

# Nelta Choutari

Nepalese ELT Practitioners Meet the World

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## **Welcome to Choutari: May 2014**

May 1, 2014

**May 2014 Issue**

**NELTA  
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### **Editorial**

#### **Welcoming New Year with another Series of Serendipity**

Ushakiran, Praveen, and Umes

Whenever the New Year arrives, we renew the journey planner of our life; our life begins once again with great excitement that promises new success. The planner doesn't discriminate what is doable and what is undo-able; it simply acts as a path setter. We follow the path, which guides, and what actually happens is serendipitous. Life is like that. Our professional life is not very different from that. It resonates with our normal personal life.

The journey of NeltaChoutari has also been renewed recently with the arrival the Nepali New Year 2071. And yes for sure, we have resolutions for this year too. We don't have a written planner, a chart or a calendar where we can make notes, but, we have a portable plan with organizing chart in our mind. This is our beacon for the year ahead. We are sure this planner will help us by directing our best efforts to make the Choutari able to gear up with its success. It will open newer avenues that will lead us to chart news horizons. Our journey is sure to be serendipitous. Be ready to become the surprisers. Choutari has set to serve such surprises, not at one time, but successively in the months to come.

Our success is based on your (you, the readers) effort and collaboration that come through your contribution of articles and your readership. Choutari team of editors will always be busy supplying you with substantial information along with materials but your participation is what makes a difference. We have planned to expand activities of

Choutari by incorporating a variety of reading materials and resources important for your research work, paper writing and, of course, for classroom teaching. The benefits will be serendipitous.

The May 2014 Issue is serendipitous in real sense. This month we have come up again with a variety of blog entries, ranging from teaching grammar and vocabulary, and learned centered approach to teachers' development through teachers' club, and self-reflection of using YouTube and journal writing for developing fluency and writing in English. Besides, for this issue, we have a special blog entry on post-colonialism in Indian literature.

**Here is the list of blog entries for this month:**

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Isn't it an array of diverse ideas and experiences? We hope you find these stuffs useful.

Now we invite you to join the conversation again by sharing your responses as comments under any posts, by liking and sharing them with your network, by contributing your own posts for future issues, and by encouraging other colleagues to do the same.

Happy serendipitous reading!

**Choutari Team**

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 Posted by Umes Shrestha

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## **If Only, It Were True: The Problems with Grammar Teaching**

May 1, 2014

***Pramod Kumar Sah***

Can teachers do a good job by prescribing grammar rules to their students? I imagine "No!" would be the most common answer to this question if asked to a gathering of contemporary English language teachers. We now seem to have that realization by now. However, some ineffective and purposeless grammar teaching continues to dominate in majority of Nepali classrooms. What can we as English language teachers do? I discuss the pros and cons of grammar teaching, highlight some problems of grammar teaching in Nepal, and suggest some aspects that can be incorporated to make grammar teaching more effective.

Grammar teaching is still a controversial issue in the field of second and foreign language instruction. It has been of great interest to researchers and teachers to find out whether it is worth teaching. Apparently, despite Krashen and Terrel's (1983, p. 114) and some others' negative view, linguists like Cowan (2009, p. 3) and Thornbury (1999, p. 16) believe grammar instruction has a lasting effect in learners. As 'grammar' is an inevitable aspect of language teaching, what counts is the meaning of 'grammar' taken as in the classroom. Is it a set of rules that subsequently drives us to interpret the rules stated in the marketed textbooks? Thus, questions arise as:

### ***Is teaching of grammar textbooks advisable?***

I am much concerned about the practice of using textbook in our grammar lessons provided it helps with set guidelines to reach objectives. Be of my opinion that, this is merely a mythological grammar teaching if we are explaining the textbook page by page, getting the students to complete the exercises and eventually setting a test of those exercises and quantifying their level of learning. More miserably, we have chances to observe the classes where students are seen reciting grammar rules and definitions of terminologies by rote. The majority of empirical researchers have found these practices of no worth as Bright (1947) finds "...a knowledge of the technical terms gives no guarantee that the pupils can use the language." Thus, I would prefer to use textbook merely as a resource book.

Instead of following a mere textbook, at first, I would choose a grammatical item to expose to my students. Choosing an item again depends on Second Language Acquisition paradigms, such as the hierarchy of acquisition. In particular, SLA research

shows that the 'Present Continuous Tense' is acquired prior to the 'Present Simple'; thus, despite textbooks introducing the 'Present Simple' first I would opt for the 'Present Continues' alternatively. Then, I would plan my own lessons with comprehensible input and tasks. Nevertheless, ways to make input comprehensible, what we teach of a particular grammatical item and what are the issues undertaken in a grammar lesson will occur later in the article.

### ***Should we teach grammar rules?***

I would say, 'no'. Jespersen discovered this fallacy in the early 1900's and was re-emphasized by Bright in late 1940's, but it still governs language classrooms and textbooks not only in Nepal but in some other contexts as well. Introducing grammar rules deductively to our students brings nearly no development in the students' production. It helps them know the rules; they can tell, for instance, the simple present tense is composed of Subject+ verb + object/complement, but unfortunately will not be able to express their present habits accurately and fluently. The exhibited below demonstrates this dilemma:

Teacher: The difference is the present simple expresses habitual actions, but the present continuous actions that are going on now *while you speak*.

Tiresome child: Please sir, *why are you saying "while you speak?"*

Teacher: I'm sorry. It would have been better to say "*while you are speaking*".

Tiresome child: Was what you said wrong, sir?

Teacher: No.

Tiresome child: I'm sorry. *I am not understanding*.

Teacher: Look. There are some verbs that are exceptions. We never use the present continuous of the verbs "to understand", "to see", "to hear" and so on. Now you really must go away. I 'm seeing the headmaster in five minutes and it's time I started.

Tiresome child: You *are seeing* the headmaster, sir!

Teacher: Go away!

