, depicting characters and societies navigating the fissures between aspiration and limitation. The contradictions embedded in postcolonial life—between the desire for progress and the burden of historical injustice—resurface repeatedly in his narratives. These tensions are not merely individual; they reflect the broader socio-political dilemmas faced by nations grappling with the legacies of empire.

In Naipaul's literary corpus serves as a sobering meditation on the enduring consequences of colonial rule. His fiction and non-fiction alike invite readers to reflect on how historical forces shape personal identities, societal structures, and national destinies. In illuminating the complexities of postcolonial existence, Naipaul offers a nuanced understanding of how the past continues to define the contours of the present and the struggles inherent in forging a future free from its shadows.

Diaspora and Cultural Displacement

Diaspora and cultural displacement stand as some of the most compelling and complex themes within V.S. Naipaul's literary canon, probing the psychological, emotional, and existential struggles of individuals suspended between multiple cultural identities. Naipaul's own life exemplifies the intricacies of the diasporic condition: born in Trinidad to Indian parents and later settling in England, he experienced the layered dissonance of living across three distinct cultural spheres. This triadic cultural inheritance informs much of his narrative voice, imbuing his characters with a shared burden of alienation, nostalgia, and the persistent quest for belonging.

In *The Enigma of Arrival*, Naipaul presents a deeply introspective portrayal of cultural displacement through the lens of a semi-autobiographical narrator. Set in the English countryside, the novel captures the protagonist's inner struggle to reconcile his Caribbean background with the unfamiliarity and subtle estrangement of his new environment. The text meditates on themes of exile and the disjuncture between memory and immediate reality. The narrator's journey illustrates the emotional turbulence that defines diasporic identity—where the pull of a distant homeland competes with the need to anchor oneself in an alien cultural landscape. The result is a profound sense of rootlessness, reflecting the broader diasporic condition as one of fragmentation and deferred belonging.

Naipaul extends this meditation on identity in *A House for Mr. Biswas*, where the diasporic experience is filtered through the life of Mohun Biswas, a descendant of Indian indentured laborers in Trinidad. Biswas's struggles encapsulate the broader dilemmas faced by the Indo-Caribbean community: negotiating between inherited cultural traditions and the dominant colonial ideologies of the West. The novel poignantly illustrates how identity within the diaspora is often forged in the crucible of hybridity, where conflicting values and expectations vie for dominance. Characters are seen contending with the burden of cultural inheritance while simultaneously striving for self-determination in a society that marginalizes them. In this way, Naipaul's fiction becomes a microcosm of the diasporic struggle—one marked by contradictions, longing, and resilience.

Naipaul's non-fiction further reinforces these themes, particularly in travelogues like *Among the Believers* and *Beyond Belief*. In these works, Naipaul engages with the diasporic consciousness across Muslim societies, examining how individuals grapple with issues of faith, modernity, and identity in the wake of colonialism and globalization. His incisive observations reveal the psychological dissonance caused by cultural displacement and the ensuing identity crises that afflict individuals and communities alike. The process of migration, he suggests, often triggers a collapse of familiar structures, leaving individuals caught in a liminal space—detached from the past yet not fully integrated into the present.

Naipaul's exploration of diaspora and cultural displacement thus captures the fluid and often contradictory nature of identity in a globalized world. His characters, whether fictional

or observed in real-life encounters, frequently embody the condition of exile—emotionally burdened, spiritually displaced, and struggling to fashion meaning in unfamiliar territories. Their journeys resonate with readers who have encountered similar fractures in their own identities, prompting introspection about what it means to belong and how identities are shaped by historical, cultural, and personal forces.

Ultimately, Naipaul's work offers a powerful commentary on the human condition as it is shaped by diasporic experiences. His treatment of cultural displacement and the longing for belonging underscores a universal human desire for connection and coherence in an increasingly fractured world. By illuminating the emotional and cultural contours of displacement, Naipaul provides a voice to those living between worlds, reminding readers of the profound and ongoing implications of migration, memory, and identity.

An Analysis

A House for Mr. Biswas

V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961) stands as his magnum opus and remains one of the most significant contributions to postcolonial literature. Rooted in the narrative of Mohun Biswas—a man of Indian descent residing in colonial Trinidad—the novel charts his lifelong struggle for autonomy, self-definition, and dignity. More than a personal tale, the novel functions as a microcosmic reflection of the wider postcolonial condition, portraying the emotional and cultural turmoil experienced by individuals navigating the residual legacies of colonialism.

At its core, the novel grapples with the themes of ownership and identity. The titular "house" becomes a potent symbol of individual sovereignty and existential legitimacy. For Mr. Biswas, possessing a home transcends material comfort; it is a declaration of independence and a foundation for personal identity within a fractured and oppressive social framework. In a society shaped by colonial hierarchies and bound by restrictive familial and cultural norms, Biswas's aspiration to own a home becomes a metaphorical quest for belonging an agency for identity.

Naipaul's narrative explores this conflict through his richly developed characters and subtle social commentary. Biswas's complex relationships—particularly with his wife Shama and her domineering Tulsi family—highlight the struggle between individual desire and collective expectation. The tensions between personal aspiration and communal obligation form a recurring motif throughout the novel, illustrating how deeply embedded societal structures limit self-expression in postcolonial contexts. These interactions expose the friction between traditional cultural responsibilities and modern notions of freedom and identity.

The novel's structure further enhances its thematic concerns. Naipaul employs an episodic narrative style that mirrors the fragmented and often chaotic journey of postcolonial identity formation. The prose—deceptively simple yet laced with irony and humor—renders Biswas's experiences both poignant and universal. Through a series of vignettes, Naipaul paints a vivid portrait of Trinidadian society, exposing the intricacies of cultural hybridity, the persistence of colonial mentalities, and the emotional toll of displacement.

Moreover, *A House for Mr. Biswas* resonates with autobiographical undertones, echoing Naipaul's own diasporic experience. Much like Biswas, Naipaul himself belonged to a marginal community—descendants of Indian indentured laborers—and faced the struggle of carving out a distinct identity in a society shaped by British colonialism. The novel's emotional weight lies in its authenticity: the longing for recognition, the disillusionment with inherited systems, and the fragile hope of self-determination all reflect the broader human yearning for belonging in a divided world.

Ultimately, *A House for Mr. Biswas* offers a profound commentary on the individual's quest for meaning in a society governed by historical subjugation and cultural uncertainty. It

stands as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of displacement and marginalization. By combining personal narrative with astute social insight, Naipaul crafts a work of enduring relevance—one that not only explores the contours of postcolonial identity but also speaks to the universal struggle for home, purpose, and selfhood.

The Enigma of Arrival

The Enigma of Arrival (1987), a semi-autobiographical novel by V.S. Naipaul, offers a deeply introspective meditation on themes of identity, migration, and cultural displacement. With a nameless protagonist modeled closely on Naipaul himself, the novel charts the slow emotional and psychological evolution of a diasporic subject as he moves from the Caribbean to England. It is not merely a tale of geographical transition, but an exploration of inner exile, self-perception, and the quiet anguish of cultural estrangement.

At the heart of the novel lies the immigrant experience, imbued with a profound sense of displacement and alienation. The protagonist's attempts to assimilate into the unfamiliar social and cultural milieu of England are met with subtle yet pervasive resistance, leading to a quiet crisis of identity. The narrative evokes the complexities of reconciling one's past with an uncertain present, especially as the protagonist grapples with feelings of nostalgia and the fading echoes of his Caribbean upbringing. The emotional burden of emigration—marked by loss, longing, and an elusive sense of home—is rendered in Naipaul's characteristically restrained yet evocative prose.

The title itself, *The Enigma of Arrival*, underscores the ambiguity of the immigrant journey. Arrival, in this context, is not simply the act of reaching a destination, but an ongoing emotional and intellectual reckoning. It suggests that even physical relocation does not necessarily equate to belonging. The protagonist's interactions with the English landscape and society, often marked by silence and distance, reflect his internal conflict—between the rootedness of memory and the estrangement of the present.

Importantly, the novel extends its inquiry into identity to include the theme of artistic creation. The protagonist's reflections mirror Naipaul's own struggles with writing and authorship in a world fractured by colonial histories and cultural hybridity. Writing, in this novel, becomes a means of survival, a way to reassemble fragmented identities into coherent narratives. It is through the act of narration that the protagonist begins to make sense of his displacement, transforming alienation into insight and expression.

The text also wrestles with the broader existential questions of home and belonging. Naipaul juxtaposes the protagonist's memories of colonial Trinidad with his new life in rural England, underscoring the emotional and cultural tensions of the diasporic experience. The protagonist's journey is not one of triumphant integration but of persistent negotiation, a search for meaning within shifting borders and uncertain allegiances.

Ultimately, *The Enigma of Arrival* stands as a subtle and profound reflection on the immigrant condition. It brings to light Naipaul's deep insights into the fragile construction of identity in a globalized world, where movement often brings not clarity, but further fragmentation. The novel's introspective tone, rich detail, and philosophical depth make it a significant contribution to postcolonial literature. It powerfully illustrates how personal history, cultural memory, and the creative impulse intersect in the ongoing struggle for selfhood amid displacement.

Conclusion

V.S. Naipaul's literary artwork stands as a profound meditation on identity, belonging, and the enduring intricacies of postcolonial existence. Through his intricately developed characters and deeply nuanced narratives, Naipaul addresses the long shadows cast by colonial legacies, the cultural tensions of diaspora, and the personal turmoil of those navigating fractured identities

amid shifting social and political realities. In seminal works such as *A House for Mr. Biswas*, *In a Free State*, and *The Enigma of Arrival*, Naipaul captures the emotional and psychological landscapes of individuals caught between histories and homelands, past and present, tradition and transformation.

Central to Naipaul's achievement is his distinctive narrative voice—marked by precision, clarity, and a sharp ironic edge—which lends depth and resonance to the themes he engages. His ability to penetrate the private realms of his characters, while simultaneously interrogating the larger cultural and historical forces that shape their lives, elevates his writing beyond the personal into the universal. These interwoven layers of individual struggle and collective history challenge dominant narratives, compelling readers to reconsider cultural assumptions and inherited ideologies.

Naipaul's exploration of identity and displacement is not limited to a particular geography or time. Rather, his work speaks powerfully to ongoing global dialogues surrounding migration, hybridity, and belonging. In an age increasingly defined by movement and multiculturalism, Naipaul's portrayals of rootlessness and the quest for selfhood remain urgently relevant. His characters' fragmented journeys mirror those of many in the modern world—individuals seeking coherence in a landscape marked by cultural dissonance and historical rupture.

Ultimately, Naipaul's legacy resides in his unflinching portrayal of the existential dilemmas faced by individuals in postcolonial and diasporic contexts. His ability to draw connections between the personal and the political, between the internal psyche and external structures, grants his narratives a universal quality. Through his introspective and often unsettling examinations of identity, Naipaul not only illuminates the complexities of postcolonial life but also invites readers to reflect on their own place within an ever-evolving global tapestry. As such, he remains an indispensable figure in modern literature—provocative, insightful, and enduring.

Works Cited

Naipaul, V. S. *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Knopf, 1961.
Naipaul, V. S. *The Enigma of Arrival*. Knopf, 1987.
Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. Routledge, 1989.
Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books, 1978.

Investigating Technology-Enhanced Language Learning: Strategies, Impact and Challenges

Rahul More

Abstract

Technology has profoundly contributed in acquiring and procuring information, flourishing human knowledge expeditiously with ease. Ranges of opportunities and challenges have been yielded for both language educators and learners due the availability of modern technologies. Human brain is now well trained developing under new technological development. Technology has pioneered the new way to emphasis, think, memories and remember the innovative concepts in language learning. It is pertinent learning not only a foreign language but also a second language. Technology-enhanced language learning came to prominence due to the contemporary development in education sector. Technology offers people the opportunity to link together countless sources of knowledge and educational resources.

This paper largely emphases on critical role of technology in language learning especially in understanding technology as a felicitator in improving memory and thinking process of human beings. This study will also analyse the approaches learning new language and extemporizing language skills enhanced by technological learning environment. Certain recommendations are also discussed in the end regarding several strategies which can be executed efficiently in acquisition of new language through technology.

Key words: Technology-Enhanced Language Learning, Language Skills, Memory, Strategies

Introduction

The emergence of recent technology has fetched exceptional variations in our lives, and we are witnessing incredible technological progress on daily basis. The impact of technology is inescapable, transmuting the arenas related to human development like education, business, health care, and communication. The access and availability of information is in the blink of an eye due to the introduction of technology in every aspect of human life. Even in the 21st century, technology is a medium of learning by providing valuable and candid varieties of skills, knowledge and even way of thinking.

Human civilization's one of the most significant inventions is language. Language primarily enables human beings to communicate and interact. Not just simply transmit information, language allows us to share our thoughts, convey emotions, and develop social relationships. Languages are the medium to get connected with different cultures around the world. Developing memory and thinking skills is possible through learning a new language. Whilst learning a new language one can advance into new expanses of mind and reinforced the brain's natural ability to concentrate. It has been proven through research studies that the people who are well acquainted with two different languages perform better than those who can speak only one language. Technology has played a vigorous role as a tool to increase the pace of language learning. The rapid evolution in technology has enabled us to examine several latent tactics in learning and teaching languages. The rapid growth of numerous technology-centered pedagogies like gamification, flipped classroom and socio-cultural context had become the important aspect for expanding the ubiquity of technology enhanced language learning.

Conventionally, new language acquisition was frequently a sluggish and grueling process, demanding years of study and persistent practice. Technology-based language learning process detects common errors patterns and offers instantaneous feedback and rectifications, recommendations, which accelerate the learning process. The appropriate use of

technology in language learning is comprehensive and diversified. Technology based applications allow scrutinizing each learner's performance and adjust in a personalized way. Knowingly or reflexively, every language learner uses the variety of tools and techniques, takes different actions and modifies their self-behavior to make their language use or language learning process more effectively and efficient (Cohen, 2011). However, the rapid technological development in the 21st century is creating a new landscape for the modern teaching and learning process. For the successful learning of language strategies, knowledge and practice are critical responsible factors. However, in the modern digital age, there are numerous challenges lying ahead in understanding the new strategies relevant to various digital challenges (Oxford & Schramm, 2007). With the advent of free of the low cost of modern technology and easy accessibility for both teacher and learner, anyone and begin learning language competently and in a personalized manner, provided it should be on a regular and daily basis. Moreover, there is no crystal-clear idea during learning a new language, how the learner or the educator can exceptionally comprehend and connect with the strategies in pioneering and technology (Becker, Rodriguez, Estrada, & Davis, 2016).

Use of technology in developing basic skills of language

In the acquisition of language, the use of technology within and outside the classroom is appealing and stimulating for the learners. Students are transformed into vigorous learners than to be the submissive listeners due to the inclusion of technology in teaching. It also enables teachers to assess and monitor student's evolution on regular basis with systematic obligatory guidance. Technology had a huge impact on the basic skills of language learning like listening, speaking, reading and writing. Let us scrutinize how technology enables students to learn language skills with ease.

Listening

There are various ways to use technology-based media like podcast, interactive online activities, video platforms and specialized language learning apps. Listening is one of the most perplexing aspects of language learning. Many students scuffle with aspects like following natural speech speed, understanding different accents, and distinguishing unfamiliar sounds. While accommodating various proficiency levels within the same classroom, teachers face comparable challenges of providing adequate high quality listening practice for all students. Language labs have transmuted the methods of listening exercises, and can be organized sanctioning for more engaging, personalized, and operational instructions. Rather than passive learning activities, today's technology enables active engagement with audio content, making the learning process more meaningful and productive.

The progression "bottom-up' and "top-down" is promptly promoted by well-known psychologists Eleanor Gibson and James Gibson. These concepts were put forward in the framework of perception and learning. The process of bottom-up allows the perception of sensory input based on data-driven techniques where a perception is built on the basis of understudying raw sensory evidences. In contrast, the top-down approach develops insight based on prior knowledge, self-experience and perspective. It is a concept driven approach where the brain uses prevailing knowledge to understand sensory information. Many of the apps on the internet to develop listening skills are based on the above approaches. Both the approaches are important for effective listening; the bottom-up provides the foundational building blocks and top-down adds the interpretive framework.

While learning listening comprehension, the learner encounters numerous difficulties. The sources of these difficulties are many: the message, the listener, the speaker, physical environment, unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar accent, fast speech rate and so on. Contrarily, Teng (2002) classifies these difficulties into four different factors namely listener factor,

stimulus factor, speaker factor and context factor. So it becomes very crucial for learners to learn to listen first before they can listen and learn. Technology is endowing listening ability and serving as a catalyst in understanding the root cause of listening problems and also providing the most suitable and practical solutions to the problems.

Chang and Chang (2014) experimented on a few Taiwanese college students' methods of English language listening to assess students' self-diction activities with some YouTube videos. The first 8 weeks were scheduled on offering and practicing both the top-down and bottom-up strategies. The next 8 weeks were spent on executing metacognitive strategies. In the next phase, students were asked to reflect and recall upon their metacognitive strategies progression by answering questions related to strategies they used and reasons why they failed to answer the complications they confronted. This research highlights the implication of assimilating an equilibrium that integrates both bottom-up and top-down listening tactics for evolving vigorous listening skills. It also proposes that providing specific training in metacognitive strategies can further improve learners' ability to monitor and improve their listening abilities.

Speaking

Technology has become the mode of communication that is more commonly used in the education sector than that of trade and transaction. Excelling in speaking is the utmost crucial factor to learn and develop learning any language. It is highly impossible for technology to replace teachers, but wise use of technology can be a handy tool to improve teaching techniques. There are a variety of technical tools that can be used to enhance speaking skills like video conferencing, blogging, podcast, speech recognition software, TELL, etc. Comprehensive and fluent speaking is more than enough to create the first impression. Learners have to elevate themselves by using modern technology; otherwise, they will be demoted in the real world. Effective speaking skill involves the ability to communicate the message clearly, concisely and achieve the desired outcome. Technology assists and emboldens the playfulness of learners and assures the active participation in a variety of ways in learning.

Technology offers learners to engross unconventionally, provide opportunities for self-paced interactions, privacy and a safe environment where errors are rectified, and appropriate feedback is assured. At present, there is numerous qualitative feedback software accessible on the internet. Web 2.0, the terminology refers to websites and applications which makes participatory information sharing easy by user-centered design collaboratively in World Wide Web (O'Reilly, 2005). Web 2.0 echoes the new age of the internet, which emphasizes social networking, cloud computing, higher participation level, and sharing information between internet users. Hence. Web 2.0 offers communication possibilities skills to improve self-expression and understanding. Kusmaryani et al. (2019, p. 2) states that there are benefits that technological devices offer by bringing both teachers and learners along with the inclusion of many advance features like prompt communication, video player, recording, website browsing, etc. With the help of it, both learners and teachers will be able to achieve positive outcomes in learning and teaching methods such as self-directed learning, inquiry learning and formative assessment.

By using the technological tools such as YouTube, films, video conferencing, PowerPoint, etc., students can improve both speaking and listening skills. Moreover, the exhilaration of using technology with attractive and sounds, beautiful colorful pictures and actions would entice students' dynamic engrossment in developing their speaking skills. Variety of factors that hamper speaking skills are anxiety, teaching techniques, learner's culture, lack of desire and self-confidence, nervousness, inhibition and lack of vocabulary. Sosas (2021) explored the use of technology in teaching speaking skills and its effect on students and revealed that the incorporation of technology in teaching speaking skills facilitated

establishing relationships, increase diction, diminish anxiety, meticulousness, and positively developed confidence of learners.

Reading

Reading is an intricate skill, and intellectual skill includes linguistic, metacognitive and cognitive skills. The diffusion of technology in developing reading skills has become the ultimate support to replace traditional comprehension and learning methods. Textbooks and tools have been drastically altered by advanced digital technologies, creating excitement among many for their potential to be utilized as instructional tools for literacy education. Since 2007, the variety of digital texts made available starting from Amazon Kindle, iPads, touchscreen tablets to e-books, this number of devices available for displaying digital texts has increased potentially. Rather than looking at modern technologies to be fit into an already overcrowded outline, the teachers should intellectualize these technologies as affording tools that can be organized to create fresh and fanatic readers who retain the unconventional level of literacy skills and desirable knowledge compelled by today's information-based society. Annotation and My notes: the concrete tools were designed by Nor, Hamat, Azman, Noor, and Bakar (2011) to teach English comprehension to their 81 Malaysian college students.

Annotation tool was allowed to students to skim the entire reading and highlight important points that they fail to understand and then write comments in the text. It offered students the chance to process and internalize the text at their own speed leading to thoughtful learning. My notes encouraged students to reflect on what they understood and even comment on other comprehension and construct technology-based strategies to develop reading skills. Reading comprehension can be enhanced through well-organized training of metacognitive reading strategies (Cubukcu, 2008); technology paves the way to design the specific training program to satisfy the necessities of enhancing the learning outcome. Moreover, motivation in learning is another essential factor responsible to influence the use of technological applications to develop reading skills. The educators must pay attention towards encouraging the low-achieving learners to inculcate the reading strategies analytically and appropriately. Educational technology has been championed as a potential solution to develop reading skills among all kinds of learners.

In the reformation of technology-enhanced education, the foremost component evolving reading skills is digital text books, also known as e-text books. It is a digital entity with textual content, which ascends from assimilating features such as bookmarks, search, annotations, highlights, hypertext, multimedia objects, and interactive tools. Nowadays, even traditional learning classes that are face-to-face have employed digital texts (Manalu, 2019). Being easily accessible and ready to use digital text books are currently preferred to read as it is more effective and easier to handle than that of printed books. Digital textbook introduced a unique text format in terms of color, font and view for readers to interact with. Digital textbooks have primarily presented readers with an innovative experience in reading. Basically, readers have the variety of optional tools to gather information such as online news, Whats App group, journals, Wikipedia, etc., by getting connected to the internet (Manalu 2019).

Writing

The most substantial contribution of language is writing skill, which is grounded in diverse purposes. Writing expresses thoughts, emotions, opinions, and whatever we are going to write is to discipline our language from academic to professional; hence, is a challenging task. Technology helped learners to build trust in them, which made the learning possible even outside the classrooms. Moreover, they were able to get assistance from the intellectual writings of others and include it in their own writing to transfigure modest writing into something extraordinary. The incorporation of Information Technology and the most recent

technological development tool Artificial Intelligence in developing writing, the learner can obtain instantaneous feedback and assistance improving their writing skill faster (Zhao, 2022). With the help of AI, learners can receive immediate and well customized feedback of their writing, which can help them to detect and correct errors promptly, which paves the way to enhance their writing abilities. It is crystal clear that AI tool envisioned to scrutinize written material and deliver annotation on multiple parts of writing such as syntax, grammar, content, vocabulary and structure (Thorp, 2023).

Technology accomplishes the synopsis of progressive provisions and processes of teaching and learning that facilitate more rapidly and more complete development, hence the modern technology is not constrained to the practice of the contemporary utilization and measures. It had a substantial impact on the way learners and dedicated writers consent to their work of art. Present technology had a positive impact on writers through progression in their research expertise where additional details are comprehended and expressed. Authors are able to nurture their creativity and critical thinking, permitting them to produce innovative notions. Contrarily, the originality and quality has been adversely affected, conversely learner's innovative mindset is becoming slave of technology and losing interest in origination as everything is easily accessible and available which is badly affecting the writing style. As writers are gradually choosing to facsimile the work of others rather than producing inimitable and classic content, a significant amount of plagiarism has also been caught in many academic assignments (Berman 2020). In the accordance with Lisa Sandolo (2010), technology is also very worthwhile in augmenting learner's reinforcement in writing skills as technology has become supportive in improving grammar, spelling, checking plagiarism and citation, and many other ways. In addition, these technologies improve writing competency, enable collaboration, mend the superiority of work through grammar and plagiarism checks, and exposed new paths for data analysis and organization Dr. Vaishali and Sonali (2024). The use of technology can enhance the two sub-systems of language i.e. vocabulary and grammar. Let us try to evaluate the development of these two sub-systems.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary has directed the success in enriching the learning language multiple times, which is learned through multiple oral and written contexts. Before technology was introduced in education, the foremost source of expansion of vocabulary was contingent on formal education, conversation, and reading. Encompassing loud reading and conversation played a dynamic role in espousing an opulent language environment. Likewise, for learning new words, tools like thesaurus, dictionaries, and flashcards were necessary.

In the 21st century, the development of vocabulary is both strenuous and shaped by digital technologies, such as mobiles, the internet and personal computers. Digital-based language learning had an optimistic influence on learner's enthusiasm, self-sufficiency for learning language and mend their both computer and communication skills. For diminishing the obstacles faced by the language learners, proficient progress should be furnished to all willing educators, and all language classes should be well-equipped with the obligatory technological tools. The real sense of using digital tools lies in the capability to provide diverse learning styles, reassure reliable practice, deliver instantaneous feedback, making vocabulary attainment more appealing and effectual in the existing digital world. Gamification is so recurrent in language learning that includes fun activities that endorse thinking, interface, problem-solving and learning approaches where the learner is involved in an artificial engagement, guided by rules that result in a measurable outcome.

A number of software and digital game-based studies incorporated both subsidiary learning procedures and supplementary materials that facilitated language learning; for example, Shintaku (2016) explored the interplay of game design and pedagogical conciliation for Japanese learners using a commercial game with refined worksheets and a reference list.

As education endures to progress in the digital era, the prominence on inventive and effective vocabulary teaching approaches will remain dominant in language learning. Even in today's the technologically advanced world, there is a desperate need to advocate for a serene tactic that conglomerates traditional methods with pioneering technology to endow learners and concoct them for a linguistically multifarious world.

Grammar

The amalgamation of technology in the field of education has offered students vibrant engagement, self-independence and renewed perspective. In the prompt shifting educational scenario, technology has become a revolutionary force challenging the conventional teaching approaches and improvising learning process. It is obvious that the effective use of educational technology is the main concern in language teaching and crucial emphasis in language learning that computer has aided. Grammar plays a significant role in developing a sentence, evade obscurity in communication, aiding listeners comprehend speakers' circumstances more evidently. Brinton (2000) specified that grammar bridges each unit of language with the help of doctrines or set of rules of a functioning language, construction, its system to make a meaningful expression.

Applications of technology provide multidimensional information access for both teachers and learners, especially in teaching and learning grammar, which paves the way to get closer connection. Nowadays, teachers are just the medium of transmitting elementary and fundamental knowledge to students and direct them on how to find and exploit information related to the content that is available and accessible in copious and diverse form on the internet. Technology also creates opportunities to select content that is not still comprehended or required to be lengthened to self-improve. Learner's positive attitude towards learning and quality of learning is improving by the use of technology even in the running classroom. After learning grammar, the learners can determine the nature of language and comprehend what they read, write or listen lucidly. But the learners who fail to understand or have no perception of taught grammar, it is difficult for teachers to make such learner understand with speculated time frame in academics and technology based educational applications are the best solution for teachers to complete their teaching meritoriously. Using technology tools in teaching grammar is a time saving technique in explaining the lessons and correct learner's exercise, it also helps learners to have sufficient time for their self-study and other benefits. The result of technology-enhanced grammar learning and teaching can provide better results if both teachers and learners can identify the importance of grammar and select the most appropriate method of teaching and learning. These tools have more chances for learners to master the lessons learned at school, widen the knowledge and appear on the tests better.

Challenges

Technology-enhanced language learning is a multi-year effort, by nature. It entails perseverance from learners even outside the classrooms to comprehend the distinctive framework of explicit phrases, words, and semiotic actions in other cultures. Conversely, amalgamation of formal and informal learning is a challenging mission that the educators still required to take care of at the curricular and programmatic levels. As there is a high demand for personalized learning, unfortunately, it is not sufficiently reinforced by current technology. To meet the distinctive needs of learners, the technologies are evolving focus on tailoring directives in the forms of learning analytics and adaptive technologies. Lack of training and working equipment are the main challenges in technology-based learning language along with lack of basic understanding among both students and teachers of handling and understanding the use of technological equipment, deficit of command over technology teaching procedures and lack of mastery of electronic equipment are a few of the foremost complications.

The future of technology-enhanced language learning is heavily dependent on the ability of teachers to produce alluring and convenient use of modest technology that can be sustained in a two-dimensional, online context. Moreover, it is very crucial for teachers to nurture the learner's emotional development such a way that they can participate in this kind of learning deteriorating academic dishonesty. It is the need for technology-enhanced language learning to set a systematic and progressive system to help teachers, students and institutes to set stimulating yet feasible goals using technology as an integrated part of their language teaching and learning environment.

Conclusion

This paper discovers the prospects that technology-enhanced language learning offers teachers to help learners to attain language literacy goals. In addition to the language subsystem like vocabulary and grammar, the four basic language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing) based on technology-enhanced language learning are scrutinized and reviewed in this paper. Finally, this paper also throws some light on the challenges faced by both teachers and learners during language teaching and learning enhanced by technology. It also reflects that the research in technology-enhanced language learning is far away from expiration, it is vigorous, and had potential to produce and encompass understanding of how languages are learned with significant dimensions to spawn new pedagogies in language learning. For further future research, the researchers should pay attention towards the core issues that are in need of examination and illuminate critical methodological concerns. In spite of all the denigrations, the study of technology-enhanced language learning is enormously vivacious and will remain so for a conceivable time to come. There are challenges and traps that can hinder the expansion of this field or steer it away rather than towards everyday classroom practices. If technology-enhanced language learning successfully accomplishes the navigation effectively and incursion vigorous steadiness between the old and the new, it will continue as a persuasive line of inquiry within language learning and also likely to generate new pedagogical schemes that can be encompassed in diverse educational frameworks.

The momentum of development of technology and educational tools is faster than that of preparation of language teachers. Getting well acquainted with traditional ways of teaching and assessment of language learning is not enough in the 21st century; they must be well-equipped with knowledge and skills to identify technical traits specific to the new technologies that can be viably assimilated into design technology-based pedagogies for their students. Technology-enhanced language learning can help teachers to develop a better sense of learners' knowledge comprehension and language expertise and understanding learners' requirement and areas where directives should be upgraded.

Work Cited

Becker, A., Rodriguez, J. C., Estrada, V., & Davis, A. *Innovating Language Education: An NMC Horizon Project Strategic Brief. Austin, TX*: The New Media Consortium, 2016.

Brinton, L. J. *The structure of modern English: A linguistic introduction.* John Benjamins Publishing, 2000.

Chang, C., & Chang, C.K. *Developing Students' Listening Metacognitive Strategies Using Online Videotext Self-dictation Generation Learning Activity*. The EUROCALL Review, 2014, pp 3-19.

Cohen, A. D. *Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.

Dr. Vaishali Parekh and Sonal Pandya. "*Exploring the Use of Technology in Academic Writing.*" International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education, 2024, pp. 2075-2081.

Kusmaryani, W., Musthafa, B., & Purnawarman, P. *The influence of mobile applications on students' speaking skill and critical thinking in English language learning.* Journal of Physics: Conference, 2019.

Manalu, B. H. *Students's perception of digital texts reading: A case study at the English Education Department of Universitas Kristen Indonesi.* JET (Journal of English Teaching), 2019.

Nor, N. F. M., Hamat, A., Noorizah, M. N., & Bakar, N. *An Investigation on Employment of Interactive Technological Tools to Comprehend Online Reading Texts*. International Journal of Learning, 2011, pp. 247-260.

Oxford, R. L., & Schramm, K. *Bridging the Gap Between Psychological and Sociocultural Perspectives on L2 Learner Strategies*. In A. Cohen & E. Macaro (Eds.), *Language learner Strategies: Thirty years of Research on Language Learner Strategies*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 47-68.

Shintaku, K. *The Interplay of Game Design and Pedagogical Mediation in Game Mediated Japanese Learning*. International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching, 2016, pp. 36–55.

Teng. H.C. *An Investigation of EFL listening difficulties for Taiwanese college students. Selected papers from the Eleventh International Symposium on English Teaching*, Fourth Pan-Asian Conference, 2023, pp. 526-533.

Thorp, H. H.. *ChatGPT is Fun, But Not an Author. Science: Advanced Materials and Devices*, 2023, pp. 313–313.

Zhao, X. *Leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology for English Writing: Introducing Word Tune as a Digital Writing Assistant for EFL Writers*. RELC Journal, 2002.