Thus, prescribing grammar rules hardly boosts up the learners' production in the target language. Consequently, what I would rather teach them is 'patterns' of language, explicitly and inductively. I would give them implicit exposure; this doesn't hold the ideas that I oppose explicit instruction. Then, the learners are asked to work on the language (i.e. examples) to explore 'patterns' of that particular language. Once the patterns are noticed, the information processes to their short-term memory that needs to be practiced to drive to long-term memory. The explored patterns are practiced communicatively with appropriate tasks. The more they are given chance for production, higher is the possibility for the information to reach to automatic processing or to say long-term memory.

Furthermore, in our context, we lack the authentic data to use as an exposure to our students. Here, I doubt at making use of the marketed textbooks since the language used in them are barely authentic or based on any study. In this regard, corpus study has been a great means to us. It is advised to check [Using Corpora in English Language Teaching](#) by HimaRawal in February issue of this blog for detailed information.

### ***Should we teach to speak according to the rules of grammar?***

I'll agree with you if you said 'yes'. The significance of speaking according to the rules of grammar cannot be ignored but consciously using rules while speaking not only obstructs fluency but also increases likelihood of using language out of context. In normal speech, the mind of the speaker certainly does not think of a rule and then work out a sentence to fit it. While speaking, a fluent speaker does not think of grammar at all, s/he thinks of the meaning of what s/he wants to say. Thus, as a language teacher, we need to teach students to speak comprising meaning in the context rather than the rules of grammar. However, there might be an argument that a conscious knowledge of grammar rules is obligatory for new learners of a foreign language. Thus, what can be the best idea is that we provide them rules of grammar and then give them ample opportunities to practice those language points by creating natural settings so that the patterns of languages are discovered by the students in such a way that rules become a subconscious part of language learning endeavour eventually leading to a condition where the learner can use language even without worrying about remembering the rules.

Moreover, it is not always necessary to stick to formal grammar while speaking. The utterances, like 'How are you doing?', 'I am going to go home now', 'Do you want to have coffee?', 'Are you all right?' and so on will seem quite odd in spoken discourse.

Thus, I would teach my students to speak like, 'How you doing?', 'Gonna go home now', 'Wanna have coffee?', 'You all right?', but they should be made aware that they cannot use these forms in written discourse. If we attempt to teach our students as we were taught, we will not do any justice to them. We need to understand the need and interest of this iPhone generation. They do not even bother grammar rules while speaking, face-booking, twittering, or texting electronically. What counts for them is communication and they are right. If native speakers are doing so, why cannot they? On contrary, formal grammar must not be ignored in written texts.

In a nutshell, we should start teaching 'spoken grammar' as well. Out of my personal interest, we must be thankful to course designer of Tribhuvan University for prescribing the textbook 'Exploring Grammar in Context' which is primarily grounded on corpus data and indeed a descriptive grammar textbook. The most significant aspect of the book is that it incorporates spoken grammar, but unfortunately we witness the section being ignored in classroom practice and has been taken as of less importance. This attitude is born from the question patterns of the annual examination that hardly composes any question from the section, and this has assisted me to assume the avoidance of spoken grammar. It is advised to give equal importance to the section and be honest to students. The knowledge of discourse marker, back-channelling, ellipsis, headers and tails, filled and unfilled gaps, etc. is equally notable to tense, mood, passive sentence, reported speech and so on.

### ***If we teach grammar anyway, let's consider these 4 aspects***

The most crucial aspects of grammar teaching that must be taken into account are 'noticing', 'consciousness-raising', 'grammar in context', 'information processing system' and 'focus on production'. This short article will not discuss these aspects in details, but attempts to deal them briefly.

Grammar teaching without giving students chance to notice a language is meaningless. Noticing can occur when the learners are paying conscious attention to a form within input. Schmidt (2010: 725), the propounder of Noticing Hypothesis, defines the term as 'conscious registration of attended specific instances of language' and emphasizes the idea that no noticing means no learning. Thus, a teacher has to help learners develop noticing. And, this is only possible when we expose plenty of comprehensible input and get the students to work on the input to explore their own grammar rather than explaining prescriptive grammar rules to them.

In addition, by consciousness-raising we mean to devise activities that help them 'to construct their own explicit grammar' (Ellis, 1993: 10). Put it other way, we develop activities that will get the students to understand a particular grammatical feature, how it works, what it consists of and so on. The students attempt to raise their consciousness towards a form of language through noticing. This does not necessarily mean students are able to produce sentences but it helps to understand a form that is eventually brought to their production through practice.

The next concept is the need of teaching grammar in context. The real acquisition is not completed until the learners are able to use them in communicative context as Nunan (1998) views "...effective communication involves achieving harmony between functional interpretation and formal appropriacy... by giving them tasks that dramatize the relationship between grammatical items and the discoursal contexts in which they occur" (p. 102). Thus, instead of just giving them a set of rules, we are supposed to give them optimum opportunity to explore grammar in context.

Finally, our grammar teaching activities might as well be based on the theory of information processing. When a learner is provided with input, it is not necessary that all input turns into intake. Some type of filtration takes place where the noticed input processes to short-term memory that needs to undergo practice to eventually reach to long-term memory. The language reached to the long term memory finally becomes automatic when the learners are able to produce a language.

Incorporating these factors (noticing, consciousness-raising, providing context for language use, and authenticity) can give purpose for the teachers and may significantly increase the effectiveness of learning. Johns and King (1991, p. 3) find DDL, a new style of grammar teaching incorporating learners own discovery of grammar based on evidence from authentic language use. This approach initially makes use of corpus data that is exposed to learners where they are asked to notice patterns of a language. While working on the data, students consciously notice patterns and raise their consciousness on the given patterns. Later, the discovered patterns are practiced in set tasks where the learners get chance to produce the language.

It is always heard from teachers saying grammar teaching is a problematic area, but in my opinion, the problem is we do not take on new experiments to see if new approaches work. We are much preoccupied and grounded by the age-old "grammar" books that shamelessly prescribe "correct" rules. It's high time we consider minimizing the use of prescriptive grammar rules with aids to textbooks and allow learners to

explore their own grammar through comprehensible input, especially making use of authentic data.

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## **Games for Retaining Vocabulary**

May 1, 2014

***Pema Kala Bhusal***

I would like to begin this article by stating what Wilkins said to show the importance of vocabulary – “Without grammar, very little can be conveyed and without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed” (Wilkins, 1972). Vocabulary acquisition is crucial for second language learning. However, many second language learners feel that learning new vocabulary is a tedious and laborious process. On this paper, I first discuss about the problems faced by my students while dealing with vocabulary. And then I will offer some guidelines and suggestions on ways to retain new vocabulary.

I remember my tutors at KU teaching ‘Teaching Vocabulary’ by using different games and by using flashcards, ball, realia etc. The games helped me learn collocations, synonyms, and different words very easily. I was not completely aware of those words, but now they are still in my mind. I came to realize that games are very effective tools for retaining new words.

During my school days, I never saw my teachers using games in the classroom. We learnt the meaning of difficult words through rote learning. When I started teaching, naturally, I didn’t have any knowledge that vocabulary could be taught through games. When I saw my teachers using different games at my university level, I seemed to be unfamiliar with them and I felt having very less knowledge about vocabulary. I imagined what if I had a chance to enjoy these kinds of games in school! My vocabulary knowledge would have been stronger than now.

When I taught lower secondary level students in the public school, I found that the students had many problems regarding vocabulary. For instance, when I asked them to describe a picture, they were unable to do so. They could not make logical connections among words. To make it worse, they couldn’t find the right words to describe the picture.

After gaining knowledge about using games in the classroom, I used different games such as ‘Kim’s game’, ‘Relia’, ‘What’s missing?’, ‘Erase’ and ‘TPR verb game’ to teach vocabulary. When I employed the different games through different physical activities, the students had lots of fun and they were learning the words quickly and effectively.

Since that day, they kept telling me to use such kinds of games in my classroom as they had never done such activities before.

I realized that it is important to understand this issue from their perspective because they have been practicing and learning English in their native language from the very beginning. They always carry an unknown fear of using English, especially while speaking. This might be the result of the teaching trend as well, which is – the teacher comes in the classroom, asks the student to look at the book and he/she translates the passage into Nepali. The students are still taught English using a conventional approach like a grammar translation method. (I don't mean that grammar translation method is not a good method to use in the classroom. We can use it depending upon the context and situations. Sometimes the students can understand more easily when teachers use this method.)

Similarly, if we teach vocabulary through drills, it might become boring for the students, especially those who have limited expertise in language study. Forgetting the word is also another problem. Most of the students complain that they forget words soon after learning them and they don't exist for a long time. I recently observed an English language classroom of grade 8 at a public school. During my observation, I found the English teacher using Nepali language all the time. I felt very sad about the situation and thought how the students would never develop their English language that way.

Now let me share a few strategies I have used in my classroom for the enhancement of my student's vocabulary. The first strategy was I asked them to read the passage before coming to the class, assuming that the more they read the more they can see new words to learn. Then, I asked them some words related to the passage. When I did so, some of the students responded from the context and some got confused. Therefore, I made them familiar by showing some pictures, realia and engaged them into conversation. This strategy helped them learn the words easily because I think interaction is the key to succeed in language learning.

Likewise, I asked the students to come in front of the class and touch some objects without looking at them, recognize the objects and describe them to the class. They were very curious and enjoyed the sensual learning activity. Another game I used frequently in my class was the game called 'Erase'. I used this game to teach the name of the animals, classroom objects, etc. For this, I asked my students to tell me the name of the animals they knew. After that, I made a circle on the board and wrote them down around the circle. In this way, I elicited the names of the animals. After that, I randomly wrote them down on the board. First of all, I asked them to repeat the words in chorus

so that they could remember the words for the game. Then, I arranged the students into two groups and lined them up into two teams. After that, I provided the first student in each team an eraser and they raced to the board to erase the word I have yelled out. The game was played in the same way to the end. The first student who correctly erased the word won a point for the team. Finally, I scored the group that won. This is one of the examples of a game I have used in my classroom.

In this way, I used several games to teach vocabulary. From their active participation and involvement, I came to know that integrating games, both physical and mental, helps the students to keep their mind alert. Not only this, they were able to reduce their boredom and retain the words easily.

To sum up, games play a very important role to motivate the students in learning activities. From these experiences, I have realized that acquiring and retaining vocabulary in a foreign language is a challenging job, but learning vocabulary through games is one of the effective ways that can be applied in any classroom. They can be used not only for mere fun, but more importantly, for the useful practice and learning purpose. There is a good Chinese proverb "tell me, I will forget; teach me, I will remember; involve me and I will learn". This saying also proves that if we ask the students directly to write or tell the unfamiliar words, they would probably be unable to do so and feel discouraged, but they can write or tell if they are involved in different fun activities.



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## **Learner-Centered Teaching: Some Considerations**

May 1, 2014

***Guru Prasad Poudel***

There has been an enormous push to introduce learner-centered teaching strategies to pupils in both elementary and higher level institutions worldwide. The underlying assumption held by many is that learners will be more successful if they have an opportunity to enjoy while learning. However, the challenge is how to create learner centered teaching environment inside the classroom. This article aims to present few considerations on how to implement learner centered teaching in our daily pedagogic endeavors. In addition, the article includes tips, principles and challenges of learner centered teaching.

Over the past fifty years the 'how' and 'why' of what we teach has been the focus of much thought, research and deliberation. From Grammar-Translation to the Communicative Approach and beyond, the best methodology for English language teaching (ELT) has supposedly been discovered many times. While many changes have occurred in ELT over the past five decades, good teaching is learner-centered one. In learner centered class, an effective teacher helps each student connect to the material and the subject and pay more attention to their activities rather than his own.