Reimagining Language Classrooms: A Study on Technology-Enhanced Language Learning Practices

P Rajitha Nair

Abstract

The traditional language classroom is changing dramatically in this age of fast technological innovation. With a focus on how digital tools and platforms are changing pedagogical methods, learner engagement, and language acquisition results, this study examines how language education is changing through the lens of Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL). The research examines how much technology-from learning management systems (LMS) and mobile applications to AI-driven tools and virtual classrooms-supports the development of core language skills. It does this by using both qualitative and quantitative data gathered from instructors and students in higher education institutions.

Finding efficient methods for incorporating technology into ESL (English as Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms, evaluating instructor readiness, and comprehending learner perspectives are the objectives of this paper. Results show that when digital tools are used effectively, learners become more autonomous, are more motivated, and are increasingly drawn to blended and interactive learning settings. On the other hand, the study also draws attention to important issues like the digital divide, inadequate training, and infrastructure constraints, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas. This research provides educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers with useful insights and pedagogical recommendations for optimising language learning in a digitally connected world by reimagining the language classroom through the TELL framework.

Keywords: Technological innovation, digital tools, pedagogical methods, blended learning, learner perspectives.

Introduction

The swift incorporation of digital technologies into teaching and learning settings is causing a major shift in the field of language education. The growing availability and accessibility of technology resources is changing traditional classroom methods, which formerly focused on teacher-led activities and textbook-based learning. Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL),a method that uses digital platforms, multimedia materials, and online communication tools to support and enhance language acquisition processes, is the result of this change. Specifically, the incorporation of technology has created new avenues for the interactive, individualized, and captivating development of the fundamental LSRW skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The need for efficient, contemporary language training grows as English continues to solidify as the world's lingua franca. In order to succeed in academic, professional, and social settings, learners today need to possess not only vocabulary and grammatical precision, but also digital literacy and communicative competence. By giving students opportunities for collaborative learning, real-time feedback, and exposure to authentic language, technology-enhanced learning environments can meet these needs. Though the theoretical advantages of TELL are generally accepted, student attitudes, teacher preparedness, infrastructure, and instructional design can all affect how well these practices are actually implemented and work.

This study examines the changing role of technology in English language classrooms and how the development of LSRW abilities is impacted by technology-enhanced practices.

The study intends to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of TELL by utilizing case studies, current literature, and classroom observations. It aims to comprehend how students use digital resources, how educators may successfully incorporate technology into their lesson plans, and what tactics can optimize learning results. By rethinking language classes from a technological perspective, this study adds to the expanding corpus of research on creative and inclusive language teaching methods appropriate for learners in the twenty-first century.

Language classrooms are rapidly changing in the twenty-first century as a result of the use of technology. Learner-centred, interactive, and multimodal learning environments are gradually replacing traditional teacher-centred approaches. The use of digital tools, such as AI chatbots, virtual classrooms, and language learning applications, to facilitate and enhance language acquisition is known as technology-enhanced language learning, or TELL.

Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL)

The 21st century has seen a dramatic change in the field of language instruction, mostly as a result of the incorporation of cutting-edge digital technologies. Learner-centred, interactive, and multimodal techniques are gradually replacing traditional, teacher-centred methods, which present teaching in a one-way fashion with the teacher as the only source of knowledge. In order to accommodate different learning requirements and styles, these contemporary methods place a high value on students' active participation, encourage teamwork, and make use of a variety of communication channels (text, audio, video, and interactive assignments).

Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) is a notion that embodies this change. The term, 'TELL' describes the methodical application of digital tools and technologies to enhance and facilitate language learning. This covers a broad range of platforms and resources:

- Artificial intelligence (AI)-driven Chatbots are helpful for practice and evaluation because they can mimic real-world discussions, offer immediate feedback, and adjust to a learner's skill level.
- Teachers and students around the world can communicate in real time through virtual classrooms, which eliminates geographical boundaries and provides access to actual language input and cultural exposure.
- Applications for language learning (like Duolingo, Babbel, or Memrise) provide individualized, gamified learning experiences that can inspire students and encourage regular practice outside of the conventional classroom.

In addition to improving accessibility and engagement, the move toward TELL gives students more authority over their own education. Students are no longer merely passive consumers of information thanks to resources that provide real-time feedback, flexible learning pathways, and genuine communication opportunities. Rather, they take an active role in a dynamic, independent learning process. Additionally, technology enables multimodal learning, which allows students to reinforce language skills in an integrated way via reading, speaking, listening, and writing—often all at the same time.

There is a fundamental shift in the way languages are taught and learned is reflected in technology-enhanced language learning. Teachers may design more effective, adaptable, and inclusive learning environments that satisfy the needs of the contemporary world by utilizing digital technologies.

This study aims to examine the implementation, effectiveness, and challenges of TELL practices in Indian higher education institutions, with a focus on English language classrooms in particular.

It answers the following questions:

- How is technology being used to enhance language learning?
- How do educators and learners feel about TELL?
- What issues exist, and how do they affect education?

In the twenty-first century, the use of technology in language classes is bringing about rapid change. Learner-centred, interactive, and multimodal learning environments are progressively replacing traditional teacher-centred approaches. The technique of using digital tools, such as AI chatbots, virtual classrooms, and language learning programs, to enhance and facilitate language acquisition is known as technology-enhanced language learning, or TELL.

With an emphasis on English language classrooms specifically, this study intends to investigate the application, efficacy, and difficulties of TELL methods in Indian higher education institutions. It provides solutions to the following queries:

- How is language learning being improved by technology?
- What are the opinions of teachers and students regarding TELL?
- What problems are there, and what impact do they have on education?

The uses of technology to aid the process of learning a second language is known as technology-enhanced language learning or TELL. It is a technique that can be combined with current teaching methodologies rather than being a stand-alone teaching strategy. To produce interesting and successful learning experiences, TELL makes use of a variety of technologies, including computers, the internet, multimedia materials, and online communication tools.

Important features of TELL

It improves language proficiency**.** Research has demonstrated that TELL improves a range of language proficiency, including speaking, writing, listening, reading, and sub skills including vocabulary and grammar. It enhances motivation and engagement**.** Students' motivation and engagement may rise as a result of technology's ability to make language learning more engaging and dynamic.

By letting the students, study at their own speed and concentrate on areas in which they require further assistance, TELL can encourage individualized learning experiences. A greater range of learners, especially those in remote areas or with disabilities, can benefit from technology by having easier access to language learning materials as it is user-friendly. It proves to be a Low-cost efficiency: When compared to conventional approaches, technology can occasionally provide more reasonably priced language learning solutions.

Examples of TELL in action

- **Digital content:** Boosting language input and practice through the use of audio recordings, movies, and interactive simulations.
- **E-learning platforms:** Making use of platforms that provide exercises, structured courses, and language proficiency feedback.
- **Language learning tools:** Using smartphone apps to master grammar, expand one's vocabulary, and practice pronunciation.
- **Computer-mediated communication (CMC):** Using online resources to communicate with teachers and peers, which is especially beneficial for improving writing and speaking abilities.
- **Mixed media overlay:** investigating immersive technologies to produce authentic language learning settings.

Things to think about when implementing TELL

- **Pedagogical training:** In order for teachers to successfully incorporate technology into their lesson plans, it is imperative that they receive sufficient training and assistance.
- **Pedagogical integration:** Technology ought to be carefully included into the curriculum in order to meet certain learning objectives and pedagogical purposes.
- **Navigating possible setbacks**: It's critical to anticipate and proactively handle possible difficulties such as technical difficulties, interruptions, and privacy issues.
- **Learner-specific needs**: Taking into account that every student has unique learning requirements and preferences, and modifying TELL strategies accordingly.

Application of TELL in English language teaching

The quick development of digital technology has had a big impact on how English is taught and learned worldwide. More dynamic, interesting, and learner-centred approaches are gradually replacing traditional language teaching techniques, which frequently concentrated on rote memorization and textbook-based exercises. Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) provides cutting-edge methods and resources that support the growth of the four fundamental language skills— Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW) in this dynamic environment. By rethinking English language classes from a technological perspective, teachers may better satisfy the varied demands of students in the twenty-first century and give them useful communication skills.

The typical language classroom has changed as a result of the quick adoption of technology in education, particularly when it comes to studying English. The teaching and practice of the fundamental language skills—Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW)—has undergone some of the biggest changes. These four crucial abilities can now be developed holistically with the help of dynamic, tailored, and interactive learning environments boosted by technology. By increasing student engagement and language competency in all LSRW categories, this study explores how digital technologies and practices might successfully redesign English language classrooms.

Enhancing Listening Skills through Technology

According to the LSRW framework, listening is the initial receptive skill and is essential to language learning. Listening exercises in traditional schools were frequently restricted to pre-recorded conversations on CDs or audio snippets from textbooks, which provided little variation or interest. However, students have access to a variety of real-world listening resources in the technology-enhanced classroom, including TED Talks, YouTube videos, podcasts, and instructional platforms like BBC Learning English. By exposing children to a variety of dialects, intonations, speech rates, and real-world situations, these materials help them become more prepared for communication in the real world. Additionally, students can repeat challenging passages, listen at their own pace, and strengthen comprehension by utilizing interactive features like transcript support, subtitle options, and adjustable playback rates.

Listening is a fundamental language learning ability, and technology today offers a multitude of real-world listening resources that go well beyond the conventional classroom setting. Learners can access native speakers, authentic conversations, and a variety of accents through digital platforms including YouTube, podcasts, audiobooks, and language learning applications. These resources aid students in improving their contextual awareness and comprehension. Students may learn at their own pace and go over challenging parts again thanks to the utilization of interactive quizzes, subtitles, and playback speeds that can be changed. Apps like BBC Learning English provide brief, level-appropriate listening modules

for daily practice, while TED Talks and English-language news sources can be utilized to develop academic and professional listening abilities. By encouraging active listening through discussions, quizzes, and summaries, listening apps such as English Class101 and platforms with comprehension activities help make listening practice more efficient and user-friendly.

The availability of authentic audio materials like podcasts, online films, and language learning software has significantly helped listening, a fundamental skill in language acquisition. These days, learners have access to a variety of listening materials that feature real-world conversations, native speakers, and a spectrum of accents. This exposure aids in the development of contextual awareness of words and idioms in addition to improving pronunciation and comprehension. Subtitles, playback choices, and comprehension tests are examples of interactive elements that improve listening practice and make it more flexible and learner-friendly.

Fostering Speaking Skills through Interactive Technologies

Speaking is the more productive alternative to listening, can be difficult for students because of anxiety, a fear of making mistakes, and a lack of opportunity for in-person practice. Students can now practice speaking both inside and outside of the classroom in a variety of ways thanks to technology. Artificial intelligence is used by programs like ELSA Speak, HelloTalk, and Duolingo to provide real-time feedback on accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation. In order to lessen their fear of embarrassment, learners can also engage with AI-powered chatbots or virtual assistants that mimic conversations and offer constructive criticism without passing judgment. Live speaking practice is made possible by online discussions, presentations, and oral interviews with peers or teachers using video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Google Meet.

Additionally, students can film and share brief videos on given themes using sites like Flipgrid, which create a fun and safe environment for vocal expression. In addition to enhancing pronunciation and speaking fluency, these digital exercises foster communication confidence, peer review, and self-monitoring.

Artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots, video conferencing platforms (like Zoom and Google Meet), and speech recognition software have created new opportunities for practice and feedback on speaking abilities. Regular speaking practice outside of the classroom is made possible by the ability for learners to converse in real time with peers, language partners, or even virtual assistants. Students can improve their accuracy and confidence in spoken English by using apps like FluentU and ELSA Speak, which offer real-time feedback on pronunciation and fluency. Additionally, these resources support self-directed learning and empower students to take charge of their language acquisition.

Interactive technology can greatly improve Speaking, which is frequently regarded as the most difficult ability for language learners. With the use of tools like voice recognition software (such as ELSA Speak and Google's speech-to-text), students can get real-time feedback on their fluency, intonation, and pronunciation. Additionally, real-time oral practice in group projects, presentations, and conversations is made possible by virtual communication systems like Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Learners can engage in casual, culturally rich conversations with native speakers throughout the world using language exchange apps like Tandem and HelloTalk. These virtual exchanges foster self-assurance, lower fear, and offer a secure setting for repeated practice—all of which are essential components of improving speaking ability.

Technology-Enhanced Strategies for Improving Reading Skills

The incorporation of digital tools has also greatly improved reading abilities. Learners were previously limited to printed books, which might not accommodate different interests or skill

levels. These days, a variety of texts tailored to various language levels are available on online reading platforms like Newsela, ReadTheory, and Epic! giving students access to engaging and understandable reading material. In order to promote deeper knowledge, these platforms frequently come with integrated glossaries, interactive annotations, text-to-speech capabilities, and comprehension questions. Multiple learning styles can be supported and the reading experience enhanced by e-books and articles with embedded media (audio, video, and photos). Using note-taking applications, vocabulary monitoring tools, and online dictionaries helps students improve their vocabulary and critical thinking abilities. Reading becomes a collaborative and participatory activity rather than a solitary one when students take part in online reading circles, discussion forums, or book blogs to think about and discuss what they read.

Access to digital libraries, e-books, and reading systems like Newsela or ReadTheory, which provide graded content that is appropriate for different competency levels, have redefined reading skills. Reading becomes more interesting and accessible with interactive features like clickable glossaries, audio assistance, and comprehension exercises. Students can mark important passages, annotate literature, and even take part in online reading discussions. In addition to fostering critical thinking, these exercises assist students in strengthening their reading habits, increasing their vocabulary, and improving their comprehension.

Digital technology turns static text into multimodal, interactive experiences when it comes to reading. Online reading resources like Newsela, CommonLit, and Read Theory provide integrated comprehension questions, vocabulary explanations, and instant feedback while tailoring content to the reader's reading level. Independent reading and vocabulary development are encouraged by e-books with integrated dictionaries and annotation tools. Additionally, learners can go deeper into areas of interest through digital stories, blogs, and hyperlinked texts, which enhances their scanning and skimming abilities. Additionally, these resources promote critical reading and text analysis and evaluation skills, which are crucial for academic English.

Improving Writing Proficiency with Digital Tools

The last skill in the LSRW sequence, writing, has arguably changed the most as a result of technology. In the past, writing was limited to paper-based assignments that were assessed by the teacher alone, frequently with little to no feedback. These days, students can write in real time with digital tools like Google Docs, which facilitate group writing and provide immediate feedback from peers or teachers. Grammarly, Hemingway Editor, and QuillBot are examples of grammar and style-checking programs that offer instant feedback to enhance clarity, coherence, and accuracy. This gives students the ability to self-edit and take charge of their writing development. Students can publish their work for actual audiences via blogging platforms and digital storytelling tools, which gives them a sense of direction and inspires them. Additionally, learners can be guided through the whole writing process—from outlining and brainstorming to drafting and revising—by structured writing platforms. These resources foster the creativity, computer literacy, and communication abilities necessary for both academic and professional settings in addition to linguistic accuracy.

The availability of digital tools like Google Docs, Grammarly, QuillBot, and blogging platforms has revolutionized the writing process by supporting drafting, editing, and collaboration while offering real-time grammar and style suggestions. Moreover, collaborative writing projects and digital storytelling platforms foster creativity, peer interaction, and audience awareness—all of which are critical elements of effective written communication—and enable learners to become more proficient and self-assured writers.

The incorporation of digital tools that facilitate drafting, rewriting, and collaborative work has transformed writing, the last element of the LSRW architecture. Learners can improve their writing correctness and coherence by using AI-powered writing aids such as

Grammarly and QuillBot, which offer real-time feedback on grammar, structure, word usage, and tone. Peer review, group projects, and collaborative writing are made possible by platforms like Google Docs and Padlet, which enhance the process's interactivity and social aspect. By blogging, journaling, or posting their work online, students can also participate in creative digital writing, writing for real audiences and gaining a sense of authorship and control over their education.

The use of technology in LSRW training has significant pedagogical ramifications. First, technology makes it possible for blended and flipped learning approaches, which allow students to communicate and clarify during class time while using linguistic resources at their own pace outside of it. Teachers can become guides and facilitators who promote individualized learning pathways rather than being the only ones who impart knowledge. Teachers can more effectively identify learners' strengths and shortcomings with the help of analytics and progress tracking technologies, allowing for data-driven education and focused remediation. Additionally, incorporating technology into the classroom promotes inclusive education by meeting a variety of learning requirements, such as those of children with visual or hearing impairments or those who require assistance aids for learning issues.

From a pedagogical perspective, the integration of technology into language classrooms promotes blended and personalized learning. Digital tools allow teachers to tailor instruction to individual learner needs and track progress using data-driven assessments. Moreover, the interactive nature of tech-based learning fosters increased motivation and engagement. However, this shift also presents challenges, such as the digital divide, which limits access for some students, and the need for teacher training to effectively incorporate technology into language pedagogy. Over-reliance on technology can also hinder face-to-face communication and the development of interpersonal skills if not balanced thoughtfully.

All things considered, technology-enhanced learning fosters a more welcoming, flexible, and inspiring atmosphere for the development of LSRW abilities. Learners are increasingly, actively involved in building their own linguistic and cultural competency rather than being passive consumers of information. Differentiated education is made possible by the individualized nature of digital tools, which cater to the varying requirements, skills, and learning preferences of students in a classroom. Additionally, having access to real-time data and feedback enables educators to track students' progress, spot any gaps, and offer tailored assistance. Additionally, technology promotes autonomy by motivating students to direct their own education and investigate language use in authentic settings.

Literature Review

In the twenty-first century, the use of technology in language classes is bringing about rapid change. Learner-centred, interactive, and multimodal learning environments are progressively replacing traditional teacher-centred approaches. The process of using digital tools, such as AI chatbots, virtual classrooms, and language learning applications, to enhance and facilitate language acquisition is known as technology-enhanced language learning, or TELL.

With an emphasis on English language classrooms specifically, this study intends to investigate the application, efficacy, and difficulties of TELL methods in Indian higher education institutions. It provides solutions to the following queries:

- How is language learning being improved by technology?
- What attitudes do teachers and students have towards TELL?
- What problems are there, and what impact do they have on education?

Disparities in digital infrastructure and teacher preparedness still exist in India, notwithstanding the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's encouragement of digital integration (NCTE, 2021).

Methodology

Design of Research
In order to provide a comprehensive picture of TELL practices, this study used a mixed-methods strategy, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data.

Participants
25 English language instructors with various levels of experience; 120 undergraduate students from five private colleges in Telangana.

Data Gathering Instruments
Student questionnaires: centred on motivation, perceived efficacy, and use of digital tools; Teachers' semi-structured interviews: centred on challenges, pedagogical approaches, and implementation

- Observations in the classroom (optional): Recorded the usage of digital tools and trends in student participation

Analysis of Data
Descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data, whereas theme coding and interpretation were used to analyse qualitative data.

Findings and Discussion

Frequently Utilised Technologies
- Language learning applications: Duolingo, Hello English, Memrise;
- Learning management systems (LMS): Google Classroom, Moodle;
- Multimedia tools: YouTube, TED-Ed, Canva for presentations;
- Artificial intelligence and chatbots:
- ChatGPT, Grammarly for writing assistance

Views of Students
The following are some of the challenges: limited access to devices and the internet, distractions, and app fatigue; 85% reported higher engagement and self-paced learning; 70% said apps and videos enhanced vocabulary and listening skills; and 60% favoured blended learning over traditional approaches.

Views of Teachers
- Time restrictions, a lack of training, and curricular rigidity are challenges; teachers found TELL useful in encouraging self-directed learning and multimodal input; and teacher facilitation is emphasised as being essential even in tech-supported contexts.
- Educational Consequences
- Redesigning the curriculum is necessary to effectively incorporate digital tools.
- The growth of digital literacy among educators and students
- Promotion of cooperative digital
- Supporting cooperative digital initiatives to improve communication skills

Challenges and Limitations

The lack of localised content in regional contexts; the digital divide in rural areas; teacher resistance to changing pedagogical practices; the one-size-fits-all approach of many apps; and

the fact that this study is restricted to a small number of institutions may not accurately represent the variety of educational settings found throughout India.

Conclusion

When used in conjunction with good teaching practices, technology can be a potent pedagogical enhancer rather than a cure-all. Digital resources are used in the reinvented language classroom to encourage participation, independence, teamwork, and critical thinking. Institutions must make investments in training, infrastructure, and policy support in order to fully realise TELL's promise. Future studies can include gamification, VR-based language environments, and AI-driven personalised learning.

Technology-enhanced language learning offers a powerful means of developing LSRW skills in an integrated, engaging, and effective manner. It reimagines the English language classroom as a space that goes beyond textbooks and rote learning, towards a learner-centred and skill-driven environment. To maximize its benefits, educators must thoughtfully design lessons that incorporate technology while addressing issues of accessibility and digital literacy. With the right balance, technology can become a transformative tool in fostering English language proficiency for learners across diverse contexts.

Reimagining English language classrooms through technology-enhanced learning practices offers a transformative approach to developing LSRW skills. It allows learners to move beyond rote memorization and passive learning, toward interactive, personalized, and skill-integrated language acquisition. The possibilities for engaging learners are vast—from immersive listening experiences and interactive speaking practice to scaffold reading and collaborative writing projects. However, the success of these practices depends on thoughtful implementation, addressing infrastructural gaps, and empowering teachers and learners alike. With the right balance of innovation, pedagogy, and accessibility, technology can truly redefine how English is taught and learned in the modern classroom.

In conclusion, reimagining English language classes with technology integration provides a potent means of improving the growth of speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities. Teachers may design immersive, captivating, and adaptable learning environments that mirror the reality of global communication by utilizing digital tools and platforms. Given that English is still widely used as a lingua franca, it is not only advantageous but also necessary for students to be prepared with strong LSRW abilities through technology-enhanced practices in order to succeed in the social, professional, and academic spheres.

References

Beatty, K. (2013). *Teaching and Researching Computer-Assisted Language Learning*. Routledge.

Kukulska-Hulme, A. (2009). Will mobile learning change language learning? *ReCALL*, 21(2), 157–165.

Warschauer, M., & Healey, D. (1998). Computers and language learning: An overview. *Language Teaching*, 31(2), 57–71.

Stockwell, G. (2012). *Computer-Assisted Language Learning: Diversity in Research and Practice*. Cambridge University Press.

NEP 2020. Government of India.

NCTE. (2021). *Digital Pedagogy Handbook*. New Delhi: National Council for Teacher Education.

The Intersection of Cognitive Frameworks and Digital Tools in Developing Future Language Learning Ecosystems

U Ramesh Babu

Abstract

The future of language learning will focus on ecosystems where digital innovation and cognitive insights come together to create personalized, engaging, and effective educational experiences. These ecosystems go beyond traditional classroom boundaries by using real-time feedback, delivering content in different formats, and involving interactive problem-solving. Ultimately, the paper emphasizes the need for educators, researchers, and tech experts to work together in designing future language learning environments.

Key Words: Cognitive Linguistics, Digital Tools, Language Learning Ecosystems, Adaptive Learning, Immersive Technology, Interdisciplinary Integration.

1. Introduction

Language learning is currently experiencing a profound transformation, driven by two significant and interrelated forces: Personalization, adaptivity, and interactivity—hallmarks of many modern digital tools—mirror cognitive demands such as scaffolding, feedback loops, and cognitive load optimization. This paper explores the intersection of cognitive frameworks and digital tools to better understand their combined impact on the design and function of future-oriented language learning ecosystems. These ecosystems are conceptualized not merely as collections of instructional resources but as dynamic, interconnected environments where learners, educators, digital platforms, content, and sociocultural context converge in real time to facilitate multilingual competence.

2. Cognitive Frameworks in Language Learning

Understanding how learners process, internalize, and produce language is essential for designing effective digital learning environments. Several cognitive theories provide critical insights into these processes, helping educators and developers align digital tool functionalities with how the brain naturally acquires language.

- Cognitive Load Theory (CLT)

In digital language learning environments, the principles of CLT have become vital in guiding the design of user interfaces, content presentation, and interactive activities. For instance, applications that present vocabulary with clear visual and audio cues, rather than cluttered interfaces or distracting animations, help learners focus on essential language input.

- Distributed Cognition & Connectivism in Digital Language Learning

In today's connected world, language learning happens through networks of people, tools, and knowledge. Distributed cognition extends learning beyond the individual, using digital platforms and collaborative tools to store, organize, and support thinking. Connectivism (Siemens, 2005) views learning as building and navigating connections between ideas, resources, and people across both digital and real-world spaces. Knowledge exists in the network and changes as these connections grow.

- 4E Cognition Framework

The 4E Cognition Framework—encompassing Embodied, Embedded, Enacted, and Extended cognition—provides a comprehensive model for understanding how cognitive processes are situated in the body and external supports.

- CoDiL Framework

The Cognitive-Digital Learning (CoDiL) framework, proposed by De Jong and Lazonder (2024), builds upon existing cognitive theories to bridge the gap between cognitive science and educational technology design. It focuses on the alignment of digital functionalities with cognitive learning processes, emphasizing the need for intentional design that supports learners' mental efforts, decision-making, and autonomy.

3. Emerging Digital Tools in Language Learning Ecosystems

The integration of cutting-edge digital tools into language education marks more than just a technological advancement—it signifies a paradigm shift in how language is learned in the 21st century. In contrast to traditional language instruction models, which often rely on static curricula, isolated grammar drills, and one-size-fits-all methodologies, the infusion of intelligent, interactive.

- AI-Powered Language Learning Applications

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the landscape of language learning by enabling hyper-personalized and data-driven educational experiences. Platforms such as Duolingo, Babbel, and Rosetta Stone use AI algorithms to analyze learners' interaction patterns and adapt instructional sequences in real time. Further advances, such as GPT-based tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly, GO), support higher-order language skills including creative writing, discourse structuring,

- Immersive Storytelling and Augmented Reality

Immersive storytelling and Augmented Reality (AR) technologies create situated, context-rich environments where language is not just learned, but experienced. Tools like ImmerseMe, Mondly AR, and VirtualSpeech integrate narrative structures with visual cues, speech interaction, and gamified scenarios to support situated learning.

- Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

MALL platforms also encourage contextual learning, such as identifying real-world objects (via camera-based AR) or responding to location-based prompts. Such integration of the learner’s physical and digital environments reinforces the embedded and extended cognition principles outlined in the 4E framework (Burston, 2014).

- Learning Analytics, Adaptive Systems & Collaborative Creativity

Modern language learning blends learning analytics and adaptive systems with collaborative creativity platforms to create highly personalized and interactive experiences. Analytics track learner progress and patterns, while adaptive systems tailor content and pacing to individual needs. Collaborative creativity platforms then bring learners together in shared digital spaces to co-create, exchange ideas, and solve problems—turning data-driven personalization into a socially rich, creative process.

4. Synergies Between Cognitive Frameworks and Digital Tools

The convergence of cognitive learning theories and digital innovation provides a conceptual foundation for designing next-generation language learning ecosystems with how the mind works. This section explores five critical synergies between major cognitive frameworks and the affordances of contemporary digital tools.

- Aligning Digital Features with Cognitive Principles

Conversely, digital tools can increase germane load, the load dedicated to schema construction, by using gamified language tasks that promote active engagement, pattern recognition, and immediate feedback. Applications such as Duolingo use point systems, achievement. For example, video-based storytelling apps that synchronize subtitles with narration without overwhelming the screen layout demonstrate effective CLT-driven design.

- Distributed Cognition, Adaptive Learning & Connectivism

In collaborative digital spaces, distributed cognition extends learning beyond the individual, using shared tools and environments to support thinking and problem-solving. Adaptive learning personalizes this process by adjusting content and pathways to each learner's needs, while connectivism frames it within a network of human and digital connections where knowledge flows and evolves. Together, they create a dynamic model in which learning is shared, personalized, and sustained through an ever-expanding web of interactions.

- Embodied Learning & the CoDiL Perspective in Practice

Through AR/VR technologies, embodied learning immerses learners in interactive environments where language is experienced through action, context, and sensory engagement. In the CoDiL (Collaborative Digital Learning) perspective, these immersive experiences are integrated into authentic, collaborative tasks, allowing learners to co-construct meaning, practice in realistic scenarios, and receive immediate feedback. Together, they transform language learning into a lived, participatory process that bridges the digital and physical worlds.

5. Designing Future Language Learning Ecosystems

Designing effective and inclusive language learning ecosystems for the future demands. Unlike traditional instructional models that often isolate content delivery from learner cognition or fail to account for the socio-cultural context of learning, future language ecosystems must operate as integrated, dynamic, and responsive environments.

- Key Characteristics of Future Language Learning Ecosystems

To be effective, future language learning environments must exhibit a set of core characteristics that reflect both cognitive principles and the affordances of digital technologies, they are Personalization, Adaptivity, Immersion, cognition principles, Collaboration, Cultural Responsiveness

- Proposed Integrated Model: ECOLE-AI

To operationalize these principles, we propose the ECOLE-AI model: Embodied Cognition-Oriented Language Ecosystem with Artificial Intelligence.

Components of the ECOLE-AI Model:

- CLT-Informed Instructional Design Learning tasks are designed to minimize extraneous load
- Distributed Digital Scaffolds Learners engage with external cognitive supports, Connectivist Networks for Peer Interaction ECOLE-AI supports social constructivist

learning by integrating learners into decentralized knowledge networks. 4E-Based Embodied Interfaces Using AR/VR, gesture-based input, and context-aware mobile apps, learners interact with content in sensorimotor-rich environments.
- CoDiL-Aligned Adaptivity and Agency Learners are offered adaptive learning paths, reflective tools, and choice mechanisms.

- Challenges in Implementing Future Ecosystems

While the potential of cognitive-digital integration is profound, the implementation of such ecosystems comes with significant technical, pedagogical, and ethical challenges:
- Digital Equity and Access Disparities
- Cognitive Overload from Poorly Designed Tools
- Teacher Readiness and Professional Development
- Ethical Concerns Around Data and AI Transparency

6. Conclusion and Future Directions

The future of language learning is increasingly being shaped by the synergy between cognitive science and educational technology. As the demands of global communication, multilingual proficiency, and lifelong learning intensify, traditional classroom-based models are proving insufficient on their own. Instead, what is emerging is a language learning ecosystem. Finally, the CoDiL (Cognitive-Digital Learning) framework provides the operational glue that binds these elements, emphasizing learner agency, real-time adaptivity, and cognitive alignment within digital platforms. When these frameworks are strategically integrated, the resulting ecosystems become more than the sum of their parts:

- They become responsive, adjusting dynamically to learners' needs, interests, and pacing.
- They become immersive, embedding language within realistic simulations and authentic cultural contexts.
- They become collaborative, promoting shared meaning-making, social negotiation, and distributed problem-solving.

References

Burston, J. (2014). MALL: A review of the recent literature. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 27(1).

Chandler, P., & Sweller, J. (1991). Cognitive Load Theory and the format of instruction. Cognition and Instruction, 8(4).

Clark, A. (2008). Supersizing the mind: Embodiment, action, and cognitive extension. Oxford University Press.

De Jong, T., & Lazonder, A. W. (2024). The CoDiL framework. Educational Psychology Review.

Hutchins, E. (1995). Cognition in the Wild. MIT Press.

Johnson-Glenberg, M. (2018). Immersive VR and embodied cognition.

Learning With Purpose: A Study on Outcome-Based Assessment in English Education

V Ramya Sudha

Abstract

Outcome-Based Assessment (OBA) had been adopted as an effective framework to ensure measurable learning outcomes in English classrooms. This research paper aimed to examine how OBA had been implemented, assessed, and analyzed to enhance language acquisition among secondary and higher secondary students. The main objective was to evaluate whether intended learning outcomes (ILOs) were clearly defined, communicated, and assessed through aligned teaching strategies and evaluation tools. A mixed-method approach had been used, including a literary review, survey questionnaire, case studies, and data analysis. The literary review reflected the evolution of assessment models from content-based to outcome-driven education. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 120 English teachers and 200 students across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Key factors such as learner engagement, assessment transparency, and teaching strategy alignment were analyzed. Tables and graphs illustrated trends in performance and teacher perceptions. Case studies from two English classrooms demonstrated that OBA led to higher student motivation, better language retention, and improved writing and speaking skills. However, challenges like inadequate teacher training and resistance to new assessment formats were also reported. Findings revealed that outcome-based approaches had fostered goal clarity, learner autonomy, and reflective practices. The study concluded that OBA, when correctly implemented, transformed the English classroom from a rote-learning space into a learner- centric environment. Recommendations were provided for institutional training, outcome map- ping, and curriculum redesign.