As the years pass, the daily routine of teaching the same material through same method day in and day out starts to diminish the passion that was once so prominent years earlier. So what do we do? We do what so many of us have done when times get dull. The need is we have to recharge the batteries and break the routine of daily instruction. It is the time to employ new strategies to increase the intrinsic motivation of our learners so as to strengthen their language acquisition. Thus, learner centered teaching is assumed to be new recharge in our instructional practices. Equally, it is urgent to gear up teaching learning responsibilities to the learners, instead of having them only in the shoulders of teachers.

### **Tips for learner-centered classroom**

The following ideas can be used in the classroom to create learner centered atmosphere in the classroom.

*i. Cultivate a relaxed atmosphere before the beginning of instruction.*

A relaxed atmosphere is conducive to free expression. A skillful teacher can create an atmosphere in which the student feels enough ease to struggle through a situation, and to find the words to express oneself.

*ii. Praise the students when it is deserved*

The teacher should compliment students when they do well. He/She should make it a practice to reinforce a good performance with encouraging comments. He/She should be careful, however, to be discreet along this line, setting high standards for the class.

*iii. Be enthusiastic and engender enthusiasm*

Enthusiasm is one of the most important factors to involve learners in a conversation class. The teacher should feel joy at the prospect of engaging them in learning, and put things into practice learned in the classroom.

*iv. Listen to the students*

The teacher should not dominate the learner's responses. He should try to get the students to speak as much as possible.

*v. Be patient*

Patience, necessary in any encounter with students, is especially important in a learner centered class. The teacher should put himself in the place of the student. He should think of how he himself had to struggle to express his ideas when he was first learning a new topic.

*vi. Be alert and foster alertness*

Since the learner-centered class provides practice in both speaking and understanding what is said, the teacher should stay alert and see to it that the attention of the students does not wander. For example, when a student is not paying attention, the teacher can call him; ask him back to the practice by directing a question to him; or he can ask him to repeat something that has been said. The teacher can also ask him to repeat a question he has just asked him another student.

*vii. Making corrections*

What should the teachers do about mistakes in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and meaning? This is a delicate area in a learner-centered class. Students tend to insist that they want to be corrected. The teacher should let them find the good answers from the alternatives that he provides. He should always correct flagrant violations the moment they are made. As Halt (1980) says, "We must not fool ourselves...into thinking that guiding children to answers by carefully chosen leading questions is in any important respect different from just telling them the answers in the first place...the only answer that really sticks in a child's mind is the answer to a question that he asked or might ask of himself". The teacher should not overlook the value of an attention-getting-comment that might prevent a repetition of the mistake. He should not be necessarily rigid in their mistakes in such classroom.

*viii. Avoid oversimplification*

The principle behind the learner-centered class is that 'learning is something only the learner can do'. The teacher cannot learn for the pupil, he can only provide good conditions within which learning may take place. If things are made too easy for the learners, they will not be inclined to use their own learning resources. As Halt (1980) says "If we taught children to speak, they would never learn". What he means is that as teachers, we would want to break up the learning process into a series of gradable steps and prevent movement from one step to another until the first step had been mastered.

*ix. Treat the individual student as a person, on an equal basis with all the members of the class.*

A learner-centered class becomes successful if the teacher treats every students on an equal basis. He must look carefully at his classes to be certain that all the students are included equally. He shouldn't be biased toward the brighter and more energetic students. A teacher's effectiveness depends on his equal treatment to all his students.

*x. Leave emotional baggage outside the classroom*

Another consideration for a teacher in learner centered classroom is that the teacher must manage his emotional activities. The classroom is a stage; and to be effective, the teacher must in some cases be an actor. For this, he must speak naturally with smile and concentrate on the student.

*xi. Lead learners to understand language outside the classroom too*

Krashen and Terrell (1983) argue that the purpose of child-centered language instruction is to lead learners to 'understand language outside the classroom' so that they can ultimately utilize the real world, as well as the classroom, for progress'. They indicate that the purpose of the child-friendly classroom instruction is to facilitate and encourage the students to interact with speakers in the target language outside the classroom.

### **General Principles for Language Lesson in Learner-centered Class**

A good language class is much more than a series of activities and exercises that the teacher has strung together to occupy the available amount of time. As language teaching is a career in a field of educational specialization, it requires a specialized knowledge base obtained through both academic study and practical experience. A good language lesson, therefore, reflects the specialized thinking and knowledge of an educated language teaching professionals and in planning for their teaching, they should think carefully about how they understand the nature of the teaching and learning they will be participating in (Nunan & Lamb, 1996).

Some programs may seek to induct students into a particular method or approach (such as communicative language teaching, genre based teaching or task-based instruction) where, as other may operate on the basis of principled eclecticism, where teacher are introduced to a variety of teaching approaches and encouraged to blend or adopt them based on the contexts in which they will teach in learner-centered class (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). In most of the cases: teachers think of methods in terms of techniques which realize a set of principles or goals and they are open to any method that offers practical solutions to the problems in their particular teaching context heading to learner centeredness.

Kumaravadivelu (1994) purposes ten general principles that can be used as guidelines to be adopted or applied based on the need of learners as well as of specific situation. The principles are:

- Maximize learning opportunities.
- Facilitate negotiated interaction.
- Minimize perceptual mismatches between teacher's intention and learner's interpretation.
- Activate intuitive heuristics (for example, by providing enough textual data for learners to infer underlying grammatical rules).

- Faster language awareness.
- Contextualize linguistic input.
- Integrate language skills.
- Promote learner autonomy.
- Raise cultural consciousness.
- Ensure social relevance.

In developing learner-centered class, teaching should be much more than a performance by the teacher. Above all, a successful lesson makes the learners, rather than the teacher, the focus of the lesson. So an English language teacher must conceptualize the questions like – was the lesson content something students could relate to and that was relevant to their needs? Were the activities students took part in during the lesson sufficiently challenging to engage them but not so challenging that they became frustrated and lost interest? Were the students motivated during the lesson? Did the lesson provide opportunities for active participation by all the students in the class or was it dominated by one or two students who monopolized questions and discussion? These ideas will explore how one can move from a teacher centered approach to teaching to a learner-centered one, that is, one in which student's needs, interest and preferences take priority in teaching (Richards and Farrell, 2011).

### **Features Focused on Learner-centeredness**

An important skill in teaching is the ability to make learners the focus of teaching. This involves understanding learners' needs and goals, communicating trust and respect to them, acknowledging diversity of needs and learning styles, giving feedback on their learning in ways that help develop their confidence and self-esteem and minimize loss of face, and using strategies that help develop an atmosphere of collaboration and mutual support among learners. Dornyei and Lamb (2003) mention that in some lessons, the focus is more on teacher performance than learner engagement, however, in learner-centered lessons, teachers achieve a more learner-focused approach to teaching, as is reflected in features mentioned below. These features show the focus of teaching on learner centered class.

- the degree of engagement learners have with the lesson
- the quantity of student participation and interaction that occurs.
- the learning outcomes the lesson produces.

- the ability to present subject matter from a learner's perspective.
- how well the lesson addresses learner's needs.
- how the teacher reshapes the lesson based on learner feedback.
- how the teacher responds to learners' difficulties.

### **Practical Benefits of Learner-centered Teaching**

Undoubtedly, an English language class consists of many different kinds of learners – some with similar needs and goals and some with a great diversity of need. The nature of such class may be fairly homogeneous with students of a similar age, educational background, interests, goals and needs. In order to bring them in the mainstream of learning, learner-centered teaching becomes a tool of success. Benson (2001) argues that learner-centered teaching is practically more effective than other modes of teaching for several reasons:

- It is sensitive to individual needs and preferences.
- It encourages construction of knowledge and meaning.
- It draws on and integrates language learning with students' life experiences.
- It generates more student participation and target language output.
- It encourages authentic communication.
- It breaks down barriers between in-class and out of class learning.
- It opens up spaces for discussion of motivations, learning preferences, and styles.
- It encourages students to take more personal responsibility for their learning.
- It challenges the views that learning is equivalent to being taught.
- It offers a wide range of preferences for particular kinds of classroom activities, styles of teaching, classroom arrangements, aspects of language and mode of learning.
- It creates a community of learners by encouraging interaction within the class, helping them find learning partners and groups they are comfortable with, encouraging a sense of friendship among the students and to share interesting experiences to each other.

## **Challenges in Learner-centered Class**

Keeping our students' needs and interests at the forefront of our teaching is not always easy. Managing the processes and routines of teaching can sometimes distract us from the real point of teaching, which is to facilitate learning on the part of our students. Whenever possible, we should think through our lessons and the teaching activities we make use of from the point of view of our learners and use the focus points discussed above to help make our teaching more learners centered. According to Wright & Bailey (1999), some of the challenges faced by teachers in such classes can occur in:

- the way in which teachers support and manage the processes of language learning.
- the way in which teachers create opportunities to participate in the communicative and interactive uses of language.
- the way in which teachers involve their learners in individual and group activities.
- the way in which teacher use materials by all means to all the students of the class.
- the way in which teachers address individual differences in needs and interests, background and cultural perspectives of the learners.
- the way in which teachers focus individual learners in tests and assessments.
- the way in which teachers manage time, routine, course and institutional conditions.
- the way in which learners participate in classroom discussion, learning and evaluation

## **Conclusion**

An important goal in language teaching is to create opportunities for students to participate in authentic uses of language in order to facilitate their language learning. Learner-centeredness is an approach which emphasizes on creating opportunities and giving optimum time and space to the students to participate in authentic classroom activities. Similarly, learner-entered teaching refers to teaching that reflects learners' individual differences in cognitive styles, motivation needs and interests. Teachers have sole authority in teacher-centered teaching however such authority is deliberately handed over to the students in learner-centered teaching. Developing a learner-centered focus to our teaching involves drawing on students' life experiences, creating

opportunities for students to interact and co-operate, and to develop a sense of shared interests and concerns. If we can engage our students in our classroom activities in real sense, we can ensure effective teaching and learning.

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## **Professional Development through English Teachers' Club**

May 1, 2014

***Shashi Kayastha***

Teacher development is a continuous process which includes teacher's regular engagement, constant support and constructive feedback from peers and tutors, innovative platform, self initiated steps and committed dream. In the scenario of growing need for establishing professional communities of learning, English teachers' club is one of the effective initiatives to collaboratively develop teachers. It is a platform for English teachers where they associate and network with other members of the same profession through collaborative engagement in capacity building activities. In this blog entry, I briefly introduce English teachers' club, followed by its significance and finally highlight on the importance of joining such associations.

### **English Teachers' Club**

Mutual problem solving and collaborative learning draw teachers into a community seeking for their development. Padwad and Dixit (2008) advocate the need of professional learning communities in the context of shifting teacher education from product-oriented mode to social constructivist, process-oriented mode of working. It motivates the teachers to strive for the continuous and ever innovative processes of "change and mend" sequence where they learn to collaborate, commit, construct and contribute in local level to the global scenario, and activities that involve professionals in open and dynamic discussion enhances professionalism.

Teachers association is an essential platform for the teachers that associates and network with English teachers in a community for continuous growth through different professional practices. In recent decades, such association or networking has been established as one of the effective means of professional development for the teachers across the world. Teachers' club is one of such associations and it is a small professional community. The club might be formal and informal, but both of them primarily serve the purpose of a professional association. Compared to other like-minded communities, it is more focused on building on capacities of teachers for their professional growth.

English teachers' club (ETC) is a network of like-minded English teachers who are seeking to enhance their capacity and collaboratively develop effective teaching methods for their career development. Further, it helps to establish better working relationships among colleagues and creates a forum for exploring new teaching ideas or addressing perceived (or unperceived) problems and concerns.