Keywords: Outcome-Based Assessment, English Language Teaching, Learning Outcomes, Formative Assessment, Pedagogical Innovation

Introduction

English language instruction had traditionally relied on summative assessments that emphasized memory-based evaluations. However, the need for meaningful, measurable, and skill- oriented education led to the introduction of Outcome-Based Assessment (OBA). The NEP 2020 emphasized the need to measure what students learned rather than what was taught. This research explored how OBA had been used in Indian English classrooms to achieve targeted learning out- comes.

Objectives

1. To assess the effectiveness of outcome-based assessment in English classrooms.
2. To examine how intended learning outcomes had been mapped with assessments.
3. To evaluate teacher and student perceptions of OBA.
4. To identify challenges in implementing OBA.

Methodology

A mixed-method approach was adopted. A structured questionnaire was prepared and

circulated among English teachers and students. Responses were collected from 120 teachers from 25 schools and colleges 200 students from grades 9–12. Data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. In-depth case studies were also presented.

Literature Review

Several studies had explored OBA in language education. Biggs (1996) introduced constructive alignment, where assessments aligned with learning outcomes. Spady (1994) emphasized that outcomes must drive all academic decisions. Wang and Cheng (2008) argued that students became more autono- mous when outcomes were clear. Indian scholars like Rao (2015) and Nair (2019) also highlighted the need for reform in English language evaluation through OBA.

Survey Questionnaire for Teachers

1. Were the learning outcomes clearly defined in your lesson plans?
2. Was assessment based on outcomes rather than content coverage?
3. Did students demonstrate improvement in writing/speaking after OBA?
4. Were rubrics used to assess each skill separately?

Survey Questionnaire for Students

1. Were you informed about the learning outcomes?
2. Did you feel more motivated when outcomes were shared?
3. Was your performance assessed skill-wise?
4. Did you find the feedback useful?

Data Analysis (Tables & Graphs)

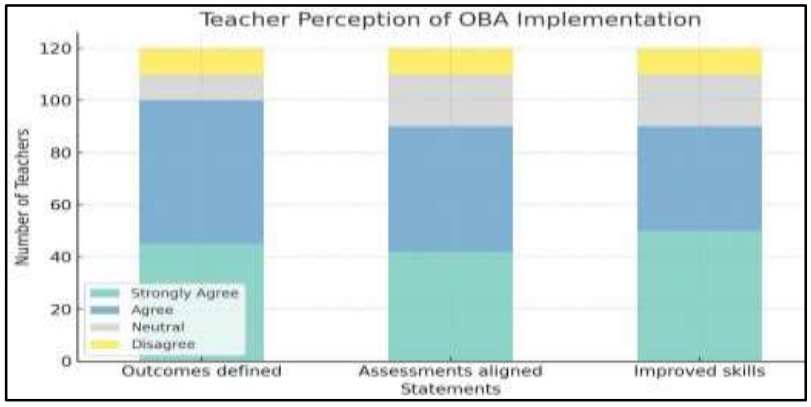
Table 1: Teacher Response on OBA Practices

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Outcomes were defined	45	55	10	10
Asswssments aligned with outcomes	42	48	20	10
OBA improved students skills	50	40	20	10

Table 2: Student Perception on OBA

Statement	Yes	No
Outcomes were Communicated Clearly	130	70
Skill-wise performance was assessed	115	85
Feedback helped improve performance	145	55

Graph 1: Teacher Perception of OBA Implementation

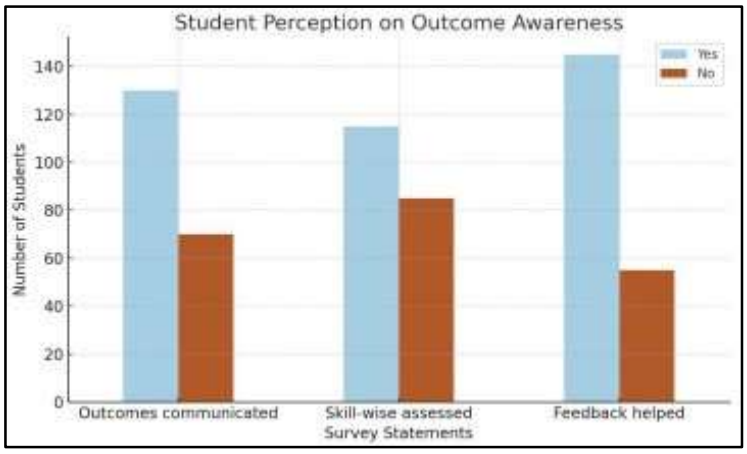


Bar Graph (Stacked)
X-axis: Statements (3 from Table 1) Y-axis: Number of teachers

Insight

Most teachers agreed or strongly agreed that outcomes were defined and assessment alignment helped improve student skills.

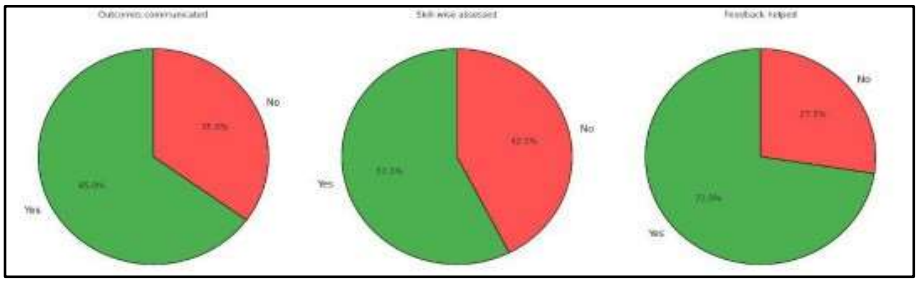
Graph 2: Student Response on Outcome Awareness



Grouped Bar Graph
X-axis: Student responses (3 from Table 2) Y-axis: Number of Students
Two bars per Statement: Yes No

Insight
A majority of Students confirmed they were aware of outcomes and benefited from skill-wise feedback.

Graph 3: student perception on outcome- b a s e d assessment as pie charts for each key area.



Findings

1. OBA had led to better alignment of teaching and learning.
2. Students became more aware and active in their learning journey.
3. Teachers acknowledged the value of outcome-based rubrics.
4. Challenges included lack of training, time constraints, and limited resources.

Discussion

The shift from content-based testing to outcome-based assessment reflected a paradigm change in pedagogy. Teachers who adapted to OBA noticed improved learner engagement. Yet, systemic

challenges needed to be addressed through institutional policies and support.

Conclusion

Outcome-Based Assessment had been effectively used in English classrooms to enhance language acquisition and learner autonomy. When learning outcomes were clearly defined and shared, students showed improved motivation and skills. However, for OBA to become sustainable, continuous teacher training and curriculum redesign were essential. It was concluded that linguistic landscapes must be consciously shaped to reflect the cultural diversity of urban spaces. Policymakers, urban designers, and community leaders should recognize signage as a tool for cultural inclusion and social harmony.

Recommendations

1. Conduct regular workshops for teachers on OBA strategies.
2. Redesign English curriculum with outcome mapping.
3. Provide digital tools for outcome tracking.
4. Encourage student reflection and self-assessment.

References

Biggs, J. (1996). Enhancing Teaching through Constructive Alignment. Higher Education.
Spady, W. G. (1994). Outcome-Based Education: Critical Issues and Answers.
Wang, L., & Cheng, D. (2008). Outcome-based learning in ELT. ELT Journal. Rao, M. (2015). OBE in Indian Classrooms. IJEL.
Nair, R. (2019). Transforming English Teaching through Outcome-Based Assessment. Edusearch.

Emotion, Embodiment and AI: A Cognitive Digital Approach to Analyzing Literary Affects in English Literature

T Sharon Raghukar

Abstract

This Article examines the role of emotion and embodiment in English literature through the lens of artificial intelligence and cognitive linguistics. By adopting a cognitive-digital approach, it emphasizes the embodied nature of literary affect, how readers physically and psychologically experience emotions evoked by narrative and how AI can be employed to analyze and visualize these responses across texts. Emphasizing a cognitive-digital methodology, it explores how AI tools, particularly 'sentiment analysis' and 'affective computing' can be combined with theories of 'embodied cognition' to analyze the 'affective dimensions' of literary texts. Grounded in the tradition of English literary studies, the article investigates how embodied emotional responses shape reader engagement and textual meaning drawing on canonical and contemporary works. The integration of AI offers new possibilities for quantifying and visualizing emotional patterns in large literary corpora while cognitive linguistics provide a nuanced understanding of how embodied metaphors and sensorimotor experiences influence literary affects. Through case studies of works by authors such as Shakespear, Woolf and Morrison, this approach reveals the complexity of emotional dynamics in English literature. Ultimately, this interdisciplinary framework enhances traditional literary analysis, enriching our understanding of how emotion and embodiment operate within English texts and foregrounding AI's evolving role in digital humanities.

Keywords: English Literature, Emotion, Embodiment, Artificial Intelligence

Introduction

The exploration of emotion and embodiment in literature has long been a fertile ground for understanding human experience, as authors across centuries have sought to render the complexities of feeling, perception and corporeality within their narratives. From the Elizabethan plays of Shakespear to the stream of consciousness modernism of Virginia Woolf, and the profound explorations of identity and trauma in Toni Morrison's works, literature provides an enduring lens through which affect -the experience and expression of emotion-can be examined. Yet, in age increasingly dominated by digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI), the methodologies for analyzing literary affect are undergoing transformative shifts. This study proposes a cognitive digital approach to analyzing literary emotions, harnessing AI tools to deepen our understanding of how affect is embodied and conveyed in texts spanning from early modern to contemporary English literature.

Shakespeare's plays, such as *Hamlet* and *Othello*, vividly dramatize the tensions between mind, body and feeling, capturing the embodied nature of affect through soliloquies and physical action. Shakespeare's portrayal of grief, jealousy and madness not only reflects Renaissance conceptions of the humors and the body's influence on the mind but also anticipates modern psychological insights into emotional complexity. For instance, Hamlet's introspective soliloquies provide a rich site for cognitive affective analysis, revealing how inner turmoil manifests both linguistically and physically, thus bridging subjective experience with outward expression.

Virginia Woolf's modernist novels, including *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, shift the focus to the inner life and sensory perception. Woolf's use of stream of consciousness

captures the fluidity of emotion and embodiment, portraying feelings through fragmented thoughts, moods and bodily sensations. Her narrative style emphasizes the embodied subjectivity of emotion, lending itself well to digital analysis techniques that can detect subtle affective patterns.

Toni Morrison's contemporary works, like *Beloved* and *Song of Solomon*, explore how emotional experience is deeply intertwined with history, memory, and racial identity. Morrison's poetic language evokes trauma and healing as embodied states, often connected to cultural memory and ancestral presence. Her narratives highlight the social and political dimensions of embodiment and affect, enriching the study of literary emotion across contexts. By integrating Shakespeare, Woolf, and Morrison with contemporary digital techniques, this study aims to trace the evolving representation of emotion and embodiment in English literature. It demonstrates how cognitive digital approaches can deepen literary scholarship, highlighting the enduring power of affect across centuries and the innovative possibilities AI offers for its analysis today.

William Shakespeare: Hamlet & Othello

Shakespeare's hamlet and Othello provide a rich field for emotional and psychological analysis, with their characters demonstrating intense inner conflict and shifting emotional states.

Prince Hamlet

In Hamlet, the protagonist's language reveals his mental struggle and emotional fragmentation. Prince Hamlet is a thoughtful, emotional and conflicted young man dealing with grief, betrayal and philosophical doubt. His famous line, "*To be or not to be-that is the question*" (Act 3, Scene1), shows his inner debate about life and death. Another quote, "*How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable/seem to me all the uses of this world*!" (Act 1, Scene 2), reflects deep sadness and depression. AI sentiment analysis tools would identify these as negative polarity and low emotional valence, showing emotional overload. Hamlet's emotions often appear through images of death and decay-like Yorick's skull- making him an example of embodied emotion where physical objects represent internal feelings. This aligns with Bing Liu's (2012) framework on emotional complexity supports Lisa Feldman Barrett's (2017) theory that emotions are constructed by context and cognition rather than universally expressed. It helps us understand Hamlet's changing emotional states not as irrational. but cognitively built through memory and social roles. Lui's computational model would tag his speechless as sentiment-heavy, with sharp shifts in emotional tone.

General Othello

Othello is a powerful yet emotionally vulnerable leader who is manipulated into jealousy and rage. His psychological downfall is triggered by Iago's manipulation when he says "O, Beware, my lord, of jealousy: It is the green-eyed monster…" (Act 3, Scene 3), the metaphor turns emotion into a living, consuming thing. His tragic end "I kissed thee ere I killed thee" (Act 5, Scene 2) shows a painful blend of love, guilt and violence. AI metaphor detection and emotion tracking could mark these moments as high intensity emotional shifts. It could mark such shifts as complex polarity and emotional contradiction. Digital linguistics tools can also analyze how Othello's racial identity affects his emotional expression- "Happy for I am Black" linking race and emotional embodiment. Using Hayles (2012) view of digital embodiment, Othello's language can be mapped as a breakdown of narrative and cognitive control, revealing emotional overload through AI

Shakespeare's use of metaphors, soliloquies, and somatic imagery invites affective computing tools to study how emotions are physically and linguistically expressed. Tools like LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry ad Word Count) and Emolex can track emotional keywords,

pronouns use and metaphors to visualize how emotional states are performed in text. Shakespeare's characters demonstrate that emotion in literature is embodied, evolving, and context dependent ideal for digital humanities methods.

Virginia Woolf: ***Mrs Dalloway, To the Light House***

Virgina Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* offers a stream of consciousness narrative rich in internal emotional detail.

Mrs Dalloway

Clarissa Dalloway

In Mrs. Dalloway, Clarissa Dalloway is a refined and reflective woman preparing for a party while thinking about her past and identity and is portrayed through fleeting impressions, shifting memories, and emotional contrasts. She reflects, "She always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day, "showing quiet anxiety and existential fragility. AI tools like sentiment trajectory mapping would identify emotional ambivalence here-neither purely negative nor positive, but layered and unstable. Another line, "She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged," demonstrates emotional ambivalence and contradiction- joy and sadness together, ideal for digital linguistic analysis, which Hogan (2011) argues is key to modernist affect.

Using Jokers' (2013) digital macroanalysis, her thoughts could be mapped across the text for sentiment flow, measuring her internal tension over time.AI sentimental tools would track these emotional shifts and detect a mix of positive and negative sentiment. Clarissa's constant inner dialogue reflects shifting emotions of joy, memory, fear and social anxiety. Jockers' data -driven methods help model Clarissa's internal landscape as a fluctuating graph of emotional highs and lows. Hogan's theory supports Clarissa as a character built by layered emotional resonance.

Septimus Warren Smith

Septimus, a war veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress, exhibits linguistic disorientation and affective overflow. His utterance, "The world has raised its whip; where will it descend?" (p.68) signals heightened fear and emotional intensity. Barrett (2017) explains trauma as distorted cognitive -emotional processing, where perception becomes emotionally colored. His hallucination- "The leaves were alive; trees were alive" shows how trauma changes how he sees the world. His emotional distress is embodied – he feels it in his senses and body. "He had not killed himself; his wife had." (p.149) this displaced logic is a linguistic coping mechanism, reflecting how trauma skews both syntax and agency. Ahmed (2004) further argues that emotions "stick" to bodies with political histories- such as soldiers or marginalized figures- shaping how trauma is embodied and expressed. His concept shows how trauma becomes both a private and collective inscription on the body. Barrett's theory contextualizes Septimus's hallucinations and suicidality as the result of disrupted emotion construction.

Language associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) often exhibits distinct linguistic and emotional patterns that reflect the speaker's cognitive and emotional disruption. (fragmentation, repetition…) Victims of trauma often speak or write in ways that confuse past, present and future. Time Markers are blurred or absent. "It is happening again.", "He could not feel. As he opened them, the world seemed to race past him, a theatre of idiocy" here the past war experiences blend into the present disrupting time perception. Sentiment detection AI tool and LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) could trace fear, detachment and hopelessness in his language.

To the Light House

Mrs Ramsay

In To the Lighthouse, Woolf links time, memory and emotion. The quote "What is the meaning of life? That was all -a simple question which shows deep philosophical & emotional thought - an effect not easily categorized, but central to digital humanities studies. Mrs. Ramsay is a motherly and thoughtful figure who holds the family together. She embodies the quiet emotional labor of care and presence. Her poetic reflection, "And all the lives we ever lived…are full of trees and changing leaves," (p.135) is rich with metaphor and subdued affect. These lines are tagged by LIWC with high insight, low negative effect and strong perceptual processes. Words like look, feel, think and change dominate Woolf's narration, reinforcing her use of perceptual embodiment.

Hayles (2012) digital embodiment applies here: the emotional tone of Mrs. Ramasay's language signals identity through rhythm, silence and syntax. Tanya Clement (2013) argues that such subtle affective cues demand AI models that engage in close reading to detect and preserve emotional nuance. Hayles positions Mrs. Ramsay's emotional presence as traceable through linguistic fading and metaphorical compression. Clement supports the use of fine-tune sentiment tools that capture affective subtleties often missed by broader sentiment models. Virginia Woolf's characters exemplify how emotions are not loud or dramatic, but subtle, embodied, and momentary. Sentiment analysis tools, if trained on literary data, can track such micro-emotions and emotional shifts across time. Her writing illustrates the role of digital linguistics and AI in detecting nuanced affect in non-linear narratives.

Toni Morrison: *Beloved* & *Song of Solomon*

Beloved

Sethe

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and *Song of Solomon* explore racial identity, trauma, and emotional healing. Her Characters embody emotional pain that is both historical and personal. In Beloved, Sethe is a mother haunted by slavery and the death of her child. Her emotional pain is etched in both her physical scars and her language. Her back is described as a "Chokecherry tree", a metaphor for the physical and emotional scars of slavery. "It was not a story to pass on" reflects her embodied trauma and silence, cultural memory and sorrow, which deeper sentiment models reveal as painful restraint. She says, "She is a friend of my mind. She gathers me, man", showing how her identity is shattered and slowly being healed- perfect for emotion reconstruction analysis. Sentiment analysis might classify it as ambiguous or neutral, but deeper analysis- using digital humanities tools- uncovers sorrow, guilt and collective memory. Emotion is embodied through silence, scars and ghostly presence.

AI based sentiment analysis of Sethe's interior monologue and spoken language reveals a dominantly negative polarity and low valence, particularly when she speaks about motherhood and memory. For instance, in a pivotal moment she states: "I will never run from another thing on this earth." (p.18) This sentence reflects resigned determination, mapped by sentiment models like VADER as high arousal and neutral to negative polarity. "It was absolutely the right thing to do, but she had no right to do it." (p.236) This line shows high cognitive complexity and emotional contradiction. As Hayles (2012) argues, emotional embodiment in digital reading practices becomes visible when computational tools expose emotion through word clusters- Sethe's memories are not abstract; they are "*written on the body*".

Song Of Solomon

Milkman Dead

Milk man starts as a selfish, emotionally distant man but grows through a journey of family discovery. He asks, "*What was he supposed to do in the world*?" – a moment of emotional emptiness. Later he says, "*You want to fly, you got to give up the shit that weighs you down*" which shows emotional liberation. His journey starts with confusion and emotional numbness, as he learns about his ancestry, his emotional growth is reflected in the metaphor: , both emotional and geological ,can be mapped using geospatial sentiment analysis, showing how emotional growth follows physical travel.AI metaphor tracking can chart how words like "fly" and "weigh" evolve through the novel AI models trained in African American Vernacular English (AAVE) can analyze Morrison's poetic, lyrical, culturally rich style and layered language for emotion over time. "*He closed his heart to everybody*" (p.107) This has low arousal and emotional engagement, flagged by sentiment models as neutral -negative. However, during his journey south and discovery of his ancestral roots, his emotional tone changes. A Key transformative line: "*If you surrendered to the air, you could ride it*" (p.337) This poetic affirmation scores high positive valence and high insight in LIWC categories, signaling emotional release and embodied understanding. Milkman's identity is rebuilt through emotional introspection, visible in language expressing freedom, heritage and connection.

Morrison's use of bodily images, metaphors and rhythm captures emotional truth that AI can help decode- but not fully grasp. Her characters show how emotion is lived in the body and remembered across generations. This makes her work essential for AI research in narrative emotion, affective computing and ethical digital humanities.

Conclusion

Exploring Shakespeare, woolf and Morrison through the dual lenses of AI and cognitive linguistics reveals a transformative method of literary interpretation- what may be termed cognitive digital literary criticism. Shakespeare's emotionally rich metaphors, Woolf's interior consciousness, and Morrison's embodied trauma demonstrate how literary affect can now be traced, visualized and simulated through artificial intelligence.

AI tools -ranging from sentiment analysis to metaphor recognition-reveal emotional patterns that cognitive linguistics helps contextualize. The theory of embodied mind, conceptual metaphors, and affective simulation together allow scholars to decode how authors render emotion in language. This interdisciplinary approach not only enhances literary interpretation but also helps machines approximate human affective understanding. As AI becomes more empathetic and cognitive linguistics more refined, the emotional and embodied aspects of literature can be studied not merely as representations but as simulations of lived experience.

References

Shakespeare, W. *Hamlet*. B. A. Mowat & P. Werstine, Eds. Simon &Schuster. 2003.
Shakespeare, W. *Othello*. B.A. Mowat & P. Werstine, Eds. Simon & Schuster. 2003.
Woolf, V. *Mrs. Dalloway*. A. Fernald, Ed. Oxford University Press. 2014.
Woolf, V. *To the Lighthouse.* M. Hussey, Ed. Harcourt. 2005.
Morrison, T. *Beloved.* Vintage International. 2004.
Morrison, T. *Song of Solomon*. Vintage International. 2004.
Jokers, M. L. *Macro Analysis: Digital methods and Literary History*. University of Illinois press. 2013.
Liu, Bing. *Sentiment Analysis and Opinion Mining*. 2012.

Hogan P.C. *Affective Narratology: The Emotional structures of Stories*. 2011.
Hayles, N. Katherine. *How we think – Digital media and contemporary Technologies.* 2012.
Ahmed, S. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Routledge. 2004.
Barrette, L.F. *How emotions are made: The secret life of the Brain*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 2017.
Clement, T. "Distant Listening or playing visualizations Pleasantly with the Eyes and Ears. Digital Studies/le Champ Numereique, 3(2).

Exploring Conceptual Metaphors in Padma Sachdev's Autobiography *A Drop in the Ocean*

Shiwali Sharma

Abstract

Conceptual metaphors in Indian English literature are powerful intellectual means of understanding, expressing and structuring the author's experiences. These metaphors present abstract ideas and feelings in a concrete form, allowing the reader to connect with the author's emotional and social reality. This paper specifically analyses Padma Sachdev's autobiography A Drop in the Ocean to understand how metaphors reveal the author's life experiences, womanhood, struggle and cultural identity. Padma Sachdev, Dogri's first major woman poet, presents the complexities of her personal and literary life in a sensitive, introspective style in this autobiography. The title *A Drop in the Ocean* itself is a conceptual metaphor, reflecting the author's own identity and her literary contribution as a small but meaningful presence in the vast social ocean. In the research paper, various parts of the text have been analysed on the basis of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson). Major metaphors such as "life is a journey", "pain is a burden", "language is a container" etc. provide mental and cultural framework to the expression of the author's experiences. This study shows that the metaphors used in autobiography not only convey the author's emotional world but also involve the reader in the sensation of that experience. This research makes an important contribution to the field of metaphor studies and women's autobiographical writing in Indian English literature.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor, Indian English Literature, Autobiography, Experience, Womanhood, Struggle

Introduction

In literature, metaphor is not just an aesthetic tool, but a means of deep expression of thoughts and experiences. When a writer shapes their life's struggles, emotions, and identity into words, conceptual metaphors not only express the experiences but also make them sensory and vivid for the reader. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson explains how we understand abstract ideas through concrete images such as viewing life as a journey, pain as a burden, or language as a vessel of recognition.

In Indian English literature, autobiographical writing, especially autobiographies written by women, has been a powerful medium for highlighting the complexities, struggles, and cultural conflicts of women's lives. The metaphors used in these autobiographies provide structure to female identity and social recognition through language. In this context, this research paper analyses the autobiography *A Drop in the Ocean* of the renowned Dogri poet Padma Sachdev. Padma Sachdev is not only the first prominent woman poet of Dogri but has also been an influential figure in Indian multilingual and women's literature. The analytical style she employed in her autobiography is marked by an extremely dense and impactful presence of metaphors. This paper examines select passages from the autobiography to trace how such metaphors function not only as stylistic choices but as cultural and emotional maps. Through close reading and metaphor analysis, the study applies Lakoff and Johnson's framework to explore the linguistic embodiment of memory and identity.

The title of this autobiography itself presents a profound conceptual metaphor 'Life is like an ocean. An individual is just a drop. But when I sit down to look back in my life, I discover a virtual sea of people, events, situations and relationships of a bewildering variety.' This line reflects that the writer sees herself as a tiny drop in the vast ocean of life, yet this

'drop' contains the entirety of life. This metaphor not only indicates her personal identity but also humbly yet profoundly interprets her social and literary contributions.

Several other significant conceptual metaphors also emerge in the autobiography:

‘Life is a journey’
‘Every station I stopped at was a lesson; every train I missed a loss I carried.’

This line embodies the dynamism of life and the accumulated meanings of experiences.
‘Pain is a burden’
‘Some memories I drag like a sack of stones I never chose to carry them.’

This metaphor expresses the burden of personal trauma and memories.
‘Language is a vessel/property’

Although not explicitly stated, the author's statement suggests, “Dogri was not just my mother tongue, it was my mother’s soul speaking through me.” This language is presented not just as a means of communication, but as the soul connected to culture and maternal memory. This research investigates how these metaphors shape the writer's experiences in emotional, social, and cultural contexts. This study not only contributes to the field of metaphor theory but also provides a new perspective on the diversities of Indian women's autobiographical writing.

Literature Review

The foundation of the conceptual metaphor theory was laid by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). In this text, they argue that metaphors are not merely linguistic embellishments, but rather fundamental components of our cognitive system. They assert that the way we think, experience, and communicate is often made possible through metaphors, such as which shape our understanding and ideology (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This theory has given rise to new possibilities in the field of literary analysis, especially in autobiographical writing where individuals express their life experiences through metaphors.

The work of Atula Ahuja, Suparak Techacharoenrungrueang, and Sudaporn Luksaneeyanawin on the role of metaphors in Indian English literature is noteworthy, as they have studied the 'metaphors of womanhood' in the works of contemporary Indian women writers based on their cultural background (Ahuja et al., 2017). They presented the argument that metaphors reflect the social status of women on one hand, and on the other hand, they can also serve as a means of self-empowerment.

The significant role of metaphors is also seen in Indian women's autobiographical writing. In Urmila Pawar's Marathi autobiography 'Aaydan' (The Weave of My Life), 'weaving' emerges as a central metaphor that not only reflects the complexities of her life but also symbolizes her efforts at self-construction (Pawar, 2008).

In contemporary research works on modern Indian women's autobiographies, Gayathri Prabhu's book 'A Genre of Her Own: Life Narratives and Feminist Literary Beginnings in Modern India' (2025) is a significant contribution. In this book, she demonstrates how the autobiographies created by Indian women writers encapsulate feminist voices and cultural resistance. In her view, women's autobiographical writing is not only a documentation of experiences but also an ideological resistance.

Mridula Garg's criticism on the socio-political context of metaphors in her work ‘Metaphors of Womanhood in Indian Literature’ is particularly noteworthy, where she illustrates how traditional metaphors used in literature such as ‘Sati’, ‘Mother’, ‘Annapurna’, or ‘Fallen Woman’ limit the image of women and shape them into Molds. This criticism highlights the colonial and patriarchal influence of these metaphors (Garg, 2005).

Although the above research has extensively discussed Indian women's writing and the depth of autobiographical tones, there is no detailed study available specifically on the use of metaphors in Padma Sachdev's autobiographical writing. While some critical comments have been made about her poetry and creative contributions, a critical interpretation of her autobiographical tone and metaphorical expression is still in a vacuum. Thus, the current research aims to address this gap by studying the metaphors used in Padma Sachdev's autobiographical writing in light of Lakoff and Johnson's metaphor theory.

Theoretical Framework

This section clarifies the main theories used in the research and demonstrates how these theories determine the direction of the study. Since this research is based on the analysis of metaphors used in Padma Sachdev's autobiographical writing, its theoretical foundation is primarily grounded in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which was established by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). Additionally, since the author is a woman and her writing is based on female experiences, a Feminist Literary Perspective is also included as a supportive aspect of this study.

Lakoff and Johnson believe that metaphors are not merely aesthetic tools of language, but they are the foundation of our cognitive system. According to the authors, the metaphors we use deeply influence our thinking, experiences, and social behaviour. For example, metaphors like, 'life is a journey' reflect the tendency to see life as a dynamic process. Lakoff and Johnson have categorized metaphors into three main types: structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, and ontological metaphors through which abstract experiences are expressed in concrete contexts.

In writings like autobiographies, where the author interprets personal experiences, memories, struggles, and identity, the use of metaphors holds special significance. They are not merely stylistic devices, but serve as a bridge between the author's self-perception and social contexts. This study will utilize cognitive metaphor theory to understand the identification, structure, and impact of metaphors in Padma Sachdev's autobiographical writing. It will be examined how the author expresses her experiences through metaphors, whether she employs a specific metaphorical structure in the context of travel, struggle, femininity, or society. Additionally, it will also explore how these metaphors relate to her social and cultural environment.

In addition, since Padma Sachdev is a woman writer, it also seems necessary to interpret the metaphors used in her writing from a feminist perspective. Feminist literary criticism posits that language, metaphors, and narrative structures are often influenced by patriarchal value systems. Therefore, it is important that this analysis does not remain limited to metaphorical meanings but also understands how these metaphors shape the writer's identity, voice, and resistance. Critics like Mridula Garg have deeply analysed the impact of metaphors on the images of women in Indian literature. Thus, this theoretical framework which incorporates both Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive metaphor theory and feminist literary perspective provides a strong foundation for the research. This framework will not only help in understanding the linguistic implications of the metaphors used in Padma Sachdeva's autobiographical writing, but also their cultural, emotional, and social connotations.

Research Methodology

The main objective of this research is to analyse the metaphors used in Padma Sachdeva's autobiographical writing from a cognitive and feminist perspective. In this section, the method adopted for our research, data sources, and the process of analysis is presented. This study is qualitative and interpretive (Textual Analysis), as its aim is to critically analyse the profound meanings of words and metaphors rather than merely compiling quantitative data. This

approach is suitable for the analysis of autobiographical writing because it gives special attention to understanding the author's experiences, identity, and socio-cultural contexts. For this research, Padma Sachdev's autobiography (or her writings in an autobiographical tone) has been chosen as the main data source. The reason for this selection is that Padma Sachdev's writing not only reflects the Indian women's experience but also features a rich use of metaphorical language. The cultural and linguistic richness of her writings provides a suitable foundation for this study. This study employs Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) for the analysis of metaphors, a theory proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. Through this theory, we will identify, classify, and interpret the metaphors used in the autobiography. Additionally, feminist literary criticism theories will be utilized to understand the author's feminist perspective, enabling an exploration of the social-political dimensions of the metaphors. In the process of analysis, the first step will be a close reading of the selected writings of Padma Sachdev. After that, the language of the metaphors and their contexts will be carefully identified. The metaphors will be classified under the categories proposed by Lakoff and Johnson such as structural, orientational, and power metaphors. Following this, the meanings of these metaphors will be established in relation to cultural backgrounds and the author's personal experiences. The limitations of this study are also clear. The research will be based solely on Padma Sachdev's limited writings, making it impossible to draw broad conclusions. Additionally, the interpretation of metaphors can sometimes be subjective, depending on the researcher's perspective. If there is any aspect of translation from Hindi to English in Padma Sachdev's writing, there may be challenges in understanding linguistic nuances. Since this research is based on literary analysis and involves the study of personal experiences of human subjects, no specific ethical clearance is required. However, respecting the sensitivity of the writer, sensitivity and honesty will be maintained throughout the research process.

Analysis

This section presents an analysis of the metaphors used in Padma Sachdev's autobiography based on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory and feminist perspective. The objective is to understand how the author has expressed her experiences, social, and cultural identity through metaphors.