## **Significance**

Unlike various governmental and non-governmental efforts to develop English teachers, English teachers' club can be a creative way of identifying local issues and needs of English teachers and accordingly build strategies in sorting out them through collaborative approach. It emancipates teachers from territory of accumulating fixed knowledge of one-size-fits-all approach since it builds a kind of channel to exchange the ideas, innovate the ways to surpass the issue related to the teaching, search out the genuine and contextual knowledge that is applicable in local context and situation. The teachers, who are engaged 'teachers' club', get access of varieties of sources of knowledge within the community they connect and they can also put their efforts to build on contextual theories based on best practices. Besides, they enjoy sharing and caring of each individual of their community for collective improvement.

Legutke & Ditfurth (2009) elucidate that knowledge does not just develop by accumulating information but is shared, negotiated and constructed through experience in the communities of practice in which individual participates. The teachers' club provides them a platform and opportunities for them to share their experiences and discuss among themselves. Similarly, Hord (1997) points out regarding the benefits of any professional learning community that it helps to reduce loneliness of teachers, motivate them to be committed to the mission and goals and the teachers starts taking joint responsibility for the success of the student and ultimately gets the work satisfaction leading to higher morale etc.

## **Benefits of joining English Teachers' Club**

### **Socialization**

The basic need of 21st century is to learn to live together with the acceptance of sociocultural, religious difference. The culture of socialization starts with the sense of oneness in difference and attitude of compassion, respect, and understanding. Teachers club is the society of teachers that socializes one for the convenient and the successful life in the planet of teaching. It brings out the teachers from the confined territory of the

cultural and social constraints to the land of acculturation. Thus, associative team activities are the crucial one to administer the overall development of an individual's sociocultural aspect. It is mainly significant to the language teacher since language teaching and learning is an interactive process. Richards and Burns (2009) emphasize the teachers' collaboration as they say "teacher learning is not something that teacher need achieve on their own –it is a social process that is contingent upon dialogue and interaction with others". They add that "teachers can come to better understand their own belief and knowledge as well as reshape these understanding through listening to the voices of others". That means socialization incorporates the habit of listening to others, respecting the contrary views, collaboratively deciding, assisting, advising, participating etc. In the other words "engaging with other means accepting the difference" (Singh, 2002). Teachers in ETC joins for fulfilling this requirement .They co-work, co-think, co-coach, co-operate, collaborate with the common sets of goal and action. The co-operative nature in positive competitive environment expands the possibility of creation.

### **Language development**

Teaching is an art; the art requires pedagogical knowledge, creativity and proficiency of content so that teacher can well manage the class, deliver the content, make the learning possible in any situations. The basic prerequisite of language teacher is that they should be well versed in language skills. English teacher's language skill basically refers to teachers' proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As it has already been underpinned in the theory of education that language skills can be developed through the active participation in interaction, peer teaching and correcting process, ETC arranges the suitable and convenient environment for the teachers to involve in different collaborative learning projects such as collaborative action research, team teaching peer observation. Teacher can plan and implement the need based activities for skill enhancement. Teachers can engage in their need analysis where the basic needs of the teachers regarding language skill are identified, and they collaboratively prepare feasible and effective action plan, and put them into practice. In the process teachers assesses one another's improvement, they provide feedback. It also orients the teachers with a variety of language teaching skills and strategy.

I hereby exemplify some strategies we use to enhance the language skills:

#### *Strategy 1*

We mostly organize a reading theater in our mini club where the entire group is divided into three: reader group who perform reading different literary and non literary genres, audience group as the active listener who jots down some notes as per the understanding and share, analyst group who analyze the whole process of the reading and audience group. We take the assignment to read and write reflection which is peer checked in the following week.

### *Strategy 2*

Collecting different national and international talk show, lecture, interview videos and audios and assembling for the listening practice where we watch and listen the videos and share, comment and rethink about the topic in the group. It proved to be interesting and useful for the gradual improvement listening as well as the enhancing creativity and criticality, which but for being in group would be once in a blue moon.

### **Building Confidence**

No matter what qualification and degree I have, until I have the deep faith deep inside me that I can do, no where I perform the best. The sentence seems very negative but it is the reality. Student starts gossiping on your unusual movement and babbling talk, counts how often you scratch on your hair, caricatures your perplexed look. All the content you give goes in vain and the teaching becomes the daunting task "leaving us with such physical symptoms as sweating and shaking" (**Fifield, 2006**). Hence it is necessary to build up the confidence along with improving the skill so that one can better perform what he /she knows. As already discussed collaborative approach in the teachers club is helpful in getting language skills as well as professional skills. Ganwali (2011) explains, "The members of an association will have greater confidence in their activities if we learn what our colleagues elsewhere are doing in the context" (p.189). In my experience, constant working with the people of the same profession of with different qualification, practices and potentiality equip you with daring and exploratory attitude towards teaching.

### **Accountability**

Accountability is a policy of holding schools and teachers responsible for students' academic progress. Accountability is taking responsibility for your words and actions.

ETC assists to grow a socialized teacher with the content, confidence that is sure to be aware of duty to self, duty to other. One pre service teacher viewed "Working with other teachers collaboratively created a synergy that helped me to look at teaching in ways I hadn't considered...I now examine student motivation, teaching strategies, and accountability differently."(Cited in Bates, 2010, p.63), that's how the teachers' whole perspective can be changed by the co-working environment of teacher club. Loughran (2005) explains that a communal practice where others are esteemed provides better prospects to reframe situation and that helps to modify one's thinking about practice.

## **Empowerment**

Establishing teachers' community or networking through ETC is one of the fundamental objectives. The club is a medium through which the teachers get empowered and have access to higher level due to peer support and sense of group spirit. Hence, awareness in empowerment triggers several opportunities for professional growth. In other words, it brings teachers networking, and networking is the strength to combat and create. ETC collects English teachers under a single roof as the united force to combat with the individual to the global issues of teachers that horn out leadership quality governed with knowledge and conscience in teacher, consequently leading him/her to get better career opportunities and especial identity. It has the power to place the teachers in professional competency to policy making level. Since the teachers remain informed and oriented of the worlds system and affairs in teachers networking, and gain maximum exposure to the different ideas in the area of their profession.