Introduction and Context of the Text

Padma Sachdev's autobiography encompasses various aspects of Indian women's lives such as family, motherhood, society, and cultural identity. Her writing often reflects individual struggles, resolve, and social boundaries. Analysing her metaphors is essential for understanding these themes, as metaphors not only convey emotions but also reflect the author's social status and mindset.

Identification and Classification of Metaphors

According to the cognitive metaphor theory of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), three main categories of metaphors were found in Padma Sachdev's writings which are structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, and power metaphors. For example, structural metaphors like 'life is a journey' are repeatedly seen in Padma's autobiography, reflecting the ups and downs and experiences of life (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

In the orientation metaphor, portraying the journey from 'darkness to light' symbolizes liberation from struggle. Viewing the body or mind as an object in power metaphors such as 'broken heart' or 'burden of the mind', provides a deep interpretation of emotions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The Meaning of Metaphors and Social-Cultural Context

In Padma Sachdev's metaphors, not only personal pain and struggles are reflected, but they also provide references to social restrictions and women's empowerment. Metaphors like 'chains of breath' express the bonds and limitations of women, criticizing the status of women in the Indian social system. According to Kövecses (2005), metaphors are deeply linked to cultural experiences, and Sachdev's metaphors are particularly meaningful in the context of Indian women's lives. Her metaphors clearly express motherhood, domestic responsibilities, and the struggles of self-definition.

Analysis of Metaphors from a Feminist Perspective

According to feminist criticism, language and metaphors mirror patriarchal social structures (Showalter, 1985). In Padma Sachdev's metaphors, we see a duality where some metaphors challenge the traditional female role, while others seem to accept social expectations. For example, metaphors like ‘silent revolution’ depict women's inner strength and rebellion. Additionally, the metaphor ‘fire of the soul’ expresses the freedom and empowerment of women, revealing the aspiration to break out of traditional boundaries. Thus, Padma Sachdev's language and metaphorical structure not only reflect women's voices but actively empower them.

Relation Between Summary and Research Questions

Analysis clearly shows that in Padma Sachdev's autobiographical writing, the use of metaphors is not only for the expression of emotions and experiences but also plays a significant role in constructing their social and cultural identity. The metaphors present a multidimensional interpretation of their inner world, struggles, and social constraints. This study proves that the Conceptual Metaphor Theory and feminist perspective together provide a deep understanding of metaphors, which place Padma Sachdev's writing in the broader context of Indian women's autobiography (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2005; Showalter, 1985).

Conclusion

This research study focused on the analysis of metaphors used in Padma Sachdev's autobiographical writing, aiming to understand how metaphorical language provides form to the author's self-expression, identity, and cultural experiences. The study specifically analysed Padma Sachdev's writing through the lens of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and feminist literary perspectives. During the study, it became clear that Sachdev's writing uses metaphors not merely as embellishments of language, but to convey deep social, cultural, and psychological meanings. Metaphors like 'life is a journey', 'the burden of the mind', or 'silent revolution' reflect the writer's personal struggles, social constraints, and the quest for feminine identity. Through these metaphors, the writer has not only expressed her experiences but also worked to connect readers with various dimensions of women’s lives. The theoretical contribution of this research is that it has interpreted the cognitive metaphor theory in the context of Indian women's autobiographies, which is a relatively underdeveloped research area. Additionally, this study, focusing on the writings of an author like Padma Sachdev, is an important effort towards better understanding the voices of women in Indian English literature. As a research method, textual analysis and the process of identifying metaphors helped in reaching the depth of the subject, although the role of the researcher's perspective in the interpretation of autobiographical literature gives rise to limitations. It can be recommended for future research to conduct a comparative review of the use of metaphors in the autobiographical writings of other Indian women writers. Additionally, keeping in mind linguistic diversity, conducting a metaphorical

analysis of autobiographies written in various Indian languages could be a rich research direction.

Ultimately, it can be said that metaphors are not only a means of literary expression, but they also serve as a bridge between the writer's inner world and social reality. Padma Sachdev's writing is an example of how a woman writer not only crafts personal history through her autobiography but also challenges social structures. This study has made it clear that understanding autobiographical writing through metaphors can be an effective way to reveal the depth of relationships between literature, society, and feminist discourse.

References:

Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Kövecses, Zoltán. *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Ahuja, Atula, Suparak Techacharoenrungrueang, and Sudaporn Luksaneeyanawin. "Metaphors of Womanhood in the Literary Works of Contemporary Indian Writers." *Cognitive Linguistic Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2017.

Pawar, Urmila. *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs*. Translated by Maya Pandit, Columbia University Press, 2009.

"Padma Sachdev." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, updated recently. Accessed 2025-07-15.

Dutt, Nirupama. "Padma Sachdev: Sparkling like a Mountain Spring." *Indian Literature,* vol. 65, no. 5 (325), 2021, pp. 16–21. *JSTOR,* https://www.jstor.org/stable/27277061. Accessed 10 Aug. 2025.

Pawar, shikha. "Remodeling Dogri literature via female gaze in Padma Sachdev's *A Drop in the Ocean*." *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, Vol.12, no. 2, 2024, pp.31-39. doi: 10.33329/rjelal.12.2.31

Sachdev, Padma. A Drop in the Ocean: An Autobiography. Translated by Uma Vasudev and Jyotsna Singh, National Book Trust, 2011.

Canning P and Walker B. *Discourse analysis: A Practical Introduction*. Routledge,2023.

Prbhu, Gayathri. *A Genre of Her Own: Life Narratives and Feminist Literary Beginnings in Modern India.* Bloomsbury India, 2025.

Garg, Mridula. "Metaphors of Womanhood in Indian Literature." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political,* vol. 16, no. 4, 1991, pp. 407–24. *JSTOR,* http://www.jstor.org/stable/40644725. Accessed 20 june. 2025.

Cognition and Compassion: Literary Ethics in the Reimagining Duryodhana

Shreya Shubhangi & Sayani Banerjee

Abstract

Myths have traditionally served to explain the origins of the world, belief systems, and natural phenomena within specific cultural contexts. These ancient narratives, rich with supernatural elements and moral teachings, are transmitted through generations, shaping social consciousness and ethical frameworks. The Mahabharata, one of India's most significant epics, embodies this tradition, transcending time and geography to present a comprehensive narrative of Indian history. While it celebrates a multitude of heroic figures, it predominantly portrays the Kauravas—particularly Duryodhana—as representations of villainy. However, Bhasa's classical Sanskrit play *Urubhangam*, composed in the early centuries, challenges the traditional portrayal of Duryodhana by depicting him as a tragic character grappling with defeat and inner conflict. This study examines *Urubhangam* primarily through its English translation in Shattered Thighs and Other Plays by AND Haksar. Though Bhasa's reinterpretation is ancient, the present study employs a modern cognitive approach drawing on Gerard Genette's theory of focalization and David Herman's concept of the "Story world", to analyze how the narrative strategies in *Urubhangam* especially semantic focalization and cognitive world-building—shape ethical perception and audience empathy. Through close textual analysis, this study explores how focalized language, monologue, and shifts in point of view function as cognitive mechanisms that immerse readers in Duryodhana's consciousness. The study concludes that these narratological strategies do not merely portray complexity but actively reshape moral judgment and foster empathy for the marginalized or misunderstood. Socially, these findings highlight literature's power to move readers beyond simplistic binaries of good and evil, promoting critical self-reflection and compassionate engagement with difference.

Keywords: Narratology, Cognitive Approach, Duryodhana, Focalization, Gerard Genette, Indian Epic.

Introduction

In the *Mahabharata*, Duryodhana is cast as the quintessential antagonist—proud, envious, and consumed by insatiable ambition. His relentless hostility toward the Pandavas and repeated refusals to seek reconciliation position him as the embodiment of adharma within the epic's moral universe. Even his final endorsement of Asvathama's vow of vengeance reinforces his image as a villain whose downfall affirms the triumph of righteousness. Yet this dominant narrative, while powerful, is not exhaustive. Duryodhana's complexity has never been absent from the epic record—it has simply been overshadowed by the moral clarity imposed by the epic's teleological structure. His famous declaration "*Jānāmi dharmaṃ na ca me pravṛttiḥ / Jānāmy adharma na ca me nivṛttiḥ / Kenāpi devena hṛdi sthitena / Yathā niyukto'smi tathā karomi*" ("I know what duty compels me to do, and I know what would restrain me from unrighteousness; placed in my heart by a certain god, I act accordingly") reveals a character caught in tension between knowledge and compulsion, morality and destiny. This inherent ambiguity makes him a fertile figure for reinterpretation, and it is precisely this potential that Bhāsa explores in *Urubhangam* (*The Shattered Thighs*).

Composed around the 2nd and 3rd century CE, Bhāsa's *Urubhangam* reconfigures the moral architecture of the *Mahabharata* by staging Duryodhana not as a villain, but as a tragic figure marked by psychological depth and ethical vulnerability. Set on the final day of the Kurukshetra war, the play begins in the aftermath of the climactic mace duel between Bhīma,

prince of the Pandavas clan, and Duryodhana, prince of the Kuru clan. Bhīma's victory achieved by breaking Duryodhana's thighs marks the start of the play, which unfolds in the shadow of defeat. This narrative choice is significant: Bhāsa bypasses the spectacle of combat and instead foregrounds the emotional and ethical consequences of violence. In doing so, he disrupts the epic's binary moral logic and invites a more complex, humanitarian reading of character and consequence.

The objective of this paper is to examine *Urubhangam* through a narratological and cognitive framework, exploring how Bhāsa's dramaturgy reshape audience perception of Duryodhana and reorients the moral coordinates of classical Indian drama. Specifically, the paper asks: how does *Urubhangam* reframe Duryodhana's character through, focalization, and affective cues? To address this question, the analysis draws on narratological theory—particularly concepts of focalization (Genette,1980) alongside Story world which describes how readers create amental simulations of narrative environment-while attributing beliefs, desires, and emotions to characters through an intentional stance. (Herman,2013). Gerad Genette's theory of focalization provides a foundation for understanding perceptive of narrative. Building upon this the paper proposes Semantic focalization as an additional lens which explore on how language expresses a character's cognitive and emotional perspective within the text. The study is grounded in AND Haksar's English translation of *Urubhangam*, and situates Bhāsa's humanitarian impulse within broader debates. Pusalker (1968) observed that "in psychological subtlety Bhāsa is almost modern," a remark that resonates with contemporary cognitive approaches to literature. *Urubhangam* does not seek to villainize Duryodhana, but to humanize him and this shift has profound implications for how classical Indian texts can be read and theorized. It challenges the assumption that epic characters are fixed within moral archetypes and opens space for a more fluid, affectively saturated understanding of narrative ethic.

This paper thus positions *Urubhangam* as a rich site for re-examining moral and emotional complexity within classical Indian literature. By integrating narratological and cognitive approaches, it seeks to illuminate how Bhāsa's play reconfigures character, narrative structure, and ethical perception. In reframing Duryodhana not as a villain but as a tragic figure, *Urubhangam* disrupts the epic's moral binaries and invites a more nuanced, compassionate engagement with the ethical possibilities of Sanskrit drama. Through this lens, Bhāsa's work emerges not only as a literary innovation but as a theoretical provocation—one that challenges us to rethink the boundaries of narrative, morality, and human complexity.

Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative narratological approach of Genette's particularly Focalization and combining with close textual analysis with basics of cognitive narratology, especially within his four-strategy model, this paper will correspond to startegy3, which draws on cognition to explore narratives as sense-making. The primary text which has been taken is Bhasa's *Urubhangam*, as translated in *The Shattered Thighs and other plays* by A.N.D. Haksar. *The Shattered Thigh* or *Urubhangam* is set during the aftermath of the great battle of Kurukshetra, specifically focusing on the final day of combat when the duel between the Kauravas chief Duryodhana and the Pandavas prince Bhima takes place. The battlefield is described vividly as littered with the fallen—dead kings, soldiers, elephants, chariots, and weapons, emphasizing the scale and devastation of the war. The combat occurs on the Kurukshetra battlefield (as per the adhering to classical Sanskrit dramaturgy) This whole incident was described by the chorus of soldiers of the battel. The key witnesses present at this combat has prominent figures such as Krishna, the Pandavas, Balarama (Krishna's elder brother and mentor of Duryodhana) and kuru elders. As mentioned in the ninth book of the epic Mahabharata, it was Krishna who told Arjuna to target the thighs of Duryodhana and according to the rule of combat with maces it was a foul blow. While Balarama call its unfair on the other

hand Krishna calls it a necessary war stratagem. This tension introduces moral ambiguity and creates ethical engagement among the reader with Duryodhana tragic fate. In the present text these events are described in a compressed form. Departing from the epic the playwright has created his own dramatic effect by bringing kuru elders to his side together with his two queens and his son which has not been described in the epic at all. Using tools derived from Gerard Genette's focalization David Herman's cognitive Narratology, this paper analyzes the textual strategies which serves in reimagine Duryodhana characters.

Analysis

> O poor Duryodhana, even in the plight, he follows me, like a child dragging himself, his arms pale with dust; his body is smeared and wet with the bloody cosmetic of war, like a serpent dragging its tired body after having churned the ocean. (Haksar, Act II, 2008)

The given statement is framed through external focalization as Balarama was explaining the situation of Duryodhana after the combat. "o poor Duryodhana", the phrase immediately sets the tone for pity amongst the readers disrupting the expected heroic narrative. The metaphors "dragging like a child" and like serpent drag its body after churning the ocean" deepen the empathy- how a child after some hurting ran to his guardian, similarly Duryodhana is also pushing, dragging himself to Balarama as he was his mentor. Like a serpent, when we twist it in fear, wounded it drags itself to hide in dark place. These offers a cognitive reversal, inviting reader to witness the condition of warrior or a feared advisory as fragile. In Herman's terms, this exemplifies how narrative discourse shapes the reader's mental construction of the Storyworld- not merely as setting, but as a dynamic space where moral and emotional judgments are actively negotiated. Through Balarama's statement, the battlefield is reconfigured and became a spectator of ethical ambiguity. Here readers are encouraged to rethink their interpretation not to feel compassion but to question whether Duryodhana's defeat signifies justice or merely collapse. The Storyworld thus became cognitive terrain where ideological closure is suspended and emotional complexity takes precedence.

> Here I am. Bhima broke the rule of war. His mace blow shattered my thighs. I drag myself half-dead body along the earth with my arms. But please, lord Balaram please calm your anger. Today, for the first time, this head is on the ground, at your feet. We are finished. And so is the war and the enmity. Now just, let the funeral of the kuru clan proceed. (Haksar, Act II, 2008)

This statement is spoken by Duryodhana through internal focalization, giving readers direct access to his inner thoughts. When he says "Here I am," he is not just declaring his physical presence—he is revealing his state of defeat and exhaustion. It's more than a location; it's a moment of emotional exposure. The phrase "drag myself half-dead body" carries symbolic weight. It shows that he is caught between life and death, between dignity and humiliation. His body, once strong and proud, is now broken and crawling—this reversal reflects the collapse of his power and pride. When he says "for the first time this head is on the ground," it creates the image of a proud king who, after being defeated, finally comes to terms with his downfall. Though the moment is painful, it also shows a kind of realization—perhaps even regret or acceptance. This scene marks a turning point in the narrative. It shifts the focus from battle to reflection, and invites the reader to feel the emotional cost of war. Instead of celebrating victory, the reader is asked to rehearse grief, face ethical uncertainty, and understand the deeper consequences of violence.

> Durjaya -I want to sit on your lap
> Duryodhana- Durjaya, Durjaya! The pain alas! This light of my eyes, delight of my heart, this moon is now a burning fire.
> Durjaya – why don't you let me sit on your lap?
> Duryodhana – let it be, my son. Sit somewhere else. from today your old familiar sitting place is not there anymore….
> I am going to my brothers.
> Durjaya – take me there also
> Duryodhana – Tell that to Bhima, my son." (Haksar, Act II, 2008)

This conversation between Duryodhana and his son Durjaya, which feels like an extension of Bhāsa himself in *Urubhaṅgam*, is framed through internal focalization, offering a glimpse into Duryodhana's emotional and physical collapse. Durjaya's request "I want to sit on your lap" is simple and childlike, but it carries symbolic weight. The lap, once a place of comfort and protection, is no longer available. Duryodhana's response "this light of my eyes… this moon is now burning fire" shows how love, once something soothing, now intensifies his pain. When he says, "from today your old familiar place is not there anymore," it reflects not just his physical pain but also the end of his role as a father. He can no longer fulfil his duty. His identity is dissolving.

Semantically, the phrase "I am going to my brothers" signals his acceptance of death and his place among the fallen. But it is his final statement "Tell this to Bhima, my son" that carries deep emotional weight. It does not just express frustration or anger, but also pain. Duryodhana was defeated through foul means. He was not always righteous, but he wants Bhima to understand the emotional and familial loss he and his son have suffered. This is an unspoken accusation a way of making Bhima reckon with the consequences of his actions. It does not demand justice, but leaves Bhima to live with the cost of victory.

In Herman's Storyworld terms, this moment reframes the war's conclusion. It is no longer about triumph or punishment, but about loss, legacy, and emotional residue. The scene prompts reflection on how violence affects not just the defeated, but also those who survive. It invites readers to feel discomfort and empathy. The battlefield is transformed into a space of mourning, where the consequences of war are felt in intimate and irreversible ways.

> Alas! Is this the great king? He was like a pillar of gold, the king of all kings. And now my poor boy lies on the floor like a broken doorpost. (Haksar, Act II, 2008)

The given statement, externally focalised through Dhritarastra, a grieving father presenting the condition of Duryodhana after the combat marked by foul play. Semantically the phrases "kings of kings", "pillar of gold", and "like a broken doorpost" present a contrast of Duryodhana condition. This contrasting present dual frame Once was a great king, powerful and proud ruler and now lying on the ground like a door post, dethroned helpless, alone and wounded. This invites readers to revise their mental representation of Duryodhana. The grief of Dhritrastra present not only the downfall but also simulate the readers emotional and ethical dimension of the event. This incident also helps the reader to come out from their comfort of fixed moral judgements and to see the narratives from the rigid binaries sets by the epic to make sense of the world.

Discussion

Narratives not only recounts the events but also organize them to access the perception, emotion and judgement. In *Urubhangam*, focalization became a key tool for reconstructing the meaning. Drawing on Gerard Genette narrative discourse especially focalization, the study

presents the shifting of readers alignment from rigid moral binaries to rethinking and reminding of those narratives. Balarama statement was presented through external focalization, making the picture of battlefield and the warrior into the space of pity and empathy. In contrast Duryodhana's monologue not only frames his defat but also show the punishment and declaration his own wrongdoing. As Mieke Bal (1997) argues, focalization always carries ideological weight – it encodes a particular perspective. In this play the phrase like "poor Duryodhana, half-dead, pillar of gold "acts as what Herman calls Storyworld- building cues. The emotional depth of the play is further revealed in the exchange between Duryodhana and his son Durjaya, his refusal to let Balarama retaliate and acceptance of his defeat along with wrongdoings highlights realisation as well as resignation. Despite his flaws the familial bond remains intact. Dhritarshatra lament too shows the grieve over judgment. These scenes reflect Bhasa's dramaturgical strategy where he shows Duryodhana not only as fallen warrior but also as a tragic figure who have lost his everything in the battlefield under a foul play. The Storyworld tries to make the readers to look beyond the moral binaries of epic and to reconstruct and reimagine the ethical judgments through narratives and engage with the human loss.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine how Bhāsa's *Urubhaṅgam* dismantles the fixed epic binary that has long cast Duryodhana as a one-dimensional villain, revealing instead a tragic hero whose moral and emotional depths can only be accessed when we attend to *how* the story is told. By combining Gérard Genette's theory of focalization with David Herman's storymind model, and extending them through my own lens of semantic focalization, the study has shown that Bhāsa's language choices—his metaphors, evaluative terms, and shifts in perspective—systematically guide the audience into Duryodhana's inner world. Through the interplay of internal, external, and character focalizations, the play invites a perceptual and emotional realignment, allowing readers to inhabit a Storyworld textured with vulnerability, loss, and dignity. Herman's framework clarifies how this narrative cues stimulate mental simulation and cognitive empathy, while Genette's distinctions reveal the mechanics of 'who sees' and 'who speaks' in producing these effects. Here the emphasis on semantic focalization foregrounds the role of language as the bridge between perception and feeling—a mechanism that transforms interpretive distance into intimate moral engagement. The need for this approach arises from a broader scholarly gap: while Duryodhana's tragic heroism has been noted, there has been insufficient attention to the micro-level narrative strategies that effect this transformation. Exploring these narrative mechanisms is crucial, because it advances how we understand literary ethics—not as static themes, but as fundamentally tied to narrative form and reader engagement. This paper thus reveals the dynamic processes through which literature shapes moral empathy, challenging reductive binaries of good and evil that dominate traditional epic readings.

In today's world, with growing attention to moral complexity, identity, and the limitations of black-and-white thinking, revisiting classical narratives from a narratological and cognitive perspective is especially important. Literature remains a powerful tool for cultivating empathy and critical reflection. By showing how *Urubhaṅgam* invites audiences to perceive an infamous epic antagonist as a deeply human and tragic figure, my work contributes to larger conversations about compassion, justice, and the transformative potential of storytelling in contemporary cultural and ethical discourse.

In sum, this paper does not merely add to the textual interpretation of a classical play; it presents a refined methodological lens that foregrounds the role of language and perspective as active mediators in moral meaning-making. This has both scholarly and societal significance, underscoring how ancient texts resonate anew when examined through the synergistic interplay of narrative theory and the sciences of mind.

Work Cited

Bal, Mieke. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narratives*. 2nd. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1997.

Bhasa. Haksar, A.N.D. *The Shattered Thighs and Other Plays*. New Delhi: Penguin Classics, 2008. 110-125.

Genette, Gerard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. 2nd. New York: Cornell University Press, 1980.

H.Chaudhari, Bhagavanbhai. "*Urubhangam* (Breaking of Thighs) - A Tragedy in Indian Tradition. SRJIS (2016).

Herman, David. Storytelling and Sciences of the Mind. London: The MIT Press, 2013.

Parasahr, Himanshu. "Canonical Indian Literature and Bhasa: A study in Texts and their Aesthetics." IJFMR (2023).

Peter, Reshma Ann. "Revisoining the Mahabharta: Analysing Bhasa's *Urubhangam* in The Context Of peacebuilding." JETIR.ORG 8.9 (2021): 1-4. PRINT.

Pramanik, Indrajit. "The So Called Character of Duryodhana, in The Play of Bhasa is Reflected as a Humanitarian Character." IJCRT.ORG 8.10 (2020): 1-3. print.

Das, S.C. J.Prodhani. "Aesthetic Experience In *Urubhangam*." Rupkatha journal of interdiscilinary studies in humanities (2022).

Santosh, Keerthana. "The Need of Historical Rereading of *Urubhangam*." IJR (2017).

Assessing the Effectiveness of Blended Learning in Improving Writing Skills Among Graduates: A Case Study of Cambridge Empower B2 LMS

K Shyam Sundar & Illur Prem Kumar

Abstract

The current study investigates the efficacy of blended learning in improving writing skills among engineering graduate students employing the Cambridge Empower B2 Learning Management System (LMS). A mixed-methods approach was used, combining the quantitative analysis of pre- and post-assessment results with the qualitative response from the participants. The scores suggest a statistically significant enhancement in writing proficiency, particularly in technical and academic writing tasks. The paper emphasizes the role of LMS-driven feedback and structured exercises in augmenting writing competence. The findings indicate the impact of technology-enhanced language learning in engineering education.

Key Words: Blended learning, writing skills, technical education, Cambridge Empower B2, Learning Management System (LMS).

I. Introduction

Traditional classroom is integrated with digital technologies now a days through blended learning which has progressed over the past two decades as a considerable didactic template in technical education. It was introduced in the early 2000s, when technical institutions initiated leveraging Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) courses to supplement face-to-face teaching [1]. Initially, it was implemented to enhance flexibility and accessibility, blended learning has since been identified for its competence to augment learner autonomy, promote deeper engagement, and support differentiated instruction [2], [3].

In the area of language education, the assimilation of Learning Management Systems (LMSs) into blended frameworks has been influential in addressing the complex demands of language acquisition. Writing, as a dynamic and cognitively demanding skill, advantages from iterative exercise, tailored feedback, and multimodal input—all of which can be supported by a well-designed LMS [4]. Over time, research has been highlighted the prospective of digital tools to scaffold writing development through structured tasks, peer review mechanisms, and automated assessment features [5], [6].

The Cambridge Empower B2 LMS signifies a modern tool of this pedagogical development. Embedded in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), it aims upper-intermediate learners and extends a integrated series of activities targeted at progressing core language skills (listening, speaking, reading) including writing. However, general studies on LMS use in language instruction have flourished, few have investigated its targeted influence on writing proficiency among graduates who often expects advanced writing expertise for academic and professional success [7].

The current investigation tries to assess the efficacy of blended learning in improving writing skills among graduate students, using the Cambridge Empower B2 LMS as a case study. Explicitly, it analyses writing progress outcomes, student engagement with LMS-based writing tasks, and the system's usability. The outcomes aim to fill a research gap by supporting to the body of knowledge on blended language learning at the advanced level, particularly in relation to the productive language skills.

II. Literature Review

The assimilation of digital platforms into language instruction has changed the pedagogical landscape, particularly in writing skills improvement. The review of literature portrays an inclusive exploration of the study appropriate to the three critical areas: (A) Blended learning in language education, (B) Writing skill development in engineering education, and (C) The role and efficacy of Learning Management Systems (LMSs), with a special focus on Cambridge Empower B2.

A. Blended Learning in Language Learning

Blended learning, defined as the intended combination of the face-to-face instruction with the online components, has been widely identified for its use in language acquisition [1]. Garrison and Vaughan claim that blended learning establishes a "transformative educational experience" by blending the social presence of traditional learning with the flexibility of digital resources [2].

Research findings have presented that blended models are especially helpful in enhancing the higher-order language skills, as they facilitate opportunities for learners to connect with the materials asynchronously and apply knowledge synchronously [3]. Graham et al. highlight that blended domains reinforce personalized learning avenues, acknowledging the students to resume the lessons and the resources at their own pace, which is vital in mastering writing skills [4].

Blended learning has also been connected to improved learner autonomy and motivation in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) [5]. In graduate-level education, where students are expected to take part in self-directed learning, these components are essential.

B. Writing Skills Advancement in Engineering Education

The Writing Skill is an intricate cognitive process embracing idea generation, planning, text construction, and revision [6]. At the graduate level, proficient writing is essential for academic and professional communication, yet many students find it very difficult with coherence, organization, and formal language use.

According to Weigle, the effective writing instruction must be process-oriented and iterative, including several stages of improvement and response [7]. Chances for careful writing practice are frequently limited in traditional classrooms due to the time constraints. On the other hand, asynchronous tasks and feedback mechanisms on digital platforms can expand these opportunities.

Several researchers have showed that the online platforms enable the development of structured writing. For instance, Chen and Bryer identified that learners who engaged with online writing tasks demonstrated apparent improvements in clarity, grammatical accuracy, and organization over time [8]. Moreover, peer feedback and reflective journaling in digital platforms have been exhibited to strengthen metacognitive awareness in writing [9].

C. The Role and Efficacy of Learning Management Systems (LMS)

LMSs such as Moodle, Blackboard, and Cambridge Empower present customised learning environments that enable instructors to deliver content, track progress, and assess performance. These systems establish a range of multimedia tools, quizzes, writing tasks, and discussion forums, aligning well with the requirements of blended learning [10].

Cambridge Empower B2 LMS exclusively focuses intermediate to upper-intermediate learners and incorporates components aligned with CEFR standards. It comprises a wide array of writing activities with model answers, guided steps, and embedded feedback—features structured to enhance writing proficiency in a gradual and supportive manner [11].

Earlier evaluations of Empower LMS have explained positive learner outcomes in vocabulary enrichment, reading comprehension, and speaking fluency [12]. Though, there is a limited literature focusing explicitly on writing skill enhancement within graduate learners. Most prevailing studies either generalize across skill areas or focus on secondary or lower-intermediate learners. This gap rationalizes the need for experimental research into the LMS's ability to improve organized academic writing at the B2 level and beyond.

Furthermore, learner observations of LMS usability considerably affect learning outcomes. Davis's Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) underlines that perceived effectiveness and ease of use directly affect user satisfaction and continued engagement [13]. Research by Al-Fraihat et al. proves that LMS usefulness is conditional not just on instructional design but also on interface intuitiveness and learner digital literacy [14].

III. Methodology

This study selects a mixed-methods case study design to assess the effect of the Cambridge Empower B2 Learning Management System (LMS) on the writing skills of graduate learners in a blended learning setting. The selection of methodology reveals the need to both quantify differences in writing performance and qualitatively identify learner experiences and system usability.

A. Research Design

The study uses a convergent parallel design, wherein both quantitative and qualitative data are together simultaneously, investigated separately, and then explained collectively to obtain inclusive comprehensions [1]. This approach is particularly effective in educational research, where learner performance metrics and subjective experiences together infer the evaluation of instructional tools [2].

B. Participants

The study was organized with a purposive sample of 30 graduate students registered in an academic English course at Malla Reddy University, Hyderabad. All the participants were at the CEFR B2 level, verified through a pre-course placement test. Participants had access to both face-to-face instruction and online activities via the Cambridge Empower B2 LMS over an 8-week period.

C. Research Gap

While blended learning is well-known as a pedagogical approach, and LMSs have established effectiveness in language instruction, there is a notable lack of targeted studies reviewing the influence of Cambridge Empower B2 LMS on writing skill development among Engineering graduates. The prevailing sources tend to accentuate either general language development or focus on younger learners. This paper addresses that research gap by assessing both performance outcomes and learner experiences related to writing tasks in a blended format.

D. Research Intervention

The intervention involved a blended learning module that combined weekly classroom teaching with online writing assignments and self-directed learning activities exercising the Cambridge LMS. The writing module of the LMS comprises scaffolded modules such as summarizing, formal and informal letter writing, opinion essays, and report writing. These were mapped with weekly classroom lessons, ensuring emphasis through multiple modalities, consistent with the blended learning model recommended by Garrison and Vaughan [3].

E. Tools Employed for Data Collection

1. **Writing Assessment**: Students completed a pre-test and post-test writing task based on IELTS writing criteria. Both tasks were blind marked by two experienced EFL instructors to ensure inter-rater reliability [4].
2. **LMS Usage Logs**: Activity data (e.g., time on task, assignment completion, number of submissions) were extracted from the LMS dashboard to quantify learner engagement.
3. **Questionnaire**: A post-intervention evaluation was administered to measure learners' perceptions of system usability, writing task difficulty, and perceived writing development. The evaluation tool was taken from the System Usability Scale (SUS) and integrated additional Likert-scale items based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) [5].
4. **Semi-structured Interviews**: In-depth interviews were conducted with a subset of 10 participants and the course instructor. Interviews were concentrated on perceived challenges, motivation, and satisfaction with the blended learning setup.

F. Data Analysis

- **Quantitative data** (pre- and post-test scores, LMS logs, survey responses) were examined applying the **paired sample t-tests** to measure the key differences in writing performance before and after the intervention. Descriptive statistics were also used to study the patterns of LMS usage.
- **Qualitative data** from interviews were examined using **thematic coding**, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework for thematic analysis [6].

G. Ethical Considerations

Participants were informed of the research objectives and provided written consent. The study ensued ethical protocols authorized by the institution's research ethics committee. Data privacy and secrecy were maintained throughout.

IV. Expected outcomes

The fusion of the Cambridge Empower B2 Learning Management System (LMS) into a blended learning environment is anticipated to harvest multiple pedagogical benefits. These include enhanced writing skills, increased learner engagement, and a generally positive user experience. The expected outcomes are detailed below:

A. Writing Skill Enhancement

The important anticipated outcome of the study is a noticeable enhancement in learners' writing skills, specifically in drafting well-organised academic and professional texts such as opinion essays, reports, and formal correspondence. The LMS offers supported writing exercises with feedback choices, which are proposed to scaffold cognitive writing methods including planning, drafting, revising, and editing the key elements in effective writing skills [1].

Previous studies suggest that blended learning environments adopt greater language skill acquisition than either purely online or traditional models due to the integration of teacher feedback and self-paced practice [2], [3]. Explicitly, writing improvements are presumed in areas such as coherence and cohesion, grammatical accuracy, lexical resource, and task achievement, mapped with the global standards like those established by the IELTS Writing Band Descriptors [4].