To sum up, the concept of the teacher club is not entirely new since we are familiar with different book clubs, teacher study circle, collaborative study groups, teacher associations, networks and so on. English teacher clubs might be a possible forum to improve teaching as well as other professional skills. In a nutshell, it is entirely beneficial to the teachers to grow professionally.

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## **YouTube: My Best Friend Forever**

May 1, 2014

***Chandra Pd. Acharya***

Before I started pursuing my master's degree in English education at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, I didn't have any inkling that YouTube, a video sharing website, was there. On my birthday, one of my girlfriends gifted me a laptop and she suggested me to spend some of my study hours on YouTube surfing educational videos. For the first time, I learnt about the video sharing website. No sooner had I came to know about this than I befriended with it since it turned to be like a friend in need is a friend indeed. In this blog entry, I have shared my experience of using YouTube for enhancing my English language competency.

In the initial days, I did not exactly know how to use YouTube. I did some researches on web and however, some odd months later, I got the idea as a result of learning by doing, and kept on using it to the fullest. The English pronunciation that I have commanded over today is the outcome of watching English videos uploaded on YouTube. My current English is gratifying me, even some of my friends find it awesome. But, I love to opt for 'good' rating for the good has a chance to learn it for the better as learning begins from cradle and lasts to grave. So my English learning through YouTube surfing could by no means be an exception provided that I had in one way or the other fallen in love with it. Once in love, forever in love, I think I internalized this adage. To be honest, surfing YouTube videos time and again became my forte and I am damn sure it will continue till my last breath. Maybe this is because of my forever longing. Now I feel I should immensely grateful to three former PayPal employees Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, Jawed Karim who fathered YouTube in February 2005.

The point I want to make is YouTube for me was the best way to learn English however there are a lot of means available these days. So choose whichever you think the best. Truly speaking, my passion for YouTube surfing was and is to expand the storage of vocabulary and to polish the fluency in speaking English. Hence my penchant for YouTube surfing gives birth to this article.

As I believe fluency in English is the key important factor for people around the world for communication in English. It is one of the important language components to be developed. Fluency is a speech language pathology which means the smoothness or flow with which sounds, syllables, words and phrases are joined together when speaking quickly. Hence, fluency in English can be termed as ease and smoothness of speaking. Stressing much on this feature of language, Brumfit (1984, p. 56) opines fluency as natural language use.

Generally, we need to make our fluency a comfortable one so that the communication moves ahead between the parties (encoder and decoder). It gets matured through simple day-to-day tea talk to public speaking. Likewise we have to know the organization, pronunciation, word use, body language etc. Here, I am pinpointing some of the important guidelines required to become those who want to develop their fluency in English through YouTube.

### **1. Technical Qualities**

Here 'technical qualities' refers to overall qualities of videos available in YouTube. This includes clarity, video resolution, sound effect, etc. As suggested by Mullen & Wedwick (2008) and Trier (2007), quick access to vast quantity of video database provides a great deal of opportunities in enhancing learning. The video clips downloaded from YouTube or other similar websites are very educational and practical to use. For instance, in the technical dimension, many users claim that online videos clips are high in quality. According to Hubbard (2009), attributes like fine audio and visual are very important in aiding learning and sustaining the interest of learners. Thus, the quality of freely available YouTube videos is good, and learners can be benefitted from them without difficulties.

### **2. Content Focused**

The contents of selected video clips do not only meet individual learners' need, but also help them learn how to present the information attractively and effectively. Muniandy & Veloo (2011, p. 177) conclude that "the claim of many users and researchers on content of video clips uploaded online are indeed presented in a dynamic way that can enhance mastering of English language among students." This is highly concerned with the language used is appropriate or not, the language used is conversational in nature or not, the videos scaffold constructive learning or not etc.

### **3. Engaging**

The next important thing that a learner should consider while surfing YouTube is whether the videos can engage learners or not. Mostly the content of online video clips are indeed engaging and could help learners to be more focused. At the same time one should consider the following things in his/her mind i.e. whether the contents of videos are attractive or not, either they are well organized or not, whether the duration of the videos are appropriate or not, is the content easily understandable or quite difficult.

#### **4. Optimistic Attitude**

'Optimistic attitude' refers to the positive expectancy that one gets after surfing the videos in YouTube channels. Frankly speaking the learners themselves should be very optimistic about the outcome of surfing the video clips. To this one should be sure that they learn something and the reforms will take place. Thus optimistic attitude and keenness is also a strong indication so that the learning goes at pleasant manner and becomes strong one near natural future. To this, the criteria to be considered are; whether the video more interesting or not, whether the videos can capture and retain ones' attention or not, can the videos generate new ideas or not.

As similar to the saying, 'the better learners today are the better teachers tomorrow; a learner should keep the above mentioned things in one's mind in order to strengthen fluency in speaking English. There is a belief based on research findings that the more one use video clips either from YouTube or any other online sites the better the fluency s/he develops. And the ability they earn works as a mechanism in their future teaching. This can be their public image among the learners they deal with.

Likewise, I think it would be better if I mention some of the links of YouTube videos I went through and visit these days too in timed conditions for developing fluency in English. One of the effective video clips I went through in the beginning days was '*Learn How to Speak English Fluently and Confidently*'. This was a tutorial like video clips that added some skills of speaking fluently on my side. The clip suggests that the more one listens the better he speaks.

Similarly, a video clips entitled 'Fluency in English'talks about the suprasegmental features such as stress, length, rhythm, tone etc. in a practical basis. The video further suggests that practice and practice until one gets what he wanted to get is the key thing in developing fluency in English.

The other effective video clips that taught me a new kind of lesson was ; '*How Do You Speak English? Speaking Exercises To Improve Your Fluency in English*'What I learnt

through this video is that I have developed fluency one need to speak as s/she sings a song in his/her native tongue. Regarding this ideas, here I would like to connect suggestion from one of my *Gurus* that if one needs to be a good speaker in English, s/he needs to speak it as similar to his/her native language.