Although the study highlights mainly on writing, supplementary gains in speaking skills may also emerge. This is attributed to the interactive features of the LMS, such as pronunciation modules and speaking simulations. Investigations have shown that integrated-skill settings often lead to developments in secondary language competencies [5].

B. Learners' Engagement

Learner engagement is likely to improve due to the motivational design elements embedded in the Cambridge LMS. Attributes such as progress tracking, digital badges, and unlockable content function as forms of gamification, which the study has noticed to significantly enhance intrinsic motivation and persistent involvement in language acquisition [6], [7].

Gamified essentials establish a sense of achievement and persuade continuous task completion, which is particularly influential in adult learners who balance academic work with the other responsibilities. According to Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory, such extrinsic reinforcements can absolutely induce learner autonomy and competence if unified thoughtfully [8]. Additionally, the ability to study individual progress via dashboards enhances learners' sense of control and accountability, further contributing to involvement and goal achievement [9].

C. The Effectiveness of LMS

The Cambridge Empower B2 LMS is designed to be intuitively navigable for the learners, with clearly structured modules, simple menu structures, and approachable design compatible with both desktop and mobile devices. These features are authentic with user-friendly best practices in educational technology [10].

However, some usability challenges may arise, specifically for learners with inadequate prior exposure to online platforms. Older or less tech-savvy students might initially struggle with the functions such as uploading assignments, navigating modules, or using interactive features like discussion boards and audio recording tools. This aligns with the findings in prior LMS research implying that perceived ease of use differs broadly based on learners' digital literacy levels [11].

To cope with such issues, orientation sessions and user guides are expected to play a vital role in reducing the learning curve and increasing user satisfaction. A positive view of system usability has been repeatedly connected to enhanced engagement and learning outcomes in LMS environments [12].

V. Findings and Discussion

The assessment of both quantitative and qualitative data exposed significant insights into the efficacy of the Cambridge Empower B2 LMS in improving writing skills among graduate learners in a blended learning environment. It also interprets the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment approach, evaluates its effectiveness, analyses the role of the LMS, compares the assessment practices to the literature, and addresses the original research questions.

A. Findings Overview

Quantitative results showed that the average writing score increased from 5.5 to 6.7 (based on IELTS writing band descriptors) over the 8-week intervention. Improvements were observed in:

- Task achievement (clarity and completeness of writing tasks).
- Coherence and cohesion (logical flow and paragraph organization).
- Lexical resource (appropriate vocabulary and collocation usage).
- Grammatical range and accuracy.

Qualitative feedback from students supported these gains, citing increased confidence, better structural planning, and vocabulary control as key improvements. These findings are consistent with Weigle's assertion that frequent, scaffolded writing practice with feedback enhances writing fluency and accuracy [1].

B. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Assessment Approach

Strengths:

- Pre-test and post-test design conceded clear measurement of progress.
- Use of standardized descriptors (IELTS band scales) guaranteed reliability and consistency [2].
- Multiple raters and blind marking augmented objectivity.
- The LMS's automated and instructor-led feedback loops furnished both immediate and reflective learning opportunities.

Weaknesses:

- Absence of longitudinal follow-up indicated retention of skills was not evaluated.
- Peer feedback within the LMS was varying due to inconsistent levels of student participation, a common issue perceived by Hyland and Hyland [3].
- Assessment tasks were limited to academic genres, hypothetically ignoring creative or technical writing domains.

C. Use of the Assessment in Computing Writing Skills

The assessment method—fastened in formative LMS tasks and summative pre/post-tests—was effective in obtaining both progress and performance. Formative tasks enabled iterative learning and feedback incorporation, which is vital in writing development [4]. Besides, weekly tasks reflected practical academic writing demands, increasing authenticity. Students also informed that the rubric-based feedback was more helpful than traditional holistic comments, aligning with claims by Ferris and Hedgcock that criterion-referenced assessment supports self-regulated learning [5].

D. Impact of the LMS on the Assessment Process

The Cambridge Empower B2 LMS played a vital role in the writing assessment process by:

- Providing constant assessment through weekly submissions.
- Allowing automated tracking of learner progress (submission logs, time spent, revision frequency).
- Suggesting model answers and writing tips, which supported self-correction and autonomous learning.
- Facilitating teacher annotations and audio feedback, providing multi-modal interaction.

However, students with low digital literacy reported challenges in navigating feedback tools and tracking their own progress. This reflects findings by Al-Fraihat et al. that usability barriers can reduce LMS effectiveness [6].

E. Comparison with the Suggested Methods in the Literature

The assessment practices within the Empower LMS closely associate with process-based and formative writing instruction, both of which are clearly authorized in contemporary writing pedagogy [7]. For instance:

- Empower's scaffolded exercise pair with the writing activity model (planning, drafting, revising).
- Frequent feedback aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and learner scaffolding theory [8].
- Weekly writing portfolios reinforce constructivist models of assessment.
- However, the LMS still requires certain features suggested in the literature, such as:
- Diagnostic assessment tools to personalize instruction [9].
- AI-assisted error analysis, which is becoming more common in platforms like Grammarly and Write & Improve [10].

F. Attending the Research Questions

1. To what extent does the Cambridge Empower B2 LMS improve writing skills?
   Quantitative improvements and qualitative feedback prove that the LMS-supported blended model significantly improves writing skills, especially in task fulfilment, coherence, and grammar.
2. How does the LMS influence learner commitment in writing tasks?
   Students informed high engagement due to gamification elements, noticeable progress tracking, and interactive tasks—aligning with Self-Determination Theory principles [11].
3. What is the usability of the LMS for graduate learners?
   While most students found the platform intuitive, a minority faced technical challenges. These findings suggest that while usability is generally high, onboarding support is essential for inclusivity.

G. Implications for Practice

- Teachers should combine blended writing modules into graduate English courses to increase autonomy and skill development.
- Regular training on LMS navigation and digital feedback tools is advised.
- More diversified writing tasks (e.g., emails, proposals, creative texts) can direct several academic and workplace needs.

VI. Conclusion

This investigation explored the effectiveness of a blended learning approach employing the Cambridge Empower B2 Learning Management System (LMS) in improving writing skills among graduate students in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The study aimed to gauge progress in writing performance, student engagement, and the usability of the LMS for writing-focused academic instruction.

A. Summary of Key Findings

The findings exhibit that the integration of the Empower B2 LMS into a blended instructional model significantly improved learners' academic writing skill. They showed considerable improvement in writing quality, particularly in the areas of coherence, grammar accuracy, task achievement, and lexical control, as indicated by standardized pre- and post-assessments based on IELTS descriptors [1]. This progression aligns with the prevailing research that connects formative feedback and iterative practice with improved writing proficiency [2].

The LMS setting aided persistent engagement by suggesting progress tracking, scaffolded exercises, and embedded feedback mechanisms. These aspects supplied the autonomy and repetition essential for deeper learning, reliable with constructivist and process-based writing theories [3], [4].

Furthermore, learners responded positively to the platform's insightful design and interactive elements. However, a subset of users with limited digital literacy faced initial challenges—stressing the need for technical support and structured onboarding for technology-enhanced learning systems [5].

B. Didactic Implications

The current study supports the increasing need of literature supporting for blended learning in higher education, specifically in writing-intensive courses. The Cambridge Empower B2 LMS has proven to be a valuable supplementary tool that augments the reach and depth of training beyond the physical classroom. Teachers and curriculum designers are encouraged to:

- Incorporate LMS-based writing tasks to promote learner autonomy.
- Apply criterion-referenced rubrics and scaffolded assignments for formative assessment.
- Provide orientation sessions and digital support to address usability disparities.
- These practices align with recommendations in blended learning frameworks by Garrison and Vaughan [6] and writing instruction guidelines by Ferris and Hedgcock [7].

C. Contribution to the Study

The study contributes to an under-researched area by focusing specifically on writing skill development at the graduate level using a structured LMS. Most previous studies have indicated on general language acquisition or undergraduate learners. By focusing on writing as a productive and cognitively demanding skill, this investigation fills a key gap in experiential data. It also reveals how the Cambridge Empower B2 LMS, designed with CEFR-aligned competencies, can assist as an effective platform for integrating academic writing instruction into blended curricula. The study proves the system's potential for writing-cantered pedagogical interventions in postgraduate programs.

D. Limitations and Future Directions

While the outcomes were positive, the study is not without limitations:

- The duration (8 weeks) may not fully capture long-term retention or transfer of skills.
- The sample size (30 students) limits generalizability.
- The study focused solely on academic writing genres, excluding other forms like creative or technical writing.

Future research should consider longitudinal designs, include diverse academic disciplines, and evaluate additional language skills (e.g., reading-writing integration, argumentation). Comparative studies with alternative LMS platforms (e.g., Moodle, Edmodo, Blackboard) would also help in benchmarking Cambridge Empower's usefulness.

E. Final Reflection

This study restates the transformative ability of well-structured blended learning settings in adopting higher-order language skills like writing. When constructed with learner-centric principles, powered by digital tools, and employed with pedagogical alignment, such interventions can promote the quality and accessibility of language education in graduate studies for better employment.

References

1. V. Braun and V. Clarke, "Using thematic analysis in psychology," Qualitative Research in Psychology, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 77–101, 2006.
2. S. Weigle, Assessing Writing, Cambridge University Press, 2002.
3. D. Ferris and J. Hedgcock, Teaching ESL Composition: Purpose, Process, and Practice, 2nd ed., Routledge, 2005.
4. R. Al-Fraihat, M. Joy, and R. Sinclair, "Evaluating e-learning systems success: An empirical study," Computers in Human Behavior, vol. 102, pp. 67–86, 2020.
5. R. M. Ryan and E. L. Deci, "Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being," American Psychologist, vol. 55, no. 1, pp. 68–78, 2000.
6. K. Hyland and F. Hyland, "Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues," Cambridge University Press, 2006.
7. IELTS Partners, "IELTS Writing Band Descriptors (Public Version)," 2020.

8. D. R. Garrison and N. D. Vaughan, Blended Learning in Higher Education: Framework, Principles, and Guidelines, Jossey-Bass, 2008.
9. T. Silva and P. Matsuda, On Second Language Writing, Routledge, 2010.
10. C. Graham, "Blended learning systems: Definition, current trends, and future directions," in Handbook of Blended Learning, Pfeiffer, 2006, pp. 3–21.
11. G. Kasper and S. Rose, "Pragmatic development in L2 classrooms," Language Learning, vol. 52, no. S1, pp. 1–34, 2002.
12. L. Vygotsky, Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes, Harvard University Press, 1978.
13. J. Rezaei and M. Lovorn, "Reliability and validity of rubrics for assessment through writing," Assessing Writing, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 18–39, 2010.
14. S. Wang, "Artificial intelligence in language learning: Current uses and future potential," Computer Assisted Language Learning, vol. 35, no. 4, pp. 455–472, 2022.
15. C. Graham, W. Woodfield, and J. Harrison, "A framework for institutional adoption and implementation of blended learning in higher education," The Internet and Higher Education, vol. 18, pp. 4–14, 2013.
16. Y. Chen, "Blended learning in EFL instruction: A case study of student engagement," Computer Assisted Language Learning, vol. 29, no. 7, pp. 1145–1159, 2016.
17. F. D. Davis, "Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology," MIS Quarterly, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 319–340, 1989.
18. M. Wang, "Design and evaluation of a collaborative learning environment," British Journal of Educational Technology, vol. 40, no. 2, pp. 211–223, 2009.
19. L. Flower and J. Hayes, "A cognitive process theory of writing," College Composition and Communication, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 365–387, 1981.
20. Y. Chen and T. Bryer, "Investigating instructional strategies for using social media in formal and informal learning," The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 87–104, 2012.
21. M. Ally, "Foundations of educational theory for online learning," in The Theory and Practice of Online Learning, Athabasca University Press, 2008.
22. Cambridge University Press, Empower B2 Teacher's Book, Cambridge, UK: CUP, 2015.
23. S. Atkins and A. Tierney, "Exploring the effectiveness of Cambridge LMS in enhancing EFL learners' communicative competence," Language Teaching Research, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 123–139, 2021.
24. J. Bruner, The Culture of Education, Harvard University Press, 1996.
25. D. R. Garrison, T. Anderson, and W. Archer, "Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education," The Internet and Higher Education, vol. 2, no. 2–3, pp. 87–105, 2000.
26. G. Salmon, E-tivities: The Key to Active Online Learning, Routledge, 2013.
27. UNESCO, "Digital literacy in education," Policy Brief, UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education, 2018.

Mapping the Mind: Narrative Structures and Mental Spaces in Derek Walcott's Major Plays

Snehal Bhandakkar & Ghizala R. Hashmi

Abstract

This research paper explores the nuanced interplay between narrative structures and mental spaces in Derek Walcott's major plays: Dream on Monkey Mountain, Ti-Jean and His Brothers, Henri Christophe: A Chronicle in Seven Scenes, Pantomime, and Beef, No Chicken. Walcott's dramaturgy, profoundly shaped by Caribbean oral traditions, colonial legacies, and a kaleidoscope of global literary influences, forges a hybrid theatrical language that reimagines the postcolonial condition. These plays are not merely stories enacted upon the stage; they are cartographies of memory and identity, mapping the psychic ruptures and historical wounds of the Caribbean while imagining spaces of healing and reclamation.

By interrogating the narrative frameworks that structure each play—the surreal dreamscape of Dream on Monkey Mountain, the folktale cadence of Ti-Jean and His Brothers, the episodic historical chronicle of Henri Christophe, the meta-theatrical improvisations of Pantomime, and the satirical vernacular of Beef, No Chicken—this study argues that Walcott constructs mental spaces where colonial traumas and postcolonial aspirations are staged, confronted, and ultimately transfigured. Drawing on the theoretical scaffolding of Frantz Fanon's psychology of colonization, Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity, and Édouard Glissant's poetics of relation, the paper demonstrates that Walcott's narrative strategies function not merely as artistic devices but as cultural and psychological maps.

Ultimately, Walcott's theatre serves as a mental atlas of the Caribbean, dramatizing the tensions of hybrid identity and illuminating imaginative pathways to healing and self-definition. His dramaturgy is at once fragmented and whole, dissonant and harmonic—a theatrical reflection of the intricate mental geographies of a region still in the process of negotiating its sense of self.

Keywords: Derek Walcott, Narrative Structures, Mental Spaces, Postcolonial Theatre, Hybrid Identity, Caribbean Memory, Colonial Trauma and Healing, Cultural and Psychological Maps, Theatrical Reflection, Mental Geographies

Introduction

Derek Walcott (1930–2017), Nobel Laureate, poet, and playwright, is an inimitable voice in twentieth-century literature. His oeuvre offers not merely art but an epistemology—an alternative way of seeing and understanding the Caribbean. Walcott's drama interrogates colonial legacies, braids European forms with Afro-Caribbean oral traditions, and transforms the stage into a liminal space of cultural negotiation. As Walcott reminds us in his poem "The Sea is History," the waters surrounding the islands carry the sediment of memory, trauma, and possibility.

This study investigates five of his seminal plays—*Dream on Monkey Mountain* (1970), *Ti-Jean and His Brothers* (1958), *Henri Christophe: A Chronicle in Seven Scenes* (1950), *Pantomime* (1978), and *Beef, No Chicken* (1981)—to address a central inquiry: How do Walcott's narrative structures generate mental spaces that reflect and reshape Caribbean consciousness?

The theoretical backbone of this research draws upon the insights of postcolonial thinkers: Frantz Fanon, who diagnosed the "epidermalization of inferiority" that colonization imprints upon the psyche (*Black Skin, White Masks*); Homi Bhabha, whose concept of hybridity reveals

the ambivalent negotiation of cultural in-betweenness; and Édouard Glissant, who offered a "poetics of relation," envisioning Caribbean identity as archipelagic, relational, and perpetually in motion. Supplementary insights are also drawn from Stuart Hall's reflections on cultural identity, Wilson Harris's ideas of liminality, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's critiques of language and decolonization. Against this framework, Walcott's dramaturgy emerges as mental cartography: each narrative structure—dream, folktale, chronicle, meta-theatre, satire—functions as a psychic terrain, enabling both characters and audiences to traverse the complexities of history, identity, and imagination.

Dream on Monkey Mountain: Dreamscape as Collective Psyche

Of all Walcott's works, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* most vividly embodies his conception of theatre as a psychic space of transformation.

Narrative Structure: The play is structured as a dream, echoing August Strindberg's *A Dream Play* in its fluid temporality, shifting geographies, and porous boundaries between fantasy and reality. We follow Makak, a destitute charcoal burner, who is arrested and begins a journey through a surreal, dreamlike realm in which he confronts visions, ghosts, and inner demons.

Mental Space: Makak's dream operates as a psychic map of colonial self-hatred and redemption. Haunted by the apparition of a "White Goddess"—a spectral embodiment of racialized beauty and colonial ideality—Makak is trapped within Fanon's psychic bind, wherein "the black man's destiny is a white destiny" until he ruptures this cycle of desire and rejection. When Makak symbolically "kills" the White Goddess, it is not merely an act of violence; it is a dramaturgical catharsis, dramatizing the destruction of internalized oppression. Walcott's stage directions are lush and metamorphic: a jail cell becomes a forest; a courtroom dissolves into a carnival. This instability of setting and scene mirrors the instability of Caribbean identity under colonial shadow. The dream's logic enables the Caribbean, in Walcott's words, to "dream itself into being." As Makak declares: *"My head was heavy with dreams. Now I see clear."* This visionary clarity is the reward of the dreamscape: the possibility of imagining oneself whole after centuries of fragmentation.

Ti-Jean and His Brothers: Folktale and the Moral Imagination

If *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is a collective dream, *Ti-Jean and His Brothers* is an oral folktale made flesh on stage.

Narrative Structure: Told like a fireside tale, the play follows three brothers—Gros Jean, Mi-Jean, and Ti-Jean—each facing the Devil in a trial of cunning and character. The narrative is circular and rhythmic, punctuated by animal narrators, songs, and direct addresses to the audience, drawing on the Caribbean's deep oral traditions.

Mental Space: The folktale form creates a shared cultural mental space where lessons are transmitted communally. The Devil is not simply a figure of evil—he is a colonial allegory, a trickster-capitalist whose defeat represents psychic and cultural survival. Gros Jean's brute strength and Mi-Jean's bookish intellect falter; it is the youngest, Ti-Jean, who triumphs through humility, wit, and empathy. Kamau Brathwaite's notion of "nation language" is key here: the rhythms of oral speech, the cadences of Creole, and the call-and-response structure of the tale connect the audience to ancestral memory. Ti-Jean's ultimate lesson—that "it is not the size of the body that win the battle, but the courage in the heart"—maps strategies of resilience, ingenuity, and faith for a community navigating its own survival under the shadow of empire.

***Henri Christophe*: Chronicle, Power, and Paranoia**
Walcott's *Henri Christophe: A Chronicle in Seven Scenes* is both historical drama and psychological excavation.

Narrative Structure: As its subtitle announces, the play unfolds as a chronicle: a series of episodic "entries" tracing the meteoric rise and tragic fall of Henri Christophe, the Haitian revolutionary general who crowns himself king. This non-linear, semi-documentary style eschews dramatic arc for a tableau-like accumulation of moments—rituals, coronations, decrees, rebellions.

Mental Space: The chronicle becomes a frame for Christophe's psyche, a theatre of grandeur tipping into paranoia. His Citadel is both fortress and mental prison, a monument to his ambition and insecurity. Homi Bhabha's concept of mimicry haunts Christophe's kingship: his attempts to emulate European monarchy render him "almost the same, but not quite"—a fraught imitation that exposes the absurdity of transplanting colonial forms onto postcolonial soil.As the scenes progress, Christophe's speeches grow more delusional, his crown more burdensome. The chronicle structure resists neat resolution, instead mapping the psychological dissonance of post-revolutionary identity—a nation free from France yet still shackled by the colonial template of power.

***Pantomime*: Meta-Theatre and Identity Rehearsal**
With *Pantomime,* Walcott pares down his stage to two characters, yet within this minimalism creates vast conceptual horizons.

Narrative Structure: The play is meta-theatrical. On the veranda of a guesthouse, Harry Trewe, a British hotelier, and Jackson Phillip, his Trinidadian servant, rehearse a version of *Robinson Crusoe* for tourists. What begins as a straightforward rehearsal spiral into improvisation: roles invert, scripts are discarded, and the rehearsal itself becomes the performance.

Mental Space: The hotel veranda becomes an experimental laboratory for identity. When Jackson insists on playing Crusoe rather than Friday, he subverts the colonial script itself. The meta-theatrical frame destabilizes inherited narratives of master and servant, colonizer and colonized. Here Glissant's "poetics of relation" resonates: identity in *Pantomime* is not fixed but relational, negotiated through performance and counter-performance. The meta-theatre maps a psychic space in which colonial binaries are not only questioned but imaginatively rewritten.

***Beef, No Chicken*: Satire and the Communal Mind**
If *Henri Christophe* grapples with the grandeur of history, *Beef, No Chicken* revels in the granular absurdities of contemporary Caribbean life.

Narrative Structure: The play is structured as comedy, even farce, as a small-town community grapples with the construction of a highway and the corrupt bureaucracies behind it. Gossip, slapstick, and colloquial banter propel the plot in loose, episodic rhythms.

Mental Space: Humor becomes a shared cultural geography. The town's café, mayor's office, and street corners serve as symbolic gathering points where resistance and identity are negotiated. Bureaucratic absurdity is lampooned, yet the laughter is more than entertainment—it is a communal affirmation of being. Brathwaite's "nation language" surfaces again here, embedded in the vernacular humor that saturates the dialogue. Through satire, Walcott maps

the mental space of a people confronting modernization and corruption while safeguarding a sense of cultural intimacy and survival.

Comparative Synthesis: Narrative Form as Mental Cartography

Across these five plays, a pattern emerges: Walcott wields narrative structure as cartographic instrument, mapping the mental landscapes of the Caribbean.

- *Dream on Monkey Mountain*: The dream narrative charts psychic liberation from colonial self-hatred.
- *Ti-Jean and His Brothers*: The folktale narrative frames a communal moral imagination.
- *Henri Christophe*: The chronicle narrative exposes post-revolutionary ambition and paranoia.
- *Pantomime*: Meta-theatre reframes identity as a process of rehearsal and renegotiation.
- *Beef, No Chicken*: Satire maps communal consciousness through vernacular laughter.

Homi Bhabha's "Third Space" offers an apt lens: Walcott's plays inhabit this in-between site where colonial legacies and postcolonial possibilities collide and coalesce. Each narrative structure creates a different "mental map," staging the psychic negotiations of identity, history, and belonging.

Conclusion

Derek Walcott's plays are not mere scripts—they are theatrical atlases of the Caribbean mind. By deploying a spectrum of narrative forms—dream, folktale, chronicle, meta-theatre, and satire—he builds mental spaces where the traumas of history and the possibilities of imagination intersect. Makak's dreamscape, Ti-Jean's cunning, Christophe's delusions of monarchy, Jackson's improvisations, and the small-town satire of *Beef, No Chicken* together compose a single, multifaceted map. These plays dramatize Walcott's conviction that the Caribbean must "make creative use of its fragments" (*What the Twilight Says*), transforming those fragments into pathways of cultural healing and self-recognition. In their fragmentation and wholeness, in their dissonance and harmony, Walcott's plays chart the archipelago of the Caribbean psyche—an ever-shifting territory, perpetually rewriting its own maps of identity and belonging.

Works Cited

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
Brathwaite, Kamau. *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry*. New Beacon, 1984.
Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Grove Press, 1952.
Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of Relation*. University of Michigan Press, 1997.
Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." In *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, Lawrence & Wishart, 1990.
Harris, Wilson. *The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination*. Greenwood Press, 1983.
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. James Currey, 1986.
Walcott, Derek. *What the Twilight Says: Essays*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998.
Walcott, Derek. *Collected Plays: 1950–1976*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001.
Strindberg, August. *A Dream Play*. Dover Publications, 1996 edition.

From Chalkboards to Cloud Platforms: A Cognitive and Technological Approach to Digital Literacy for English Educators

Soni Gandepudi

Abstract

The teaching of English language and literature is changing as digital tools increasingly support traditional teaching methods. This paper looks at how cognitive linguistics and educational technology work together to improve teaching effectiveness and student engagement in higher education. Digital literacy is often seen as just basic computer skills, but it also includes critical thinking, ethical online behavior, and the ability to create, evaluate, and share content on digital platforms. English teachers with these skills can turn classrooms into interactive, student-centered spaces instead of passive learning environments. Cognitive linguistics helps us understand how students process language, create meaning, and structure narratives. When combined with digital tools like mind-mapping apps, AI writing assistants, and multimedia resources, this knowledge can enhance comprehension, creativity, and critical thinking. Case studies from Government Degree Colleges in Andhra Pradesh show practical uses, including collaborative writing, podcast creation, visual storytelling, and AI-assisted feedback. A proposed three-tier framework, Foundational, Cognitive, and Applied, provides a systematic approach for integrating digital literacy. This framework connects teaching methods with cognitive processes and encourages student engagement. By blending cognitive strategies with digital skills, teachers can become digital mentors. They inspire curiosity, encourage creativity, and prepare students for a connected and rapidly changing world.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, English Education, Cognitive Linguistics, Educational Technology, Student Engagement, Higher Education, India

Introduction

Teaching English language and literature has mainly relied on face-to-face interactions, blackboards, textbooks, and printed materials. In these classrooms, students were expected to absorb information passively. They primarily depended on lectures, handwritten notes, and text-based exercises. While these traditional methods helped with learning, they often limited students' creativity, engagement, and critical thinking.

The 21st-century classroom, on the other hand, increasingly depends on digital tools that require new teaching strategies. This change is driven by advancements in technology, as well as changes in how students think, communicate, and learn. Digital tools provide unique chances for interactive, collaborative, and personalized learning experiences. They help teachers reach students more effectively, catering to different learning styles while encouraging critical thinking and creativity.

As George Couros, a Canadian educator and proponent of innovative teaching, says, "Technology will not replace great teachers, but technology in the hands of great teachers can be transformational." This idea captures the main point of this paper: technology alone is not enough. Successful integration requires teachers who understand how students think, effective teaching methods, and how to use digital tools. This combination can change traditional teaching into a livelier, engaging, and student-focused experience.

In the context of higher education in India, especially in Government Degree Colleges in Andhra Pradesh, merging cognitive linguistics and digital literacy can greatly improve student outcomes. English teachers who use these methods report higher engagement, better writing skills, and more active participation in class activities.

Digital Literacy and English Faculty: The Urgency of Now

Digital literacy is often misunderstood as simply knowing how to use computers or software. In reality, it includes a variety of skills, such as:

- Critical evaluation of online information.
- Ethical engagement with digital platforms.
- Creation of digital content for collaborative learning.
- Integration of technology into teaching methods.

In English education, digital literacy is especially important because language teaching is interactive and multi-dimensional. Teachers need to be skilled in using Learning Management Systems (LMS), incorporating AI tools, and creating content that connects with students, who are often referred to as "digital natives."

For instance, collaborative platforms like Google Docs change writing exercises into shared experiences where students can work together in real time. Interactive tools like Padlet let students post thoughts, respond to each other, and engage in multimedia discussions. These activities turn students from passive learners into active creators and critical thinkers.

Teachers at several Government Degree Colleges in Andhra Pradesh have started using these tools in their classes. Reports show that students show:

- Greater engagement in writing exercises.
- Better collaboration during group projects.
- Improved understanding of complex literary texts.
- More motivation to join discussions and complete assignments.

Digital literacy also helps teachers collect resources, offer research support, and promote ethical online behavior. It changes the classroom into a space for critical inquiry, reflective thinking, and digital content creation instead of just consuming information.

Cognitive Linguistics: A Theoretical Bridge

Cognitive linguistics studies how language connects with thought. It's important to understand how students make sense of meaning, build stories, and interpret texts for effective teaching. Cognitive methods highlight that learning a language goes beyond memorization; it involves mental processes, activating schemas, and mapping concepts. Digital tools can support cognitive teaching methods in several ways:

- Mind-Mapping Applications: Tools like Coggle and Miro help students visually arrange ideas, outline narratives, and sort language components.
- AI Writing Assistants: Grammarly and similar platforms offer immediate feedback on grammar, clarity, and style, which helps students grasp the rules and improve their writing.
- Multimedia Learning: Videos, podcasts, and interactive simulations engage various cognitive pathways, boosting understanding and memory. Subtitles, visual aids, and notes help second-language learners build fluency and critical thinking skills.

Jean Piaget said, “The ultimate aim of education is to cultivate individuals who can create new possibilities, rather than merely regurgitating what previous generations have accomplished.” This highlights the need to connect teaching with cognitive growth. When technology is

integrated with cognitive insights, educators can design learning experiences that are meaningful and resonate with how students process and understand information.

Real-Life Classroom Scenarios

Scenario 1: Literature and Interactive Video
In a second-year literature course, a faculty member supplemented Shakespearean lectures with YouTube videos that highlighted key tragic elements. Students then took part in a Kahoot quiz. The results showed better understanding compared to traditional methods. Later, students created digital posters summarizing tragedies, combining textual analysis with visual creativity.

Scenario 2: Writing Workshops with AI Tools
During online writing workshops, faculty introduced AI tools like ChatGPT and Grammarly. Students received help on coherence, sentence structure, and style. Comparing AI-generated content with human-written pieces led to discussions on authorship, originality, and ethical writing practices. This encouraged critical thinking and responsible use of digital tools.

Scenario 3: Visual Storytelling in Language Labs
First-year students summarized news articles using Canva, focusing on visual storytelling. This exercise required them to filter, synthesize, and restructure information. Presentations via Google Slides allowed for peer feedback, improving collaborative learning and digital literacy skills.

Scenario 4: Podcast Production in Contemporary Fiction Courses
Students produced podcasts reflecting on novels, which they edited using Audacity. This activity combined technical skills with literary analysis, providing alternative ways to express interpretation and opinion. The exercise encouraged creativity, problem-solving, and digital content creation.
Across these scenarios, faculty observed:

- Increased engagement and motivation.
- Better analytical and writing skills.
- Stronger peer-to-peer collaboration.
- Greater ethical awareness in digital content creation.

Expanding the Role of Faculty: From Instructors to Digital Mentors

Digital changes in education require faculty to move from being traditional teachers to mentors. They need to help students critically and creatively navigate digital content. Faculty now have a broader role, which includes:

- Understanding platform algorithms and how digital media works.
- Promoting ethical behavior online.
- Facilitating interactive and multimedia learning experiences.
- Encouraging students to assess the quality and credibility of information critically.

Professional development is crucial. Workshops, MOOCs, webinars, and peer learning groups help faculty to:

- Stay updated with new digital tools.
- Confidently try out new teaching strategies.

- Work together across fields to encourage innovation in teaching.

Institutions must support this effort by providing the necessary resources for digital experimentation. Fostering a culture where risk-taking is encouraged without fear of failure is important for improving digital teaching.

Bridging the Digital Divide: Challenges and Recommendations

Even with technological advancements, some challenges remain:

- Limited access to devices and reliable internet in rural or underfunded areas.
- Resistance to change from faculty and students.
- Insufficient digital training and continued professional development.

To fill these gaps, institutions can:

1. Offer regular digital literacy workshops for faculty.
2. Recognize and reward innovative digital teaching methods.
3. Set up peer mentoring and collaborative networks.
4. Include digital teaching practices in teacher training programs.
5. Foster collaboration between different fields to develop diverse skills.

Creating Digital Teaching Resource Cells within English departments allows faculty to:

- Share tools, lesson plans, and effective practices.
- Lessen individual workloads through shared content creation.
- Promote experimentation and innovation in teaching methods.

Strategic Model for Integration

To guide systematic adoption, this paper proposes a **3-Tier Framework** for integrating digital literacy into English education:

1. Foundational Tier
This tier focuses on equipping faculty with essential ICT skills, including:
- Navigating LMS platforms.
- Creating Google Forms, Slides, and Docs.
- Ethical email communication and online etiquette.

2. Cognitive Tier
This tier connects teaching with how students learn:
- It incorporates schema theory, conceptual metaphor theory, and mental mapping techniques.
- It designs digital tasks to activate and build on existing mental models.
- It improves comprehension, creativity, and retention through activities that match cognitive processes.

3. Applied Tier
This tier promotes interactive, student-centered learning:
- It integrates tools like Edmodo, Flipgrid, and Blogger.

- It encourages students to submit assignments, participate in discussions, and provide feedback through digital platforms.
- It supports innovative assessment methods such as digital portfolios, reflective blogs, and podcasts.

This model ensures a gradual, scaffolded approach to adopting digital literacy. Assessment strategies need to develop alongside teaching methods, focusing on creativity, collaboration, and analytical skills.

Cognitive Transformation Through Technology

The shift from chalkboards to cloud platforms is more than just a technological change; it is a cognitive transformation. Aligning teaching with how students think and process information increases engagement, understanding, and creativity. As one student noted**: "I used to hate writing essays; now I love creating visual essays online."** Such comments show the deeper effect of digital literacy: it fosters new mindsets, encourages exploration, and supports active learning. Plutarch wisely stated, "The mind is not a container to be filled; it is a flame to be ignited." Our role as English educators is not just to pass on knowledge but to nurture curiosity, critical thinking, and creativity. By combining cognitive strategies with digital literacy, we create learning environments that are inclusive, engaging, and responsive to a rapidly changing digital landscape.

Additional Considerations and Future Directions

Cross-Disciplinary Approaches

Digital literacy can improve through collaboration across different fields. Faculty can team up with departments like computer science, media studies, and education technology to create richer, more engaging learning experiences.

Ethical and Societal Implications

As AI and digital tools become key in teaching, ethical issues must be addressed. Students need to learn responsible AI use, understand intellectual property rules, and find ways to fight misinformation.

Personalized Learning

Technology allows for personalized learning experiences. Adaptive learning platforms, AI-based assessment tools, and interactive modules help faculty meet the individual needs of students, improving inclusivity and effectiveness.

Research Opportunities

More research on how digital tools affect learning in English education is essential. Studies should look at long-term knowledge retention, writing skills improvement, and changes in critical thinking when students work in digital learning environments.

Conclusion

The shift from chalkboards to cloud platforms is more than just a change in tools; it represents a major shift in how we teach and learn. By combining digital literacy with effective teaching strategies, English educators can turn classrooms into places of creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking.

Key takeaways include

- Digital literacy is a complex skill that goes beyond basic computer knowledge.
- Cognitive linguistics offers a way to understand teaching and connect it with students' thinking.
- Practical digital tools, from collaborative writing platforms to AI writing assistants, boost engagement and improve learning results.
- Faculty should become digital mentors, guiding students in responsible and innovative ways.
- Institutions need to provide the necessary infrastructure, training, and collaborative chances to support new ideas.
- A three-tier framework (Foundational, Cognitive, Applied) can help integrate technology systematically in English education.

In the words of Plutarch, "The mind is not a container to be filled; it is a flame to be ignited." By combining cognitive insights with digital tools, we spark curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking, preparing students to succeed in an interconnected and fast-changing world.

References

Gee, J. P. (2003). *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Warschauer, M. (2006). *Laptops and Literacy: Learning in the Wireless Classroom*. Teachers College Press.

Mayer, R. E. (2009). *Multimedia Learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Prensky, M. (2001). *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants*. On the Horizon.

Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. Routledge.

Selber, S. A. (2004). *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Jones, R. H., & Hafner, C. A. (2012). *Understanding Digital Literacies: A Practical Introduction*. Routledge.

Piaget, J. (1970). *Science of Education and the Psychology of the Child*. Orion Press.

Couros, G. (2015). *The Innovator's Mindset: Empower Learning, Unleash Talent, and Lead a Culture of Creativity*.

Vijay Tendulkar's Portrayal of Dystopian Path of Collective Trauma of Puna People in the Play *Ghashiram Kotwal*

Tanami Roychoudhury & Harish Tapadia

Abstract

Social cognitive processes impact the human mind in such a way that it leads to psychological impairments and altercations that last for long. Collective trauma is one such social cognitive processes that is experienced by a vast population due to some cataclysmic events. Collective trauma affects the society of communities in such a way that the behavioral distortions of the people become vivid. In collective trauma Shared experiences of anguish, identity crisis and insecurities become so prominent in the society that society, in general, starts showing signs of decay in the moral fabric of the society. In the play *Ghashiram Kotwal* the repressive regimes of *Nana Fadnavis* and the oppressive methods employed by *Ghashiram* are vividly expressed that results in collective trauma of Puna society in general and women and children in particular. The crisis generated by the atrocious behavior of *Nana Fadnavis* and *Ghashiram* is analyzed in this paper. Prolonged psychological impact, collective social behavior mutual distrust and societal degenerative processes are also discussed.

Key Words: Nana Fadnavis, Ghashiram, Collective Trauma, Women, Child Abuse, Atrocities

Introduction

Vijay Tendulkar, a famous marathi playwright has described the social fabric of contemporary Indian Society and inherent social and psychological realities of the modern Indian society. His works such as *Silence! The court is in session*, *Sakharam Binder, Kanyadaan* describe different social problems and the anguish present in the society about such problems. In 1972, Vijay Tendulkar came out with an outstanding literary work in the form of a play *Ghashiram Kotwal*. Although the play was set in with a historical background but Tendulkar has himself opined that "this is not an historical play. It is a story in prose, verse, music and dance set in a historical era. Ghashirams are creations of socio-political forces which know no barriers of time and place." (Percival Spear, *The Oxford History of Modern India, Delhi 1978, p.54) Ghashiram Kotwal* is actually a play expressing the collective trauma experienced by the people of Puna but such collective trauma is very common in the modern parlance.

Cognitive Process

The Human mind is a complex organ that is involved in continuous mental activity that required processing memory and storage and reuse ability of knowledge. Decision making and communication are the outcomes of perception recall status and the response of the mind after proper categorization. While attention, perception, memory, learning and thinking are basic cognitive processes, functions such as problem solving, decision making, executive domain, social cognition and meta cognition are complex cognitive processes. All this processes simultaneously operates and the net result is human behavioral response.

Human being is asocial animal and his interaction with other people is also governed by the mental activities. How a person response to social information and situations are derivatives of social cognitive processes. The key factors of social thinking include perceiving and interpreting, understanding intentions and emotions making judgments and predictions, developing expectations, influencing behavior and learning through observations. Albert Bandura has developed a social cognitive theory which encompasses inter-personal

interactions, environmental influences and behavioral complexities. Bandura's social cognitive includes core concepts like reciprocal determinism, observational learning, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, self-regulation and self-efficacy and motivation. Albert Bandura's theory is very useful in analyzing the collective trauma experience by majority people in any social calamity.

Trauma and Collective Trauma

Any incident or a continuous experience by a person resulting in a complex mental response is generally defined as a trauma where in person is unable to cop up with the long-lasting effect of emotional, physical, or psychological harm. When a large section of people simultaneously experienced psychological and emotional distress due to a shared traumatic event then it is defined as collective trauma. Collective trauma is characterized as sufferings of many people due to common cause. They can also show effect in large communities, social groups or even a nation as a whole. At times certain collective trauma can be pandemic in nature and shoe long term effects. Collective trauma can lead to profound long-lasting psychological and social effects including hyper elevated anxiety, Social behavioral changes, acute depression, development of mistrust and changes in cognitive dynamics. Collective trauma can lead to social disintegration, altered social behavior and loss of social identity. At times collective trauma can lead to trans-generational effect.

Historical Events Described in Collective Trauma

Human race has experienced collective trauma since time immemorial. Hirschberger has described that the cataclysmic events resulting in a collective trauma which is a social cognitive process affecting combine population. Collective trauma can occur due to wars, natural catastrophe, pandemic, Historical oppression and economic stagnation (Aybin). Collective trauma can lead to identity crisis, Higher susceptibility in many world events showing collective trauma (Chang). Many modern-day events such as Spanish flue, I and II world war, partition of India, Rwanda crisis and The Great Syrian Crisis etc.

Literary Works on Collective Trauma

Many great authors have faithfully described various cataclysmic events and upheavals experienced by human society. Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar,* and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* describes the horror of the Indian Partitions and the long-lasting collective trauma experienced by the people of India. Manohar Malgaonkar's *A Bed in The Ganges* and Amitav Gosh's *Shadow Lines* describes the traumatic experiences of the greatest human displacement. Vijay Tendulkar himself has described a variety of trauma experienced by his characters in plays like *kamla, Sakharam Binder, The Vultures and Kanyadaan* .

Tendulkar's Gashiram Kotwal Depicting Collective Trauma of Puna People

Ghashiram Kotwal is a classic example of social disintegration, altered social structures and lose of cultural identity experienced by the people of Puna during the authoritarian regime of *Nana Fadnavis* and one of his administrators *Ghashiram Savaldas.* Vijay Tendulkar Has captured through his dramatic lenses the dehumanizing face of the Maratha leader Nana *Fadnavis*. On the other hand, *Ghashiram Kotwal* pursues unethical practices gains access to power and shows extreme cruelty to the people of Puna.

Nana Fadnavis And Degeneration of Puna Society

The personality of Nana Fadnavis as the chief administrator of Puna was not only lackadaisical but also highly bizarre. His libidinal urges and night life patterns resulted in a highly immoral lifestyle at affected the people of Puna immensely. The infamous *Bavannakhani,* the red-light area of Puna has been set as a Backdrop by Tendulkar to personify the evil side of *Nana Fadnavis's* personality.

Nana Fadnavis Attitude Towards the Women of Puna Society

Nana Fadnavis acted as the chief patron for courtesans of *Bavanna khani* exhibiting erotic dances. Women of all ages, Juvenile girls and even married women could not escape his evil and sensuous gazes. He uses his power and money to persuade and overpower the women of the gatherings to submit to his sensual callings. *Nana* brought about a distinct cultural transformation of not only *Bavannakhani* but also in entire Puna city by filthy promotions of night life, flesh trade and legal sanctions of the illicit actions under unrestrained commercial licenses. Puna started to look like a transformed city with married and unwedded male members of all class and creed flooding the gates of *Bavannakhani* for enjoying the erotic pleasures and setting a new normal that ramified enormously to dehumanize and degenerate the otherwise morally sound Puna society. As the flood gates opened for the men class at *Bavannakhani* the women of the society started experiencing economic hardships resulting in collective trauma of women in *Nana Fadnavis* Totalitarian regime. The masculine privileges disturbed the family lives and the women struggled even to manage kitchen expenses resulting in serious paucity of funds for minimal livelihood.

Degeneration In the Brahmin Class of Puna Due To Nana Fadnavis Unusual Sexual Behavior

Brahmin class was the most revered people of Puna society even then brahmin wives were subjected to group trauma due to male gaze. Laura Mulvey has defined male the gaze has a means to objectify or sexualize women in her famous essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". *Nana's* perverted behavior resulted in brahmin husbands transformed into male gazers and forcing their wives attend *Bavannakhani* under the pseudo pretext of attending *kirtan*. The *Kirtans* eventually turned from devotional songs to *Lavani*, a love ballad. These sudden changes of mood and contents delivered unethical and amoral pleasures to male onlookers and gave *Nana* a free chance to indulge in improper gazing of all parts of the body of brahmin women at times even with seductive gazes. This agonizing transformation from *Kirtan* to *Lavani* is well depicted in the following conversations in *Ghashiram Kotwal*-

> Sutradhar. A Women? Since when have women been doing kirtan?
> The Three (Confused). Not a kirtan, a dance.
> Sutradhar. A dance! Since when did a dance need a topic?
> The Three. Not a topic, a Lavani- a love song.
> Sutradhar. Since when was the temptation of Vishvamitra by Menaka in Lavani?
> The Three (Confused). Not Vishvamitra on Menaka. Raghu and Myna, the love birds.
> Sutradhar. And since when did they start singing love songs in the temple?"

Nana Fadnavis and Rampant Child Abuse

Heinous sexual abuse of children and child marriage has been rampant in India and Tendulkar has taken of this and explored the negative implications of child abuse in the play *Ghashiram*

Kotwal. Immoral propensities of *Nana Fadnavis* did not leave any young girl to feel save in Puna. Even *Ghashiram Kotwal's* own daughter, *Lalita Gori* could not escape the alluring eyes of *Nana Fadnavis* and gets outraged by *Nana* subjecting her to such a heinous sexual trauma for months together that she conceives and ultimately succumbs to unscientific abortion. Tendulkar also describes story of another juvenile girl where she is forced to marry to an old man and share a common roof with the grey-haired man and his six other wives. Tendulkar has been abled to depict the anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, the effects of psychological trauma on the psyche of the suffering children.

Nana Fadnavis Attitude; A True Case of Collective Trauma

As we go through the play *Ghashiram Kotwal* from the scenario of *Bavannakhani* and onwards the nature and attitude of *Nana Fadnavis* become vivid and clear. The impact on the larger section of people is illustrated by the conversations between the *Sutradhar* and the other players where in the degenerating society and devastating state of mental and social trauma bubbles out as effervescence. *Nana's* nefarious and abusive acts in the play clearly explains the deep structural alterations in the society and the sublime transformations are suggestive of a collective trauma experienced by a large section of people- a clear-cut case of social degeneration.

Ghashiram Savaldas and Puna Kotwali

Ghashiram Kotwal, a brahman from Knnauj came to Puna for earning his livelihood but failed initially to cop up with the partisan society of Puna. Subsequently *Ghashiram* resolved to tackle the humiliations and behaved aggressively. He passed decree forbidding many activities within his *Kotwali*. He Prohibited carrying abortions stealing, prostitution, cohabitating with widows, remarrying and many other immoral and ill activities of the people. He carried out license raj forbidding many common activities and showed visible outrage against his sworn enemies – the brahmans of the Puna. Citizens of Puna trembled at the mere utterance of his name.

Ghashiram Kotwal and Moral Hardcore Policing of The Puna Society

Ghashiram intended to stop the nefarious activities of the Puna brahmans by applying extraordinarily strong administrative orders at times even applying high moral policing. He used night curfew to prevent the Puna brahmans from entertainments of the red-light area. His strict actions against the whore mongers and the adulterers chilled the spines of the brahmans and ensured through his diktats that his orders are obeyed in letter and spirit. He indiscriminately enters brahman houses in the night to verify the authenticities of the sexual lives of the brahmin people. His administrative strong hold and high level of moral policing resulted in acute loss of livelihood ultimately causing a collective trauma for the people at large.

Ghashiram Kotwal Atrocities; Collective Trauma

Ghashiram kotwal's hardcore policing unleashed a reign of terror rendering traumatic and unpleasant experiences by even the common people under his *Kotwali*. At times he even stopped the permission to a woman to perform the last rights of cremation of her father – in-law. He carried out blatant violation of human rights by refusing to allow appropriate burial practices thus traumatizing the people and their family members. On even mere suspicion he arrested the brahmins of Puna on filthy grounds. He subjected people to inhuman tortures to the extent of putting the bare hands of the suscepts on a red-hot iron ball. *Ghashiram's* attitude turned extremely violent and severe after his daughter's death he even killed people by third degree torture for slightest of the slightest faults. His treatments to brahmins from Tanjore is

mind-boggling as their crime was near plucking of mangoes from his garden and his actions resulted in death of twenty-two brahmins due to suffocation and a large number of them rendered to semi- death conditions.

Ghashiram Kotwal on Morden Perspective

Although Vijay Tendulkar has set the play *Ghashiram Kotwal* in historical background, the play speaks in volumes about the psychological and traumatic impact on the society of ill – behaved personalities. *Nana's* criminal cravings and *Ghashiram's* narcissistic attitude is even visible today in the administrative circle and Tendulkar tries to emphasis this point through a historical narrative. The tyranny of *Ghashiram* operates in a new form that results in collective trauma experienced by a large section of people. Tendulkar's narrative is just a dramatic technique to explore the modern-day happenings.

Work Cited

Aydin, C. "How to Forget the Unforgettable? On Collective Trauma, Cultural Identity, and Mnemotechnologies." Identity, vol. 17, no. 3, 2017, pp. 125-137,

Chang, Kay. "Living with Vulnerability and Resiliency: The Psychological Experience of Collective Trauma." Acta Psychopathol, vol. 3, no. 51: 53, 2017, pp. 125-137.

Hirschberger, Gilad. "Collective Trauma and the Social Construction of Meaning." Frontiers in Psychology: Personality and Social Psychology, 10 Aug. 2018, www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01441/full. Accessed 28 May 2020.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings. Edited by Leo Braudy and Marshall Lohen, Oxford University Press, 1999.

Tendulkar, Vijay. Ghashiram Kotwal. Translated by Jayant Karve and Eleanor Zelliot, Seagull Books, 2009

The Impact of AI-Driven Debate Arena as a Writing Assistant on Tertiary Students' Writing Skills: Opportunities and Challenges

Tanuja Chundru, Venkata Ramana Manipatruni & TS Rajeswari

Abstract

Writing in English has turned into a significant hindrance for many students at their tertiary level, due to their difficulty in expressing their ideas and organising them for writing tasks. As a result, they are unable to draft the sentences correctly. At the same time, research on strategies to develop undergraduates' writing skills has been dwindling, particularly at the tertiary level of education. However, the use of AI-powered applications could help improve students' writing. Therefore, recognising the necessity of developing the students' writing skills and simultaneously using AI-driven applications as writing assistants, this study was conducted for the first-year students of Sri Vasavi Engineering College to develop their debate writing, using the AI-Driven Debate Arena through the MALL approach in their language lab. While this study lasted for a semester in the academic year 2024-25, the results showed that there was a significant development in the students' debate writing after using Debate Arena. However, during the journey of this research, the researchers encountered several challenges, including the students' lack of interest, lack of motivation, inability to think independently, and network issues. Beyond all these challenges, the students could have a significant development in their writing skills.

Keywords: Writing, AI, Debate Arena, MALL, Tertiary education

Introduction

Writing in English has turned into a significant hindrance for many students at their tertiary level, due to their difficulty in expressing their ideas and organising them for writing tasks. As a result, they are unable to draft the sentences correctly (Pek et al., 2019). At the same time, research on strategies to develop undergraduates' writing skills has been dwindling, particularly at the tertiary level of education (Sajid & Siddiqui, 2015), due to several issues, such as lack of enthusiasm, lack of motivation of learners, academic and curricular constraints, which hinder the progress of students' writing skills at the tertiary level (Shuvra & Roy, 2022).

However, the use of AI-powered applications, which provide transformative opportunities to develop English language learning, could help improve students' writing as well, since the students favoured the integration of AI tools into the curriculum, after having found the positive impact on writing progress (Selim, 2024). However, the integration of AI into the present educational system has been the key area to investigate (Tajik, 2025) thoroughly. Tajik (2025) claimed that the use of AI demonstrated an upsurge in the motivation levels of the students. He also asserted that AI could help improve students' engagement and confidence in their writing. Students found the deployment of AI effective and enjoyable. The findings of Tajik (2025) showed the efficacy of AI-based writing platforms in developing language proficiency and motivational levels among ESL learners.

In connection with all the research earlier, our study focused on determining the impact of AI-Driven Debate Arena as a Writing Assistant for the students at their tertiary level, addressing the opportunities and challenges of using AI-driven writing assistants for the improvement of students' writing levels. As part of this study, the first-year students's English writing skills were supposed to be improved through debate writing, using the AI-driven Debate Arena for a semester. This AI Debate Arena helped the students debate with their AI counterparts at their own pace and autonomously. It provided instant counterarguments for the

students' arguments and subsequently gave feedback on each argument to the students. This allowed the students to gauge their argumentative writing skills through their arguments, and students also flourished in improving their writing skills.

The researchers, before conducting this research, prepared two research questions as follows, based on the current needs of the students in terms of their writing skills at their tertiary level.

Research Questions

- Can the AI-driven Debate Arena help enhance students' writing levels through Debates?
- Will there be any noticeable difference between Group A and Group B after the practice of debates on the Debate Arena?

The importance of this study was in utilising the AI-driven Debate Arena, which provided AI counterparts as well as quick and authentic feedback on arguments. In this study, Group A followed the training on Debate Arena, while Group B was constrained to teacher-centric counterargument responses to the students' arguments. This study was the first of its kind and stood as a catalyst post the emergence of AI tools.

Literature Review

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionised the field of education, and new tools for academic writing in particular have been made available to help students with their language and cultural variety. Writing process: Essential components, these tools are particularly helpful in further education, where strong writing skills are required for high-stakes projects, including research proposals, theses, and journal submissions (Mustafa et al., 2025).

The promise of AI-powered interactive writing tools to improve the writing skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners has garnered significant attention to their use in educational contexts. While simultaneously having a positive impact on student motivation and performance, these platforms have been shown to increase writing correctness, style, and consistency (Tajik, 2025).

However, although AI tools have shown enormous promise in enhancing the precision of writing at the surface level, there is continuous scholarly debate over how they can help students acquire higher-order skills like critical thinking and argumentation (Mustafa et al., 2025). In this research literature review, the authors examine the function of AI writing assistants in academic writing, their impact on cognitive growth, opinions regarding their equivalence with human tutoring, and their use with students of Sri Vasavi Engineering College. They also identify gaps that this study attempts to address.

AI writing aids are invaluable for students, particularly non-native English speakers, as numerous academics attest to their effectiveness in improving the mechanical aspects of writing. There are many different AI-powered writing aids accessible for use when composing essays or reports in the current academic environment. Several frequently used tools are Writer, Sudowrite, Type, Grammarly, Liner, Buffer's AI Assistant, ChatGPT, Jasper AI, and SEOWind (Subramanian et al., 2024).

Since "Grammarly" is one of the online grammar checkers that are available, it has quickly influenced technical advancement (Astuti et al., 2023). According to Saidashev et al. (2025). Utilising QuillBot to help them write better. Additionally, three advantages of using QuillBot were discovered: improving students' positive attitudes regarding writing, offering a range of intuitive writing tools, and supporting language development. QuillBot and other AI-powered writing tools, particularly for academic writing, have a significant impact on helping students produce high-calibre work.

Unquestionably, ChatGPT and other generative AIs are already expanding the frontiers of education and bringing about a dramatic change in the way that education is now practised. Teachers have written extensively about the possible ramifications for education, students, and policy since it was made public in 2022. Several educators have already begun evaluating ChatGPT's effectiveness by incorporating it into their teaching, research, and assessment activities. They discovered that ChatGPT can free up time for other crucial activities, such as spending more time with students, by automating some tasks and processes. Baidoo-Anu and Ansah (2023).

Large language models (LLMs) like GPT-3, developed by OpenAI, opened the door for the rapid rise of cutting-edge AI chatbots like ChatGPT-3.5. However, LLMs have advanced significantly and are now capable of more than just one task, such as text or speech recognition, unlike unimodal input methods. Currently, a range of inputs, including text, images, audio, video, and PDFs, can be interacted with and identified by multimodal AI tools and language models. The most popular multimodal ones are Google DeepMind Gemini, Runway Gen-2, Meta ImageBind, Inworld AI, and ChatGPT-4 or ChatGPT-4V.

Since Google Gemini is the newest and most innovative multimodal LLM that can handle several jobs at once, the current study examines it as a multimodal AI tool. Even though Gemini was an easy-to-use and effective AI tool, its sophisticated, more precise, and contextually relevant responses completely changed how people access and interact with different types of information (Imran & Almusharraf, 2024).

The 'Write & Improve' Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) program has been incredibly successful in integrating language learning into higher education. This state-of-the-art artificial intelligence-powered software piques pupils' interest in writing and editing. In order to help language learners improve their writing abilities, the author has also suggested integrating "Write & Improve" into instruction, learning, and evaluation (Manipatruni et al., 2024).

Our study addressed the potential and difficulties of utilising AI-driven writing assistants to raise students' writing proficiency while also assessing the effects of the AI-Driven Debate Arena as a writing assistant for tertiary students. This was done in coordination with all of the previous research. The purpose of this study was to use the AI-powered Debate Arena for a semester in order to improve the freshmen's English writing abilities through debate writing. In addition to allowing students to argue with the AI counterparts independently and at their own pace, this AI argument arena offered them immediate rebuttals to their points and then supplied them with argument-by-argument feedback. As a result, students were able to evaluate their argumentative writing abilities through their arguments, and they thrived in their quest to raise their writing proficiency.

Methodology

In this study, 59 students were chosen as participants, who were in their first year of BTech at Sri Vasavi Engineering College in the academic year 2024-25. All these students, hailing from rural backgrounds, were 18 years old and studying civil engineering. Among these 59 students, 20 were female and 39 were male. All these students were chosen as per the convenience sampling technique.

In this study, the Language Lab, the Debate Arena run by AI, and smartphones, along with questionnaires for debates, were used as materials. At first, an entry test was conducted for all the students to know about their writing levels in order to segregate all the participants into two groups, namely Group A and Group B. In that test, 34 students fell behind compared to the other 25 students who scored at least 50% in their Entry Test (ET). Therefore, the students who scored at least 50% in the ET were taken as Group B, and those who scored below 50% were Group A. While Group A practised their debate writing on Debate Arena, Group B had to do the same on paper according to the teacher's instructions. This training was given for

12 weeks with 3 hours per week. After the training, the Final Test (FT) was conducted, in which Group A scored better than Group B. This study lasted for 14 weeks, with 3 hours each, with the first week for ET and the last week for FT, from March 14 to June 13, 2025.

As part of the training, Group A used Debate Arena for their debate writing, which gave them instant counterarguments to their arguments and subsequently AI feedback and scores on each argument they made, according to rubric parameters such as relevance, coherence, persuasiveness, and creativity, as in Image 1. At the same time, Group B had to follow teacher-centric instructions and practiced manually. Group B got teacher-centric feedback.

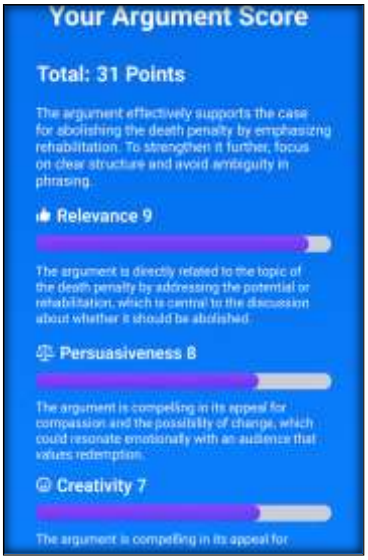


Image 1. Rubric Parameters to Assess Debate Writing

Results & Discussion

At the outset, all 59 students took the entry test for 30 marks, which consisted of 3 debate writing questions on paper in a conventional mode on March 14, 2025. The results were in favor of 25 students, as they could get over the score of 50% and therefore were considered Group B, and the remaining 34 students, who could not get a minimum of 50% of marks, were chosen as Group A. Figure 1 depicts the scores of Group A, and Figure 2 depicts those of Group B in the entry test.

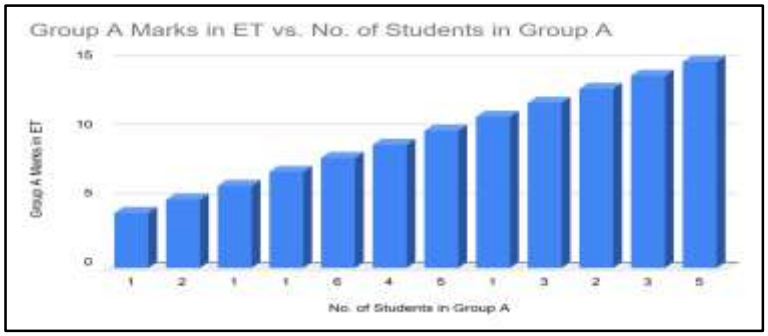


Fig 1. Group A marks in ET vs No. of students in Group A

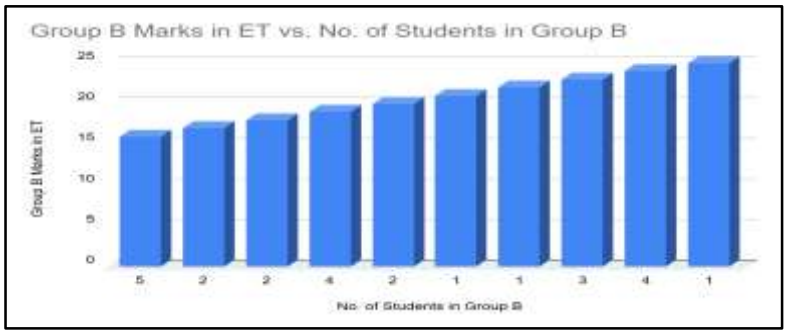


Fig 2. Group B marks in ET vs No. of students in Group B

After training for 12 weeks, the Final Test was conducted in a similar pattern to the Entry Test for all 59 students on June 13, 2025. This test revealed a progressive enhancement of the writing levels of Group A after training, on par with Group B, which was constrained to traditional instruction and learning. In this test, Group A showed a significantly better performance than Group B, proving the training effective. Figure 3 depicts the scores of Group A, and Figure 4 depicts those of Group B in the final test.

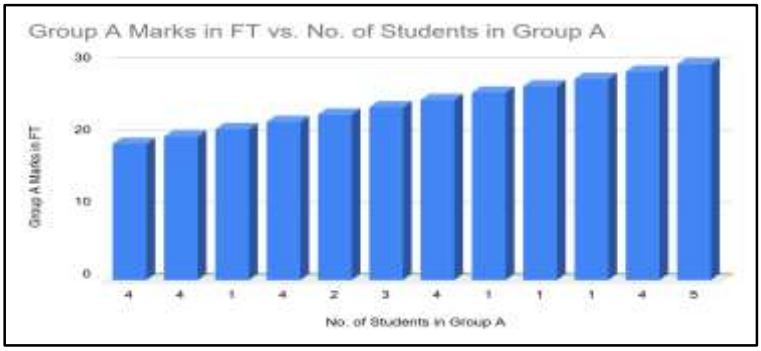


Fig 3. Group A marks in FT vs No. of students in Group A

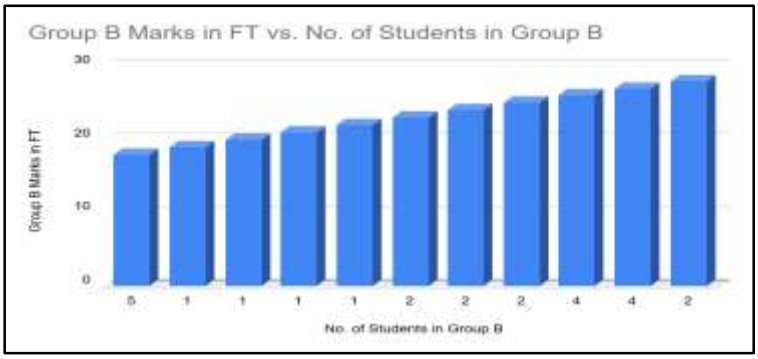


Fig 4. Group B marks in FT vs No. of students in Group B

These scores show that Group A outperformed Group B in the final test after training, and thus the training proved effective. Thus, the second research question was answered due to the noticeable difference between Group A and Group B, which resulted in satisfying the first research question through the effectiveness of AI Debate Arena.

Conclusion

This research was conducted to enhance students' writing skills at their tertiary level through debate writing, using Debate Arena, run by AI, which provided them with quick AI counterparts and subsequent instant and authentic argument-wise feedback. At the outset of this research, 59 first-year students took the entry test, which was conducted to segregate the groups for research, namely Group A and Group B, with 34 and 25 students, respectively, based

on their scores. After the division, Group A (34) took the training by practising their debate writing on the AI Debate Arena for 12 weeks with 3 hours per week, while Group B followed traditional instruction and learning. After the training, the final test was conducted for all the students, like the entry test, which resulted in Group A performing better than Group B, proving the training effective. This research significantly contributed to the existing research provision through the first-of-its-kind research, providing a new strategy to develop the students' writing skills through debate writing on the AI Debate Arena, particularly at their tertiary level.

References

Astuti, D., Darmahusni, D., Sumarni, S., & Suseno, M. (2023, June). The use of Grammarly in the academic writing of undergraduate students: Advantages, weaknesses, and challenges (systematic review). In *English Language and Literature International Conference (ELLiC) Proceedings* (Vol. 6, pp. 593-607).

Baidoo-Anu, D., & Ansah, L. O. (2023). Education in the era of generative artificial intelligence (AI): Understanding the potential benefits of ChatGPT in promoting teaching and learning. *Journal of AI*, *7*(1), 52-62.

Imran, M., & Almusharraf, N. (2024). Google Gemini as a next generation AI educational tool: a review of emerging educational technology. *Smart Learning Environments*, *11*(1), 22.

Manipatruni, V. R., Kumar, N. S., Karim, M. R., & Banu, S. (2024). Improving Writing Skills through Essay Writing via 'Write & Improve' for Error Analysis and 'Padlet' for Collaborative Writing & Peer Review. *World Journal of English Language*, *14*(4).

Mustafa, G., Khoso, A. R., & Raza, M. A. (2025). Evaluating the role of AI tools in enhancing critical thinking and argumentation in high-stakes writing among graduate students at MUET Hyderabad. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT)*, *8*(2), 1521-1536.

Pek, L. S., Mee Mee, R. W., Shing, S. R., Theesmas, D., & Nadarajan, N. T. M. (2019). Strengthening Tertiary Students' Writing Skills through TREND Model. *Asian Journal of Contemporary Education*, *3*(1), 65-71.

Saidashev, R. R., Madimova, D. T., Aubakirova, A. Z., & Dyussekeneva, I. M. (2025). Students’ perception of using artificial intelligence-based tools in academic writing. ӘОЖ: 821.512.122.0 ББК: 83.3 (5Қаз) П82, 333.

Sajid, M., & Siddiqui, J. A. (2015). Lack of academic writing skills in English language at higher education level in Pakistan: causes, effects and remedies. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, *2*(4), 174-186.

Selim, A. S. M. (2024). The transformative impact of AI-powered tools on academic writing: Perspectives of EFL university students. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, *14*(1), 14.

Shuvra, S., & Roy, S. (2022). Tertiary students’ perceptions regarding the challenges to develop writing skills. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, *9*(1), 46-51.

Subramanian, R., Vidalis, S. M., & Najafi, F. T. (2024, October). Writing skills can be improved using AI tools: An Analysis. In *2024 Fall ASEE Mid-Atlantic Section Conference*.

Tajik, A. (2025). Exploring the role of AI-driven dynamic writing platforms in improving EFL learners' writing skills and fostering their motivation.

Technology – Enhanced Language Learning in English Language Education

P Venkanna

Abstract

In recent times, the integration of technology into language classrooms has gained considerable significance. With advancements in the educational landscape, technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) has garnered increased attention. Prior research indicates that technology plays a pivotal role in motivating both educators and learners to actively participate in the language acquisition process. Given the growing prevalence and empowering capabilities of immersive technologies, along with the potential of TELL, there is a strong need for continued exploration of academic literature to identify current trends and patterns in order to comprehend prevailing practices and inform future inquiries.

Most of the selected studies employed quantitative methods to examine the implementation and trends of TELL in language education. The results revealed that universities were the primary adopters of TELL approaches, whereas primary schools reported the least use. Based on these insights, the study emphasizes the need for further research. It calls on scholars to extend their investigations by incorporating learners across all educational stages to gain a more comprehensive understanding of TELL's role in language teaching and learning.

The integration of technology into language education has become increasingly widespread (Palacious Hidalgo, 2020), giving rise to specialized areas such as computer-assisted language learning (CALL; Gillespie, 2020), mobile-assisted language learning and technology-enhanced language learning (TELL; Shadiev & Yang, 2020). While also contributing to improved performance in both receptive skills—such as vocabulary, grammar, listening, and reading (Zhang & Zou, 2022a)—and productive skills like speaking and writing (Shadiev & Yang, 2020).

Keywords: Technology Enhanced Language Learning, Systematic Review, And Language Teaching and Learning, Computer Assisted Language Learning.

Introduction

As technology use has become the norm in education, this bibliometric analysis of technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) aims to reveal its current state of the art and emerging trends. Analysis of 1,816 publications (1,745 articles and 71 reviews) from Web of Science demonstrated growing interests in the field and core publications in the field. Bibliographic coupling identified eight research fronts, with a particular emphasis on the established flipped learning (FL) pedagogy and expanding influence of mobile assisted language learning (MALL) and digital game-based learning (DGBL). These approaches are at the forefront in shaping English language skill acquisition, especially in writing, with the rise of technology multimodality and informal digital learning as nascent yet significant areas for future research. Anchored in the bioecological model, the research highlights the integral role of student outcomes across various competencies influenced by systemic factors. The study stresses the necessity for education stakeholders to blend technology with pedagogical strategies, a need further accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The study's major contribution lies in its comprehensive synthesis of TELL's current landscape and for both future research and education endeavours in the field of English TELL.

Technology has become increasingly prevalent in language education (Palacious Hidalgo, 2020), as evident with dedicated subfields from computer-assisted language learning (CALL;

Gillespie, 2020), mobile-assisted language learning (MALL; Elaish et al., 2019), to technology-enhanced language learning (TELL; Shadiev & Yang, 2020). In addition to the wealth of technologies investigated (Lim & Aryadoust, 2021;Zhang & Zou, 2022b), studies have demonstrated positive student perceptions and impact on language learning (Goksu et al., 2022), enhancing motivation, engagement, and confidence (Shadiev & Wang,2022; Wei, 2022), and positive outcome in both receptive skills in vocabulary, grammar, listening, and reading (Zhang & Zou, 2022a) and productive skills of speaking and writing (Shadiev & Yang, 2020). In particular, as the main international language for communication, learning English as a foreign language (EFL) has dominated research in technology use in language learning (Goksu et al. 2022; Shadiev & Yang, 2020).

Despite decades of calls for stronger integration of technology in language education (Dede, 2000; Hubbard, 2013), the concept of emergency remote teaching during the recent COVID pandemic accentuated the difficulties and challenges faced by educators (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Moorhouse et al.,2021). As the pandemic has resided and the role of technology becomes more important than ever, there is a need for educators and researchers to be well-prepared with an up-to-date overview of the field. This study therefore aims to identify the latest trends in technology-enhanced English education, providing a reference to inform nascent and veteran scholars on the latest developments and topics for future research. Findings from the bibliometric analysis are further framed within the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) to illustrate the holistic landscape of the field.

Technology in English education

Rapid technological advances have blurred the lines between the previous notions of specific technology use in language education (Dooly & Masats, 2015; Palacious Hidalgo, 2020; X. Chen et al., 2021; Wei,2022; Zhang & Zou, 2022b). They work in tandem to deliver a comprehensive educational experience. Infact, beyond earlier specialised notions of MALL and CALL, TELL encompasses the entire spectrum, from online learning, distance education, distributed education, virtual environment, learning management systems, the internet and web 2.0, and massive open online courses (MOOC), to synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning in e-learning, and flipped, blended, or hybrid learning. Use of any digital technology in formal or informal learning both inside and outside the classroom can thus fall under the umbrella term of TELL (Marijuan & Sanz, 2017). Application of technology has demonstrated a positive impact on language learning, whether focusing on overall or specific technologies. For instance, Zhang and Zou (2022a) looked at 41 publications from 2009 to 2020 and identified computers, mobile devices, printed materials, audio players, and PowerPoint slides as the five main tools of multimedia technologies in supporting vocabulary, listening, reading, and grammar. In another review, the authors (2022b) investigated 57 publications in 10 journals until 2019 and identified mobile devices, multimedia, speech-to-text and text-to-speech, and digital game-based learning as the top five technologies used in language teaching. On the other hand, Shadiev and Yang (2020) found that the most used were digital games and online videos, amongst the 23 technologies in the top ten technology and language learning journals of 398 publications between 2014 and 2019. In terms of skills, (Elaish et al., 2019) focused on mobile-assisted English learning and found that vocabulary was the most-used skill, and that motivation was the most identified problem in their review of 69 publications from 2010 to 2015. The literature underscored not only the diverse profusion of technology, but also their positive impact on language learning. In short, the ubiquitous and authentic nature of technology promotes active, flexible, efficient, individualised, and motivating learning processes that cater to individual learners' ability, preference, and learning styles (Palacious Hidalgo,2020). Bioecological approach to technology use in English language education. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bioecological systems theory, a person's development is

impacted by the dynamics between the contexts of five environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

At the centre is the microsystem, where interactions between the person and the immediate people (i.e., teacher or parents) or objects (i.e., books or toys) take place. The connections between different parts of the microsystem constitute the mesosystem (i.e. teacher and parent interaction). The exosystem and macrosystem comprise broader indirect environmental impacts such as schools or governments for the former, and nations or cultural values for the latter. Finally, the chronosystem refers to the impact of timely events on the entire ecology, such as the recent COVID pandemic. Modification to the bioecological system has been proposed with the increasing use of technology. Johnson and Puplampu (2008) introduced the techno-subsystem within the microsystem, where learning outcome is impacted by the types of technology and usage. Previous findings have shown the importance of technology within the system, wherein compared to the microsystem of socioeconomic status, the techno-subsystem of internet usage at home was found to exert more influence on cognitive development (Johnson, 2010). Chiu (2020) further validated the impact of technology use in the ecological model using structural equation modelling and highlighted the importance of outside-school technology use in increasing the effect of inside-school use on learning outcome. More recently, Navarro Tudge (2023) introduced neo-ecological theory as a conceptual framework to understand the impact of technology on learners in the digital age. The authors proposed that the individual can coexist within both the virtual (online) and physical (face-to-face) setting in the microsystem. Herein, the traditional nature of the microsystem is no longer spatial but relational; the virtual microsystem provides a phenomenological experience characterised by the individuals' engaging and disengaging with the virtual platform. Access to digital technology is further influenced by macrosystemic factors that highlight class (Navarro & Tudge, 2023) and economic inequalities (Chiu, 2020) that adversely affect the virtual and physical environments. In short, the use of technology needs to be configured around the students while considering other variables.

Research questions

The rapid emergence and widespread adoption of new technologies have led to a significant increase in related publications, necessitating frequent updates (Goksu et al., 2022; X. Chen et al., 2021) to provide knowledge consolidation and inform scholars on future research directives (Marijuan & Sanz, 2017). Nevertheless, with the overlapping nature of technology use, focusing on specific aspects such as CALL or MALL may fail to present a thorough review of the field (Yilmaz et al., 2022). This is further aggravated when applying bibliometric approaches to small publication sample sizes ($n<350$) and/or specific journals (X. Chen et al., 2021).

To address these limitations and provide a more holistic understanding, this study complements the existing literature by taking different bibliometric approaches. First, the search terms have been generated by drawing on recent developments and previous reviews. Second, local citation count was employed to identify the most important publications in the field (Batista-Canino et al., 2023). Thirdly, bibliographic coupling was applied to better capture emerging fields and research fronts (Boyack & Klavans, 2010), with a five-year timeframe was selected to ensure timeliness of the analysis (Clermont et al., 2021; Zupic & _Cater, 2015) given the nature of rapid technology advancement. Finally, the current bibliometric analysis adopts the bioecological model to better examine and illustrate the dynamics of technology use in English language learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Chiu, 2020; Navarro & Tudge, 2023).

These approaches set the stage for the following research questions (RQ):

1. What is the current state of research in technology-enhanced English language learning in terms of performance analysis?
2. What are the most important publications based on the latest research in technology-enhanced
   English language learning?
3. What is the conceptual structure (research fronts) in technology-enhanced English Language?
   Learning?
4. How can the field of technology-enhanced English language learning be contextualised in the bioecological theory?

Addressing RQ1 illustrates the overall scientific development of TELL in English language education. The core publications identified in RQ2 serve as a reference guide for scholars initiating research in the field. For RQ3, knowledge of the current and emerging research trends can further guide research topics and identify research gaps. Finally, framing the bibliometric findings within the bioecological model provides a holistic view of TELL in English language education.

Methods

Bibliometric analysis

Bibliometrics applies objective mathematical analysis on publications (Pritchard, 1969) and benefits from processing mass amounts of data (McBurney & Novak, 2002) and generating more accurate insights over conventional literature reviews (Cobo et al., 2011). Bibliometrics involves two types of analysis (Zupic &Cater, 2015). Performance analysis reveals the impact and production of authors, publications, journals, organisation, or countries. Scientific mapping visualises their relationships to construct the intellectual, conceptual, or social network structures of the field, and can be conducted using co-citation analysis, which clusters publication references based on them being cited together (Small, 1973), and bibliographic coupling, which clusters the publications by their citing the same references (Kessler, 1963).

Both approaches assume connected publications share similar themes; whereas co-citation analysis is backward-looking and reveals knowledge base in the intellectual structure, bibliographic coupling is forward-looking and unveils the research fronts in the conceptual structure (Boyack & Klavans, 2010). Another approach to revealing the conceptual structure of the field is co-word analysis, which clusters the keywords that are linked according to the degree to which they co-occur in publications (Callon et al., 1991). Various tools have been used for bibliometric analysis, including VOS viewer (van Eck & Waltman, 2010) and R Bibliometrix (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Growing interest in bibliometrics has seen its application in language education. Scholars have reviewed second language acquisition (Zhang, 2019) and English as a medium of instruction (EMI; Wu & Tsai, 2022). Specific aspects such as listening and reading skills (Aryadoust, 2020), motivation in language learning (Wu, 2022), pre-school learners (Yilmaz et al., 2022, language learning in Southeast Asia (Ngoc & Barrot, 2023), and e-book usage in EFL (M. -R. A. Chen et al., 2021) have also been investigated. The field of CALL has especially garnered ample attention. On a smaller scale, Goksu et al. (2022) examined 310 studies published between 2014 and 2019 to identify the most productive countries, organisations, and authors in the CALL journal. Thematically, they found English was the most common researched language, and that language skills were the most investigated dependent variable in investigating the impact of technology. This was supported by co-word analysis,

which revealed CALL, MALL, EFL, blended learning, reading, writing, vocabulary, telecollaboration, and motivation as the most common keywords. Scholars have also utilised large datasets in their reviews. For instance, Lim and Aryadoust (2021) investigated the field of CALL from 1977 to 2020 by analysing 3,697 publications in 11 journals using co-citation analysis to identify the most impactful studies. The authors identified seven basic themes including computer-mediated communication and interaction, multimedia, telecollaboration or email exchanges, blogs, digital games, wikis, and podcasts.

In a comprehensive review combining bibliometrics with structural topic modelling on 1,295 publications from 1995 to 2019, X. Chen et al. (2021) found growing diversification and pedagogical application of technologies. Primarily, their analysis identified the increasing use of certain technologies (i.e. mobile, wikis, digital games, VR, etc.) and declining popularity of others such as digital books and multimedia content. Moreover, their results indicate diverse use of technologies in different contexts, such as mixed use of mobile technologies and glossaries for vocabulary learning and digital multimodal composing in project-based learning. In addition to revealing the lack of research on recent technological developments in artificial intelligence and learning analytics, the authors emphasised keeping abreast of latest technological trends and examining how they can be integrated into the language classrooms to foster better learning outcomes.

Conclusion

This study investigated and identified the current state-of-the-art research in English TELL through bibliometric approaches. Performance analysis (RQ1) reveals continuing exponential growth of technology use in English learning. The core publications (RQ2) centred on FL and provides a reference for key publications in this field for scholars. Scientific mapping of the conceptual structure using bibliographic coupling revealed eight research fronts (RQ3). MALL has become the prominent technology in TELL, with FL and DGBL as dominant pedagogical approaches. In terms of English skills, TELL mainly supported teaching of writing skills. This study further revealed technology multimodality and informal learning of English as emerging themes for future research. The COVID pandemic further underscored the importance of supporting teachers in technology use. In the following, these findings are framed within the bioecological model, illustrated in Figure 5, to provide a comprehensive overview and recommendations for the field of TELL in English language education to answer RQ4.

References

Abdullah, M. Y., Hussin, S., & Ismail, K. (2019). Implementation of flipped classroom model and its effectiveness on English speaking performance. International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (iJET), 14(9), 130. https:// doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v14i09.10348

Abrahim, S., Mir, B. A., Suhara, H., Mohamed, F. A., & Sato, M. (2019). Structural equation modelling and confirmatory factor analysis of social media use and education. International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 16(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-019-0157-y

Alfalah, S. F. M. (2018). Perceptions toward adopting virtual reality as a teaching aid in information technology. Education and Information Technologies, 23(6), 2633–2653. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-018-9734-2

Amiryousefi, M. (2017). The incorporation of flipped learning into conventional classes to enhance EFL learners' L2 speaking, L2 listening, and engagement. Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 13(2), 147–161. https:// doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2017.1394307

Andujar, A., Salaberri-Ramiro, M. S., & Mart_ınez, M. S. C. (2020). Integrating flipped foreign

language learning through mobile devices: Technology acceptance and flipped learning experience. Sustainability,12(3), 1110. https://doi.org/ 10.3390/su12031110

Aria, M., & Cuccurullo, C. (2017). bibliometrix: An R-tool for comprehensive science mapping analysis. Journal of Informetrics, 11(4), 959–975. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2017.08.007

Aryadoust, V. (2020). A review of comprehension subskills: A Scientometrics perspective. System, 88, 102180. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system. 2019.102180

Atmojo, A. E. P., & Nugroho, A. (2020). EFL classes must go online! Teaching activities and challenges during COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Register Journal, 13(1), 49–76. https://doi.org/10.18326/rgt.v13i1.49-76

Bahari, A. (2019). FonF practice model from theory to practice: CALL via focus on form approach and non-linear dynamic motivation to develop listening and speaking proficiency. Computers & Education, 130, 40–58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.11.009

Bai, B., Wang, J., & Chai, C.-S. (2019). Understanding Hong Kong primary school English teachers' continuance intention to teach with ICT. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 34(4), 528–551.https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2019.1627459

Bailey, D., Almusharraf, N., & Hatcher, R. (2021). Finding satisfaction: Intrinsic motivation for synchronous and asynchronous communication in the online language learning context. Education and Information Technologies, 26(3), 2563–2583. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-020-10369-z

Batista-Canino, R. M., Santana-Hern_andez, L., & Medina-Brito, P. (2023). A scientometric analysis on entrepreneurial intention literature: Delving deeper into local citation. Heliyon, 9(2), E13046. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e13046

Behl, A., Jayawardena, N., Pereira, V., Islam, N., del Giudice, M., & Choudrie, J. (2022). Gamifcation and e-learning for young learners: A systematic literature review, bibliometric analysis, and future research agenda. Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 176, 121445. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121445

Boyack, K. W., & Klavans, R. (2010). Co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and direct citation: Which citation approach represents the research front most accurately? Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 61(12), 2389–2404. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.21419

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development: Experiments in nature and design. Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In W. Damon, R. M.Lerner, & N. Eisenberg (Eds.), Handbook of child psychology (pp. 793–828). Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/ 9780470147658.chpsy0114

Callon, M., Courtial, J. P., & Laville, F. (1991). Co-word analysis as a tool for describing the network of interactions between basic and technological research: The case of polymer chemistry. Scientometrics, 22(1), 155–205. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02019280

Chen, Z., Chen, W., Jia, J., & An, H. (2020). The effects of using mobile devices on language learning: A meta-analysis. Educational Technology Research and Development, 68(4), 1769–1789. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-020-09801-5

Cheng, Y.-W., Wang, Y., Yang, Y.-F., Yang, Z.-K., & Chen, N.-S. (2020). Designing an authoring system of robots and IoT-based toys for EFL teaching and learning. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 34(1–2), 6–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2020.1799823

Cheung, A. (2023). Language Teaching during a Pandemic: A Case Study of Zoom Use by a Secondary ESL Teacher in Hong Kong. RELC Journal, 54(1), 55–70. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220981784

Chen, Y.-L., & Hsu, C.-C. (2020). Self-regulated mobile game-based English learning in a

Virtual reality environment. Computers & Education,154, 103910. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2020.103910

Chen, M. R. A., & Hwang, G. J. (2019). Effects of a concept mapping-based flipped learning approach on EFL students' English-speaking performance, critical thinking awareness and speaking anxiety. British Journal of Educational Technology, 51(3), 817–834. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12887

Chen, M.-R A., Hwang, G.-J., Majumdar, R., Toyokawa, Y., & Ogata, H. (2021). Research trends in the use of E-books in English as a foreign language (EFL) education from 2011 to 2020: A bibliometric and content analysis. Interactive Learning Environments, 31(4), 2411–2427. https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2021.1888755

Chen, Y.-H., & Keng, C.-J. (2019). Utilizing the Push-Pull-Mooring-Habit framework to explore users' intention to switch from offline to online real-person English learning platform. Internet Research, 29(1), 167–193. https://doi.org/10.1108/IntR-09-2017-0343

Chen, C.-M., Liu, H., & Huang, H.-B. (2019). Effects of a mobile game-based English vocabulary learning app on learners' perceptions and learning performance: A case study of Taiwanese EFL learners. ReCALL, 31(2), 170–188.https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344018000228

Chen, T., Peng, L., Yang, J., & Cong, G. (2021). Analysis of user needs on downloading behavior of English vocabulary apps based on data mining for online comments. Mathematics, 9(12), 1341. https://doi.org/10.3390/math9121341

Chen, M.-P., Wang, L.-C., Zou, D., Lin, S.-Y., & Xie, H. (2019). Effects of caption and gender on junior high students' EFL learning from iMap-enhanced contextualized learning.

Computers & Education, 140, 103602. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.103602

Chen, M.-P., Wang, L.-C., Zou, D., Lin, S.-Y., Xie, H., & Tsai, C.-C. (2020). Effects of captions and English proficiency on learning effectiveness, motivation and attitude in augmented-reality-enhanced theme-based contextualized EFL learning. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 35(3), 381–411. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2019.1704787

Chen, X. L., Zou, D., Xie, H. R., & Su, F. (2021). Twenty-five years of computer-assisted language learning: A topic modeling analysis. Language Learning & Technology, 25(3), 151–185. http://hdl.handle.net/10125/73454

Chiu, M.-S. (2020). Exploring models for increasing the effects of school information and communication technology use on learning outcomes through outside-school use and socioeconomic status mediation: The Ecological techno-process. Educational Technology Research and Development, 68(1), 413–436. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-019-09707-x

Chung, C.-J., Hwang, G.-J., & Lai, C.-L. (2019). A review of experimental mobile learning research in 2010–2016 based on the activity theory framework. Computers & Education, 129, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.10.010

Clermont, M., Krolak, J., & Tunger, D. (2021). Does the citation period have any effect on the informative value of selected citation indicators in research evaluations? Scientometrics, 126(2), 1019–1047. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-020-03782-1

Cobo, M. J., L_opez-Herrera, A. G., Herrera-Viedma, E., & Herrera, F. (2011). An approach for detecting, quantifying, and visualizing the evolution of a research field: A practical application to the fuzzy sets theory field. Journal of Informetrics, 5(1), 146–166. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2010.10.002

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of Information technology. MIS Quarterly, 13(3), 319–340. https://doi.org/10.2307/249008

Dede, C. (2000). Emerging influences of information technology on school curriculum. Journal of Curriculum Studies, 32(2), 281–303. https://doi.org/10.1080/002202700182763

Dizon, G. (2020). Evaluating intelligent personal assistants for L2 listening and speaking development. Language Learning & Technology, 24(1), 16–26. http://hdl.handle.net/10125/44705

Dooly, M., & Masats, D. (2015). A critical appraisal of foreign language research in content and language integrated learning, young language learners, and technology-enhanced language learning published in Spain (2003–2012). Language Teaching, 48(3), 343–372. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444815000117

Elaish, M. M., Ghani, N. A., Shuib, L., & Al-Haiqi, A. (2019). Development of a mobile game application to boost students' motivation in learning English vocabulary. IEEE Access, 7, 13326–13337. https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2019.2891504

Elaish, M. M., Liyana, S., Ghani, N. A., & Yadegaridehkordi, E. (2019). Mobile English language learning (MELL): A literature review. Educational Review, 71(2), 257–276. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2017.1382445

Ene, E., & Upton, T. A. (2018). Synchronous and asynchronous teacher electronic feedback and learner uptake in ESL composition. Journal of Second Language Writing, 41, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2018.05.005

Fathali, S., & Okada, T. (2018). Technology acceptance model in technology-enhanced OCLL contexts: A self-determination theory approach. Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 34(4). https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.3629

Fathi, J., & Rahimi, M. (2020). Examining the impact of flipped classroom on writing complexity, accuracy, and fluency: a case of EFL students. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 35(7), 1668–1706. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2020.1825097

Gao, L. X., & Zhang, L. J. (2020). Teacher learning in difficult times: Examining foreign language teachers' cognitions about online teaching to tide over COVID-19. Frontiers in Psychology, 11, 549653. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.549653

Lee, J. S., & Drajati, N. A. (2019). Affective variables and informal digital learning of English keys to willingness to communicate in a second language. Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 35(5), 168–182. https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.5177

Lee, J. S., & Lee, K. (2020). The role of informal digital learning of English and L2 motivational self system in foreign language enjoyment. British Journal of Educational Technology, 52(1), 358–373. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12955

Lee, G., & Wallace, A. (2018). Flipped learning in the English as a foreign language classroom: Outcomes and perceptions. TESOL Quarterly, 52(1), 62–84. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.372

Lim, M. H., & Aryadoust, V. (2021). A scientometric review of research trends in computer-assisted language learning (1977 – 2020). Computer Assisted Language Learning, 35(9), 2675–2700. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2021.1892768

Li, R., Meng, Z., Tian, M., Zhang, Z., Ni, C., & Xiao, W. (2019). Examining EFL learners' individual antecedents on the adoption of automated writing evaluation in China. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 32(7), 784–804. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2018.1540433

Li, R., Meng, Z., Tian, M., Zhang, Z., & Xiao, W. (2021). Modelling Chinese EFL learners' flow experiences in digital game-based vocabulary learning: the roles of learner and contextual factors. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 34(4), 483–505. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2019.1619585

Lin, C.-J., & Hwang, G.-J. (2018). A learning analytics approach to investigating factors affecting EFL students' oral performance in a flipped classroom. Educational Technology & Society, 21(2), 205–219. https://www.jstor.org/stable/ 26388398

Lin, C.-J., Hwang, G.-J., Fu, Q.-K., & Chen, J.-F. (2018). A flipped contextual game-based

learning approach to enhancing EFL students' English business writing performance and reflective behaviors. Educational Technology & Society, 21(3), 117–131. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26458512

Lin, J.-J., & Lin, H. (2019). Mobile-assisted ESL/EFL vocabulary learning: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 32(8), 878–919. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2018.1541359

Liu, C., Sands-Meyer, S., & Audran, J. (2018). The effectiveness of the student response system (SRS) in English grammar learning in a flipped English as a foreign language (EFL) class. Interactive Learning Environments, 27(8), 1178–1191. https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2018.1528283

Marijuan, S., & Sanz, C. (2017). Technology-assisted L2 research in immersive contexts abroad. System, 71, 22–34. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2017.09.017

Marshall, D. T., Shannon, D. M., & Love, S. M. (2020). How teachers experienced the COVID-19 transition to remote instruction. Phi Delta Kappan, 102(3), 46–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721720970702

McBurney, M. K., & Novak, P. L. (2002 What is bibliometrics and why should you care? [Paper presentation]. Proceedings. IEEE International Professional Communication Conference, 108–114. https://doi.org/10.1109/IPCC. 2002.1049094

Mei, B., Brown, G. T. L., & Teo, T. (2018). Toward an Understanding of Preservice English as a Foreign Language Teachers' Acceptance of Computer-Assisted Language Learning 2.0 in the People's Republic of China. Journal of Educational Computing Research, 56(1), 74–104. https://doi.org/10.1177/0735633117700144

Moorhouse, B. L., Li, Y., & Walsh, S. (2021). E-classroom interactional competencies: Mediating and assisting language learning during synchronous online lessons. RELC Journal, 54(1), 114–128. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220985274

Mumford, S., & Dikilitas¸, K. (2020). Pre-service language teachers' reflection development through online interaction in a hybrid learning course. Computers & Education, 144, 103706. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.103706

Namaziandost, E., & C¸akmak, F. (2020). An account of EFL learners' self-efficacy and gender in the flipped classroom model. Education and Information Technologies, 25(5), 4041–4055. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-020-10167-7

Navarro, J. L., & Tudge, J. R. H. (2023). Technologizing Bronfenbrenner: Neo-ecological theory. Current Psychology (New Brunswick, NJ), 42(22), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-02738-3

Ngoc, B. M., & Barrot, J. S. (2023). Current landscape of English language teaching research in Southeast Asia: A bibliometric analysis. The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 32(4), 517–529. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-022-00673-2

Nie, J., Zheng, C., Zeng, P., Zhou, B., Lei, L., & Wang, P. (2020). Using the theory of planned behavior and the role of social image to understand mobile English learning check-in behavior. Computers & Education, 156, 103942 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2020.103942

Oraif, I., & Elyas, T. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on learning: Investigating EFL learners' engagement in online courses in Saudi Arabia. Education Sciences, 11(3), 99. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11030099

Palacious Hidalgo, F. J. (2020). TELL, CALL, and MALL: Approaches to bridge the language gap. In C. Huertas-Abril & M. G_omez-Parra (Eds.), International approaches to bridging the language gap (pp. 118–134). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-1219-7.ch008

Pawlak, M., Derakhshan, A., Mehdizadeh, M., & Kruk, M. (2021). Boredom in online English language classes: Mediating variables and coping strategies. Language Teaching Research, 136216882110649. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211064944

Pol_akov_a & Kl_ımov_a. (2019). Mobile technology and Generation Z in the English

Language classroom- A preliminary study. Education Sciences, 9(3), 203. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci9030203

Pritchard, A. (1969). Statistical bibliography or bibliometrics. Journal of Documentation, 25, 348–349.

Rafiee, M., & Abbasian-Naghneh, S. (2019). E-learning: Development of a model to assess the acceptance and readiness of technology among language learners. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 34(5-6), 730–750. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2019.1640255

The Cognitive Impact of Multilingual Education: A Case Study of Karnataka's 'Nali Kali' Program

Md Zabiulla Khan I & Monbinder Kaur

Abstract

Multilingualism can be defined as the ability to use three or more languages competently, and has recently drawn more attention for its great influence on cognitive development. Nearly one-third of the global population is well-versed in more than two or three languages: Multilingualism highlights both the mental and social advantages particularly in linguistically diverse places like Karnataka. Multilingual individuals exhibit enhanced problem-solving techniques and the ability to adapt culturally quickly, linked to neuroplastic changes stimulated due to exposure to many languages. The present study explores the cognitive effects of multilingual education in Karnataka through a case study of the 'Nali Kali' program, which promotes mother-tongue-based and diversity-responsive teaching methodologies that reinforce cognitive outcomes. Neuroscientific research reveals that the use of many languages at an early age gives shape to neural architecture, thereby helping in self-regulation and control of attention. Recent research suggests that polyglots show greater language awareness compared to their monolingual peers. Looking closely at the processes provides a valuable insight for framing language policies, educational planning, curriculum design and notably in diverse societies such as Karnataka. Recognising and using linguistic diversity within the educational context not only improves academic success but also promotes social equality through Karnataka's rich multilingual settings.

Keywords: Multilingualism, Cognitive Development, 'Nali Kali', Educational Policy. Metalinguistic Awareness.

Introduction

Multilingual education has a significant impact on learners' cognitive abilities and academic development, promoting stronger executive function, creativity, and social interaction (Vega-Mendoza et al., 2015). India's National Education Policy (NEP) particularly places stronger stress on multilingualism and also serves as an important instrument in addressing structural disparities in support of educational equity (Jindal, 2025). Multilingualism, defined as an individual's ability to use three or more languages efficiently, has gained immense attention for its potential impact on cognitive development (Bialystok et al.,2012). Multilingualism is a global phenomenon, with over 60 per cent of the current world's population being proficient in using more than two languages (Grosjean, 2010). In addition, individuals who know many more languages showcase higher metalinguistic awareness, allowing them to understand, evaluate and reflect on other language structures more effectively, which in turn supports higher-order thinking and learning (Kuo & Anderson, 2010). It also supports the brain's ability to change and adapt by forming new links in response to the learning that takes place during the lifespan. Karnataka's educational initiatives, such as 'Nali Kali' (Joyful Learning), foster inclusivity, motivate the learners, support cognitive growth, aid teacher training, and integrate modern-day technology.

Recent studies in neurolinguistics suggest that diverse language experience can reshape neurocognitive structure and, thereby, increase cognitive skills such as attention, mental flexibility, and resistance to distractions through self-monitoring and self-control. The cognitive gains of multilingualism are not confined to any particular age group or community,

or any geographical location. Initial exposures to diversified languages can result in long-lasting cognitive benefits (Poulin-Dubois et al., 2011).

India accommodates the vast spectrum of linguistic diversity, with twenty-two constitutionally recognised official languages, and thousands of additional languages, with hundreds of varied dialects spoken across its regions. This diversity is a way of life in India, and more particularly in states like Karnataka, where languages such as Kannada, Hindi, English, Telugu, Tamil and other languages coexist. Despite this diversity, English occupies and enjoys a pivotal status, playing a dominating role more particularly in the area of education, technology, judiciary, health sector and administration, creating pervasive *de facto* multilingual environments, particularly in the urban and semi-urban side (Annamalai, 2004; Karanth, 2006). Research over the past two decades has highlighted the cognitive advantages of multilingualism, including enhanced executive function, working memory, and metalinguistic awareness (Bialystok, 2017). This paper examines the influence of multilingualism on cognitive development through the combination of case studies and a comprehensive review of relevant literature. With a particular focus on Karnataka, it examines how multilingualism practices influence cognitive processes and academic outcomes. The study employs a case study methodology rooted in research specific to Karnataka.

Literature Review

Multilingualism has been linked with cognitive abilities, especially in the area of executive function, awareness, of beyond language, and memory (Bialystok, 2017). These capacities arise from the constant cognitive involvement in handling and differentiating between distinct linguistic systems (Kroll & Bialystok, 2013). Similarly, working memory capacity is essential for academic requirements such as reading comprehension and mathematical reasoning, which appear to be strengthened in multilingual learners (Baddeley, 2003). Another significant advantage lies in its improved metalinguistic awareness, defined as the ability to think about and manipulate linguistic structures. This enables learners to understand and recognise grammar rules, adapt across registers, and think critically about language use (Jessner, 2006). The cognitive gains of speaking more than one language persist into older adulthood, as the research shows that multilingualism provides mental reserves, which in turn slow the onset of age-related cognitive issues (Craik, Bialystok, & Freedman,2010).

Multilingualism has been considered the most powerful tool which is used in influencing cognitive development, especially in regions such as Karnataka, where there is a huge linguistic diversity can be seen. Multilingualism is very common in almost all parts of India, mainly because of the country's sociolinguistic fabric (Mohanty, 2006). Research over the past two decades demonstrates that the cognitive benefits are directly aligned with those of multilingualism. Those individuals who speak more than one language consistently outsmart and outperform their single-language speaking counterparts on executive function, including working memory and attentional switching, a finding documented in both global meta-analyses and region-specific studies (Kroll & Bialystok, 2017; Achaa-Amankwaa et al., 2023). In Karnataka, there is significant socioeconomic inequality that can be seen between the urban and, more particularly, in rural areas. Minimal access to good-quality education and resources frequently hinders the enhancement of the mental faculty of multilingualism for children from low economic status backgrounds.

In the Indian context, the Srinivasapura Ageing, Neuro Senescence and Cognition (SANSCOG) study conducted in Karnataka provides the best example of the cognitive advantages linked with multilingualism This remarkable longitudinal study highlights the fact that the older adults who are exposed to many more languages are having greater cognitive ability, functioning in comparison to their monolingual counterparts (Menon et al., 2024). These findings support the cognitive reserve hypothesis, which suggests that the continuous

management of multiple languages fosters enhanced neuroplasticity and contributes to greater resilience against age-related cognitive decline.

Furthermore, the systematic reviews mainly concentrating on dual language proficiencies and multilingual proficiencies in India reaffirm intellectual advantages across the span of a lifetime, noting significant improvement in retention of memory, problem-solving skills, and task switching ability. The International scholarly work supports these findings, for example, the Cambridge Handbook of Third Language Acquisition documents neuroimaging patterns highlighting the expansion of grey matter volumes and improved functional as well as structural connectivity in the brains of multilingual speakers (Cabrelli et al.,2023). Meta-analyses further indicate that while the neurocognitive advantages aligned well with multilingualism are usually of normal magnitude, they are well supported by the statistical evidence and with visible improvements observed. Educational policy reviews stress more on the alignment of India's NEP 2020 with these cognitive insights, demonstrating the mother-tongue-based multilingual education as the most effective method to improve mental and academic outcomes. Karnataka's famous multilingual educational schemes, such as the 'Nali Kali' initiative, not only provide practical models linking language learning but also help in cognitive development skills among the learners.

Methodology

This study employs a cross-case study approach to examine the cognitive impact of multilingual education across diverse sociolinguistic contexts in Karnataka. The chosen three cases include the 'Nali Kali' program in rural primary schools, a multilingual curriculum initiative in government schools in Bengaluru, and tribal education programs incorporating local languages in Chamarajanagar. These cases were deliberately selected to keep in mind the diversity and to represent three different areas, including rural, urban, and indigenous learning environments. The primary goal was to assess how teaching and learning more than one language teaching and learning can have an impact on cognitive outcomes such as Learners with strong executive function skills can handle complex work with ease and more independently, and adjust well to a new learning environment and are capable of facing the challenges in the learning process.

Case Study 1: 'Nali Kali' Multilingual Education Program

The concept of the 'Nali Kali' (joyful learning) program, first introduced in the Chamarajanagar district by the Karnataka State Department of Education, in collaboration with and with the support of UNICEF and the local NGOs working in the area, way back in 1995-1996. The main objective is to replace rote learning, blind memorisation with meaningful is activity-based learning and to address the low learning outcomes. It mainly targets multi-grade, multi-level classrooms with a focus on joyful, activity-based learning. The program integrates Kannada, Hindi, and local dialects to foster inclusive education (Periodi, 2020). Teachers are well-trained in 'Nali Kali' teaching methodology, use multilingual storytelling techniques and provide solo, peer and group activities to teach very foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN). Students' progress can be assessed by using a "learning ladder" that is specially designed to assess the learning ability of the students, providing enough time and space so that the learners can acquire their learning at their own pace of learning ability. This promotes cognitive flexibility and metalinguistic awareness. A study found that 'Nali Kali' students showed that there is not only progress in working memory, as evidenced by their ability to retain multilingual vocabulary across subjects, but also significant improvement in the cognitive development of the child (Rajesh Raj et al., 2015). Classroom observations indicated enhanced executive function, with students demonstrating better attention control during group tasks compared to traditional classrooms. This case study is quite relevant in terms of how 'Nali

Kali''s multilingual approach supports cognitive development in rural, linguistically diverse settings, aligning with the study's focus.

Case Study 2: Multilingual Education in Bengaluru Urban Schools

The context of this case study is that Government schools in Bengaluru integrate English, Kannada, and Hindi in their curriculum, echoing the environment marked by linguistic mobility and diversity (Mohanty, 2009). A trail project in hand-picked Bengaluru schools, using multilingual reading activities, where students can understand the texts in more than one language to improve their awareness of language structure. Teachers become more facilitators and create the learning situations by adopting learning techniques to encourage peer discussions. Qualitative data from teacher interviews revealed that students exhibited superior metalinguistic awareness, such as identifying grammatical structures across languages. Standardised tests showed a 15% improvement in working memory tasks among multilingual students compared to monolingual peers (Dolas et al., 2022). This case study demonstrates the cognitive benefits of multilingualism in urban settings, providing a contrast to rural interventions like 'Nali Kali'.

Case Study 3: Tribal Multilingual Education in Karnataka

The context of this study is Karnataka's tribal regions, such as Chamarajanagar. Multilingual education programs incorporate tribal languages, for example, Soliga- a local tribal community alongside Kannada and English to provide support for cultural preservation and cognitive development (Mohanty & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2022). The program utilises the strategies of bilingual pedagogical materials and primarily oral storytelling to engage students in language-switching tasks (Costa et al., 2008). Teachers make arrangements of learning activities and create learning atmospheres that help the students in comparing the linguistic structures of the language with others, thereby enhancing metalinguistic awareness. Further, Mohanty reported that tribal children in multilingual programs showed enhanced executive function, particularly in inhibitory control, due to constant language switching. Focus group data indicated improved problem-solving skills, as students navigated complex linguistic tasks with greater ease than monolingual peers. This case study is quite relevant in terms of its importance, underscoring the cognitive benefits of multilingualism in side-cornered communities, complementing the 'Nali Kali' framework.

Discussion

The findings are derived from three case studies- 'Nali Kali', which started in rural primary schools, multilingual practices in urban government schools of Bengaluru, and tribal multilingual programs implemented in the district of Chamarajanagar. These three case studies demonstrated the cognitive advantages of multilingualism within Karnataka's diverse educational scenario. These advantages are linked with existing literature, underscoring the role of multilingual learning in strengthening executive function, working memory, and metalinguistic awareness (Kroll & Bialystok, 2017).

In the 'Nali Kali' classroom context, the integration of activity-based approaches provides a learning environment where students are able to enjoy their learning, maintain sustained attention, and adapt techniques when faced with novel challenges. These findings align well with claims that multilingualism supports a learning environment and allows task-switching ability to be performed smoothly (Luk et al.,2011). In the same way, in Bengaluru's urban schools, multilingual reading activities required learners to navigate between Kannada, Hindi, and English, thereby involving the cognitive processes that monitor, select, and inhibit linguistic choices. The tribal programs also revealed comparable gains, with students

demonstrating self-control when switching between Soliga, a local tribal language, Kannada, and English, mirroring Mohanty's early observations of cognitive resilience in multilingual tribal learners.

Working memory was identified as another important domain, highlighting significant progress. In both situations, the 'Nali Kali' and Bengaluru urban background, students show greater capacity to retain and apply information across languages, supporting the argument that sustained multilingualism strengthens the central executive components of working memory (Dolas et al.,2022). This is consistent with findings from the SANSCOG study, which indicated that multilingualism correlates with higher cognitive performance in later life due to cumulative neurocognitive engagement (Menon et al., 2024). The enhancement of the memory has pragmatic application for academic tasks, especially in reading comprehension and problem-solving, where the integration of multiple languages helps in understanding the concepts and retention.

Another cognitive domain showing notable advancement in metalinguistic awareness is understood as the ability to consciously evaluate, reflect upon, and manipulate the structural elements of language. Young learners from Bengaluru's multilingual classrooms, for example, showcase their agility in understanding grammatical rules and language patterns across various linguistic systems. The case study related to the tribal area also highlights the development of linguistic competencies, with oral storytelling activities encouraging learners to engage lively and actively when compared to phonological or semantic or other linguistic features across languages. This ability is particularly valuable in contexts where language serves both as a tool for learning and a means of preserving cultural heritage (Mohanty & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2022). A significant overarching concept in these findings is the dynamic relationship between multilingualism and socio-cultural context in which it is deeply interwined. Karnataka's linguistic diversity, ranging from urban mobility-driven and the ability to use three languages with some degree of proficiency, to rural and tribal mother-tongue-based education, provides a supporting frame for the cognitive advantages described in global research (Catalano & Shende, 2016). However, socio-economic disparities remain a matter of great concern. While urban students at the top of the advantages of institutional support, modern-day technology, and diverse urban peer interactions, on the other hand, rural background and tribal learners often face resource limitations. Yet, the case studies show that pedagogically sound, culturally embedded multilingual approaches, such as 'Nali Kali', can bridge these gaps to a greater extent by creating inclusive and cognitively stimulating environments (Panda & Mohanty, 2015).

These findings also support the neurocognitive reserve notion that continuous involvement in handling various linguistic systems contribute to neural adaptivity, delaying the onset of cognitive decline. The convergence of these findings with NEP (New Educational Policy)2020's emphasis on mother-tongue-based multilingual education reinforces the rationale for policy frameworks that see linguistic diversity as a tool rather than an obstacle. This is particularly relevant for Karnataka, where inclusive language policies aim to provide and promote educational equity, and at the same time play a role in the growth of cognitive development across socio-economic strata, by fostering these higher-order thinking skills.

It is important to acknowledge that, although the observed cognitive gains are substantial, they do not have equally same weightage among all learners or educational contexts. Variations in outcomes may be attributed to various factors, such as a lack of effective teacher training, the shortage of fully equipped classrooms, and the extent of linguistic overlap between the languages taught can impact the desired results. For example, the success of 'Nali Kali' rests heavily on teacher preparedness in activity-based multilingual pedagogy rather than the learners (Periodi, 2022). These findings also highlight that there is a requirement for sustained professional development, curriculum convergence, and policy commitment to enhance the cognitive and educational benefits of multilingualism.

To put in a nutshell, the Karnataka-based case studies confirm a growing corpus of both international and Indian research indicating that multilingualism, when systematically fostered through pedagogical practices and supportive policy frameworks, promotes cognitive development with academic and socio-cultural value. The observed enhancement in executive function, working memory, and metalinguistic awareness across rural, urban, and tribal contexts suggests that multilingual education can serve as both a cognitive catalyst and a tool for social inclusion. The Karnataka experience, therefore, offers a replicable model for other multilingual societies seeking to harness linguistic diversity as a driver of cognitive and educational resilience.

Conclusion

This study had a goal to investigate the cognitive advantages of multilingualism within Karnataka's heterogeneous educational contexts, based on the three distinct case studies: the 'Nali Kali' rural program, cross-linguistic educational project in Bengaluru's central city government schools, and tribal educational initiatives integrating the regional and indigenous languages. Across these diverse contexts, the evidence consistently indicates that sustained engagement with multiple languages enhances critical cognitive areas, especially executive function, working memory, and metalinguistic awareness. These findings provide strong empirical support for scholarship that frames multilingualism as both a cognitive advantage and an educational asset (Bialystok, 2017; Kroll & Bialystok, 2017).

The 'Nali Kali' program, with its primary focus on joyful learning, activity-oriented, and language-immersion learning methodology, set examples that even with the least and limited resources, good-quality learning can take place. The learner showed great attention control and flexibility in switching between two tasks easily, and the ability to retain and process information across multiple linguistic codes. In the same way, city-based government schools in the capital city of Karnataka showed that structured multilingual reading and cross-linguistic comparison activities promote deeper metalinguistic reflection and stronger working memory performance. The tribal case study demonstrated that incorporating local languages into the curriculum framework not only fosters cognitive gains but is also helpful in preserving the local dying language and thereby culture. (Mohanty & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2022).

A critical insight emerging from this study is the significance of context-sensitive pedagogy. While the cognitive advantages of multilingualism are globally acknowledged and well documented (Catalano, 2016; Achaa-Amankwaa et al., 2023). The cases examined in this study demonstrate that culturally relevant, mother-tongue-based instruction transcends the goal of language safeguarding; it is also a strategic approach to enhancing learners' cognitive potential. This goes well with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's endorsement for mother-tongue instruction during the foundational years, as well as assertions that multilingual education contributes to both cognitive resilience and academic equity. Moreover, the findings lend empirical support to the cognitive reserve hypothesis.

Nevertheless, the study also acknowledges that the cognitive gains of multilingualism are not by default inherently guaranteed. Some issues, like as teacher capability in using more than two or three languages simultaneously, having the most suitable learning materials, and institutional support for multilingual pedagogy, are very critical in dictating desired results. The 'Nali Kali' program's success, for example, rests mainly on continuous professional development and teachers' training (Periodi, 2022). In the urban context, multilingual measures taken rely on language use to maximise understanding and engage the participation of the learners.

In conclusion, Karnataka's multilingual education initiatives in Karnataka provide persuasive evidence that, when harnessed via contextually responsive pedagogical through policy frameworks, can produce significant cognitive benefits. The state's experience illustrates that multilingualism should not be regarded as an obstacle to learning but as a

valuable resource that fosters mental ability. These insights have significant implications not only for the Karnataka education system but also for other multilingual societies. Investing in multilingual education is not only a cultural imperative but also a scientifically grounded strategy for fostering cognitive and academic excellence. By identifying and integrating the complete range of linguistic resources accessible to learners, policymakers and educators can play a pivotal role in cultivating cognitively resilient, socially inclusive and academically competent learners.

References

Achaa-Amankwaa, P., Kushnereva, E., Miksch, H., Stumme, J., Heim, S., & Ebersbach, M. (2023). Multilingualism is associated with small task-specific advantages in the cognitive performance of older adults. Scientific Reports, 13, Article 16912. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-43961-7

Annamalai, E. (2004). Nations within nations: Cultural and linguistic diversity in India. In M. Krauss, P. K. Austin, & W. J. House (Eds.), *Linguistic diversity* (pp. 193–208). Centre for Applied Linguistics.

Baddeley, A. (2003). Working memory: Looking back and looking forward. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 4*(10), 829–839. https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn1201

Bialystok, E., Craik, F. I. M., & Luk, G. (2012). Bilingualism: Consequences for mind and brain. Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 16(4), 240–250. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2012.03.001

Bialystok, E. (2017). The bilingual adaptation: How minds accommodate experience. *Psychological Bulletin, 143*(3), 233–262. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000099

Cabrelli, J., Puig-Mayenco, E., & Pfenninger, S. E. (2023). Third language acquisition. In K. Bellamy, L. Isurin, & J. Rothman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of third language acquisition* (pp. 25–47). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108907774.003

J., Chaouch-Orozco, A., González Alonso, J., Pereira Soares, S. M., Puig-Mayenco, E., & Rothman, J. (Eds.). (2023). *The Cambridge handbook of third language acquisition.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108957823

Catalano, T., & Shende, M. (2016). Developing multilingual pedagogies and research through language study and reflection. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 15*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2016.1181633

Costa, A., Hernández, M., & Sebastián-Gallés, N. (2008). Bilingualism aids conflict resolution: Evidence from the ANT task. *Cognition, 106*(1), 59–86. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2006.12.013

Craik, F. I. M., Bialystok, E., & Freedman, M. (2010). Delaying the onset of Alzheimer's disease: Bilingualism as a form of cognitive reserve. *Neurology, 75*(19), 1726–1729. https://doi.org/10.1212/WNL.0b013e3181fc2a1c

Dolas, F., Jessner, U., & Cedden, G. (2022). Cognitive advantages of multilingual learning on metalinguistic awareness, working memory and L1 lexicon size: Reconceptualisation of linguistic giftedness from a DMM perspective. *Journal of Cognition, 5*(1), Article 10, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.5334/joc.201

Grosjean, F. (2010). *Bilingual: Life and reality*. Harvard University Press.

Jessner, U. (2006). Linguistic awareness in multilinguals: English as a third language. Edinburgh University Press.

Jindal (2025). Multilingual education and NEP 2020: Challenges and opportunities. Jindal Journal of Public Policy, 8(III), Article 277. https://doi.org/10.54945/jjpp.v8iII.277

Karanth, P. (2006). Multilingualism in India: The implications of language and education policy. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 180*, 135–148. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.2006.011

Kroll, J. F., & Bialystok, E. (2013). Understanding the consequences of bilingualism for language processing and cognition. *Journal of Cognitive Psychology, 25*(5), 497–514. https://doi.org/10.1080/20445911.2013.799170

Kroll, J. F., & Bialystok, E. (2017). Bilingualism and cognition: Evidence from behavioural and neuroimaging research. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 21*(6), 445–456. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2017.03.003

Kuo, L.-J., & Anderson, R. C. (2010). Bilingualism and cognitive development. In E. Bialystok & F. I. M. Craik (Eds.), *Cognitive and linguistic aspects of reading* (pp. 259–282). Routledge.

Luk, G., De Sa, E., & Bialystok, E. (2011). Is there a relation between the onset age of bilingualism and enhancement of cognitive control? *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 14*(4), 588–595. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728911000010

Menon, A. J., Malo, P. K., Jain, S., Gandhi, S., Sundarakumar, J. S., Rai, P., et al. (2024). Association between multilingualism and cognitive performance among older adults in rural southern India. *Journal of Neurosciences in Rural Practice, 15*, 81–85. https://doi.org/10.25259/JNRP_376_2023

Mohanty, A. K. (2006). Multilingual education in India: The search for a scientific basis. *Language Policy, 5*(3), 253–274. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-006-9011-1

Mohanty, A. K. (2009). Multilingual education: A bridge too far? In T. Skutnabb-Kangas, R. Phillipson, A. K. Mohanty, & M. Panda (Eds.), *Social justice through multilingual education* (pp. 3–15). Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847691910-004

Mohanty, A. K., & Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2022). Growing up in multilingual societies: Violations of linguistic human rights in education (Chapter 25, pp. 578–601). In A. Stavans & U. Jessner (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Child Multilingualism*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108669771

Periodi, U. (2022). Nali-kali: A step towards quality education for all. *Learning Curve, 7*(2). Azim Premji University. https://publications.azimpremjifoundation.org/2602

Poulin-Dubois, D., Blaye, A., Coutya, J., & Bialystok, E. (2011). The effects of bilingualism on toddlers' executive functioning. Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 108(3), 567–579. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2010.10.009

Rajesh Raj, S. N., Sen, K., Annigeri, V. B., Kulkarni, A. K., & Revankar, D. R. (2015). Joyful learning? The effects of a school intervention on learning outcomes in Karnataka. *International Journal of Educational Development, 40*, 183–195. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.09.003

Vega-Mendoza, M., West, H., Sorace, A., & Bak, T. H. (2015). The impact of late, non-balanced bilingualism on cognitive performance. Cognition, 137, 40–46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2014.12.008

Author Profiles

Dr Anu Lekshmi is an academician and avid researcher in the field of Gender Studies, Health Humanities, Modernity and Life Writing. She obtained her Doctoral Degree from the University of Kerala in the field of English Language and Literature in 2023 and is currently working as Assistant Professor at University College, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Beyond academia, Anu Lekshmi is dedicated to promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and engaging with the broader community.

Mr Anup Dadarao Atram is a researcher with a deep interest in literature and social issues. Currently he is working as an assistant professor of English at Indirabai Meghe Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Amravati, Maharashtra. He is pursuing his research on Alienation. His writing often explores themes of marginalization, human struggle, and alienation. Passionate about storytelling, he believes in the power of words to create awareness and change. This is his first contribution to an anthology.

Dr Sandeep P Joshi is a poet and a research guide with a deep interest in literature and feminism. Currently he is working as an assistant professor of English at PG Department of English, Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University Amravati, Maharashtra.

Ms Varla Aruna Kumari works as a lecturer in English at SRR & CVR Government Degree College (A) in Vijayawada. She has done MPhil in Acharya Nagarjuna University and a PGDTE in EFLU. She has a two-decade-long teaching career and published research work and research papers presented at conferences. She is a life member in ELTAI.

Ms Aathira S is a research scholar from Sadakathullah Appa College, specializes in digital humanities and partition literature, exploring geospatial narratives and literary mappings to bridge history, memory, and contemporary scholarship.

Dr Audrey Sandrilla Pengal is an accomplished academician, researcher, and administrator with expertise in English, communication skills, mentoring, and curriculum development, committed to fostering holistic student growth and professional excellence.

Dr Narayana Bashyam is a dedicated Associate Professor and Soft Skills Trainer with over 28 years of distinguished experience in academia. Currently serving as an Assistant Professor at CVR College of Engineering. His subject expertise spans Business Communication, Cambridge B2/C1 Empower Assessment, Employability Skills, and Gender Sensitization.

Mr Braj Kishor Gupta is a PhD Research Scholar in English at Presidency University, Bangalore and the author of 'Take Your Giant Step Now' (2023) and Editor of 'The Covid-19 Pause: Uncommon Tales of Common Folks' (2021).

Dr Ajith K is working as an Assistant Professor of English in the Department of English at the School of Liberal Arts, Presidency University, Bangalore.

Dr Brian Mendonça is a poet, traveller, and a blogger. His recent publications include studies on Dalit literature; prison literature; protest in the 21st century; and T. S. Eliot's The Wasteland. His poems have been anthologized in The Penguin Book of Poems on the Indian City (2025) and Goa: A Garland of Poems (2017).

Dr Debabrata Hazra is currently working as an Assistant Professor of English at Sreenidhi University, Hyderabad, India

Mr Dinesh Raja V is a PhD Research Scholar in the PG & Research Department of English, National College (Autonomous), affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India. His research interests include Travel Writing, Narrative Theory, Ecocriticism, and Digital Humanities.

Dr V Srividhya is an Associate Professor & Research Supervisor in the PG & Research Department of English, National College (Autonomous), affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India. Her academic interests include Literary Theory, Cultural Studies, Postcolonial Literature, and Digital Humanities.

Ms Entisar Showai Ahmed Al Sunboly is a research scholar in English at Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded, specialising in Linguistics and Literature. Her academic work explores the intersection of literary studies with linguistics through sociolinguistic representation.

Ms Harini K is a PhD Research Scholar in the Department of English, Ethiraj College for Women, Chennai. Research Interests include Psychoanalytic literary criticism, trauma studies, memory studies and comparative literature. Has presented papers at National and International Conferences and has published research articles in reputed journals.

Ms Himanshi Gadhia is currently working as a Teaching Assistant in the Department of English at Vanita Vishram Women's University, Surat. She has over six years of teaching experience and is presently pursuing her PhD in Ecocriticism. Her research interests include Ecocriticism, Environmental Humanities, and Literary Theory.

Ms Iqra Khan is currently serving as an Assistant Professor at MU College and possesses approximately 5.5 years of teaching experience at both national and international levels. She has presented and published more than eight research papers in various national and international conferences. She holds a PhD. and has also complected the CELTA.

Mr Jagajit Manotosh Patra is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Utkal University.

Mr Joshua Arul Raj H, Full time Research Scholar, Department of English, School of Arts and Science, Vinayaka Missions Research Foundation (Deemed To be University) Chennai, Paiyanoor.

Ms E Kalavathi is a Research Scholar, Department of English at Koneru Lakshmaiah Education and Foundation along with my Supervisor Dr E S Sharmila Sigamany Associate Professor, Department of English at Koneru Lakshmaiah Education and Foundation, Vaddeswaram.

Dr J Kalpana is a Lecturer in English with 20 years of teaching experience. She holds an MA, MPhil, and PhD in English. She received her PhD from Acharya Nagarjuna University. She has qualified both APSET and UGC-NET. Her areas of academic interest include contemporary literature, Canadian studies, and literary criticism.

Ms Juzzuru Kavitha. Research Scholar, Krishna University, Machilipatnam. I have been pursuing my PhD under the guidance of Prof Dr N Usha. My research area is Indian English Literature.

Prof Dr N Usha is a professor at Krishna University. She has guided so many scholars under her able guidance.

Dr N Kavitha has 11 years of teaching and research experience, area of specialisation being Post Humanism, Cultural Studies and Digital Humanities. Served as Member, the PG Board of Studies, Department of English, University of Kerala, from 2020-23. Published 15 research papers in National and International journals, Presented Papers in more than 25 Conferences, delivered invited lectures, guided and awarded 5 PhD candidates and guiding 4 PhD candidates.

Ms Manisha Berwal, a postgraduate in English from Kurukshetra University, pursues research in Digital Humanities and English Literature, exploring interdisciplinary approaches that integrate technology with literary studies and cultural analysis.

Mr Namamula Murali Mohan is a research scholar, JNTUK University in English in Indian Literature. His scholarly interests are diaspora, identity, and language with publication contributing to interdisciplinary perspectives in humanities.

Ms Neha Rathi, Assistant Professor of Psychology at IIMT University, specializes in counseling and positive psychology, student well-being, and digital media's emotional impact, with publications in Scopus-indexed and peer-reviewed journals

Ms S. Nirmala Nigil Bhavan worked as a lecturer of English for 14 yrs in Indonesia, presently at St. Joseph's College for Women, Kurnool, A.P. She is also, a research Scholar of Monad University, UP.

Ms Prerana Sana, an independent author, researches gender, power, and identity, focusing on myth, culture, feminism, digital storytelling, and Indigenous archives to restore agency and explore narrative sovereignty and resistance.

Ms G Pushpalatha is a Ph.D. (Part-time) Research Scholar at Quaid-e-Millath Government College, Chennai and working as Assistant Professor of English at St. Anne's College, Chennai. Her research interests include Indian Literature.

Mr Rahul More is a research scholar from V G Vaze college, Mulund, affiliated to University of Mumbai. His research interest is animal emotions and zoo criticism He had presented a research paper on Technology-Enhanced Language Learning: Strategies, Impact and Challenges.

Dr P Rajitha Nair is a dedicated academician and researcher with over 32 years of extensive teaching experience across Engineering Colleges, and Spoken English Institutes. She currently serves as an Associate Professor of English and Head of the Department of English at Guru Nanak University.

Dr U Ramesh Babu is Head, Department of English at Government Degree College, Ravulapalem, Dr BR Ambedkar Konaseema Dt.

Ms V Ramya Sudha has completed BSc, BEd, MA English literature. She is currently working as a High School Teacher at ZPHS, Rangampeta, Andhra Pradesh. She is a published author and a prolific writer.

Ms T Sharon Raghukar, an MA Gold Medallist, is a dedicated scholar currently pursuing her PhD at Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati. She has a keen interest in publications and actively works towards contributing valuable insights to the academic community. With her dedication and proactive mindset, she is poised to make a significant mark in academia.

Ms Shiwali Sharma is a research Scholar in School of Social Sciences and Humanities, VIT-AP University, Andhra Pradesh. She holds M.A in English (2018) from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Katra, J&K. The broader area of her research is Life Writing studies. She has an experience of teaching as an Assistant Professor in Cluster University of Jammu.

Ms Shreya Shubhangi is a research scholar in the Department of Languages at Presidency University. She holds a Master's degree from Jaipur National University and a Bachelor's degree from Banaras Hindu University. Her research interest includes structuralism and narrative discourse studies.

Dr Sayani Banerjee is a Linguist by passion and profession. She is currently working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Languages, at Presidency University, Bengaluru. Her research areas include Semantics, Discourse Studies and Cognitive Linguistics.

Dr Kongari Shyam Sundar is Assistant Professor of English with over 28 years of teaching and research experience in India. He holds a Ph.D. in English Language Teaching (ELT) from Osmania University (O.U.), Hyderabad. His expertise includes English language teaching, curriculum design, English Language Communications Skills, Advanced English Communication Skills labs., soft skills, and employability training.

Dr Illur Prem Kumar is an English Language Educator with over 16 years of teaching and research experience in India and abroad. He holds a Ph.D. in English Language Education from The English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad. His expertise includes English language teaching, curriculum design, Advanced Communication Skills Language labs, soft skills, and employability training.

Ms Snehal Bhandakkar (Rakhunde) is a Research Scholar at Nagpur University, Nagpur.

Ms Soni Gandepudi, an Assistant Professor of English at Government Degree College in Ravulapalem, inspires students through creative instruction, research, and training, equipping them with the communication skills and values necessary for both academic and personal development.

Ms Tanami Roy Choudhury is a Research Scholar at Department of English, Vasantrao Naik Government Institute of Arts and Social Sciences Nagpur

Dr Harish Tapadia is an Assistant Professor at Department of English, Vasantrao Naik Government Institute of Arts and Social Sciences Nagpur

Ms Tanuja Chundru is a research scholar at Siddhartha Academy of Higher Education (Deemed to be University), Vijayawada, and also serves as a Senior Assistant Professor of English at Sri Vasavi Engineering College, Tadepalligudem. She published 8 research articles in international journals and 6 book chapters in conference proceedings. Her research interest includes English Language Teaching.

Mr Venkata Ramana Manipatruni is the Head and Assistant Professor of English at Sri Vasavi Engineering College, Tadepalligudem, India, and also a research scholar at Koneru

Lakshmaiah Education Foundation, Vaddeswaram, India. He has published 3 research articles in the ELT domain, indexed in Scopus. Additionally, he has published 10 more articles in other international journals.

Dr T S Rajeswari is an Assistant Professor of English at Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation, Vaddeswaram, Andhra Pradesh, India. Her research interests include English literature and language. She has published 11 research articles indexed in Scopus, as well as a few articles in other international journals.

Dr P Venkanna works as an Assistant Professor of English, Guru Nanak Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, with 27 years of academic experience, actively engages in research and writing on American and Commonwealth literature.

Mr Md Zabiulla Khan I is an educator currently serving at Government Junior College, Doddaballapur. He is presently pursuing a PhD in Applied Linguistics with a specialization in English Language Teaching (ELT) from Tumkur University, Karnataka. His academic interests lie in multilingual education, language policy, and the integration of technology into ELT practices, with a focus on improving pedagogical outcomes in the Indian classroom context.

Dr Monbinder Kaur is an Associate Professor in the Department of Studies and Research in English at Tumkur University, Karnataka, India. She has over 20 publications in UGC CARE listed journals and chapters in edited books. She has successfully executed three research projects funded by UGC, ICSSR and Tumkur University. She is currently supervising four candidates for Ph.D. Her areas of interest include Indian writing in English, Diaspora studies, Dalit Studies, Writings from North-East India, South Asian Studies and American literature.