However, one of major problems in teaching students I have noticed is how to make the teachers' talk comprehensible to the learners. Traditionally, the input, the subject matter in general, had been directly translated into the students' mother-tongue. Teacher used to be like a bilingual dictionary having meaning of one word into two languages. The job of students was not to exercise mentally to extract the teachers talk but to memorize and repeat spelling and meaning time and again to form habits. But, at present this approach has become obsolete. Now, the main objective of teaching speaking skills is to make students able to make teacher talk as comprehensible as possible so that the learners can themselves be familiar with the content delivered in different contexts. So, a teacher needs to use numerous ways to make input comprehensible so that the pattern of rote learning gets avoided.

Another significant problem with developing fluency in speaking English is that what has been learnt today is often forgotten tomorrow. Hence, to speak smoothly, smart usage of vocabulary is also important which can also be possible through English videos. For this, one should surf the videos in an appropriate time interval. Besides, to boost up fluency in speaking, it is advisable not only to revise the video clips periodically, but also start each day with a new clip and practise, and imitate it throughout the day. In addition, it is necessary to develop the habit of making casual talks with the friends.

Frankly speaking, for me, to develop my fluency in speaking I didn't felt hesitation to make talks in English with a tourist from core English speaking countries to varsity teachers from home and abroad either through online video calls or the face-to-face context-specific conversation.

To draw a conclusion from my experience shared here, I feel myself proud of developing an adage that the enormous number of video clips available online or offline can be a gateway to success in developing fluency in speaking English. However, one needs to be careful to select appropriate clips based on his knowledge and understandings in English so that the pace of his/her making fluency in speaking English gets matured in a natural way. This will help the users capable for earning bread and butter in their career.

Now I would like to retrospect to reiterate if she was the best friend, who gifted the laptop with internet access, or the laptop with internet access. But I feel the latter is the best of the best for me because YouTube has been a great companion to develop my fluency skills.

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**Chandra Prasad Acharya**

## **My Journey of Journal Writing**

May 1, 2014

***Santona Neupane***

A few months back I found myself counting the notebooks and diaries I had received in 2013 alone. They were given to me by my near and dear ones, assuming I would put them into good use, owing to the fact that I love writing. Including the two that I had bought for myself, the total was nine. Embarrassing thing though, was that, all the notebooks-except one- were empty. It was high time I did something about those notebooks. To put them to good use, I started to reflect on my days and jot them down on those notebooks. Not only did I put those notebooks into good use, I even established a writing habit: the one that helped not only me but would eventually help my students as well. In this article, I am going to talk about how journal writing helped me and my students become more expressive and creative in our writing. Further on, I will discuss why I think teachers need to implement this technique to improve students' writing skill.

I teach in a secondary school and the students I was teaching were not good at writing creatively. We know teaching is a dynamic process and we learn as we teach. When things do not go as you plan, you have to look for alternatives. And thus I looked around for different approaches that might help my students. As I guided and taught them a thing or two about writing, I found that they did write but they were not enthusiastic about it. And, improving their overall language skills was another matter. That's when I thought about journal writing, as it was helping me as well in my writing.

I hence proposed the students a journal writing project. The requirement was simple – write down about your day, every day. The students were under no restrictions except to write daily. They were free to write whatever they liked, however they liked and write how much long they wanted to. My condition was I would check their work initially to provide feedback and when it would be evident that they are able to do it on their own, I would read their work only if they wanted me to.

The initial entries included what they did at certain time that day. Now as a reader that's hardly something that excites. I suggested them to drop the conventional diary writing style they had acquired and to focus on only one important moment or event of the day. To break established habit is quite difficult and it was really hard for them to change their habit yet with persistence and practice they were able to achieve this.

The next step was to help them describe their day in terms of their senses. We had a class specially focused on five senses. At first, the students were given a magazine cutout of a beautiful scenery. They had to imagine themselves in that particular place and describe it in term as of sight, smell, sound, taste and feeling. This proved to be a useful exercise which helped the students to be expressive about their feelings.

Following the example of my own teacher, I asked them to be personal in their journal writing. I told them to be reflective and that their writing needed to mirror their individual self. Even though I had told them I wouldn't read their entry if they didn't want to give it to me, they insisted I read it and provide feedback. Following a month or so the writings they produced went through some transformation but there were still some exceptions. Once, on reading the entry of a class, I saw that everyone had written about the same event that had happened the previous day. Though the event was same, the perspective differed with different entries. With the permission of the class, the students presented the entries and we held a discussion on how each of them had different perspectives. This proved to be an interesting topic for discussion and by the end of the lesson students were aware of the difference and had a new understanding.

I would be lying if I said that journal writing transformed each and every student's writing skill. Some of the students continued to produce uninspired entries. No doubt, they had followed my instructions yet their entries lacked life as they had detached themselves from their entry. But I asked them to continue writing to establish the habit. Once I found an approach of a student quite innovative and interesting; and with her permission, I shared it with others as well. She had described a typical winter morning in such a way it seemed as if everything was gloomy and dreary. Then her writing moved on to describe a transformation: as the fog cleared she described how she could see things clearly which only moments before, seemed blocked. This opened a new dynamics for others. They started to experiment different forms as there weren't any particular restriction on how to write. Some of the entries that were produced were in the form of verse, drawings, haikus etc.

This writing project was a stepping stone for me as a teacher and for my students as writers. We did not have a separate time allocated for this writing class. As the work

progressed I guided, taught and provided feedback to them within the regular classes and sometimes during break time. Time and again I shared my entries with them and that helped them.

Journal writing can be a special tool for your students to improve their writing skills; one that doesn't take much resource and time. There is a high chance of this turning into a habit for life. It encourages them to reflect on certain element of their day and examine it. It awakens the writer in them and as is the nature of humans they look for ways to be more creative with it. This even helped my students produce poems and stories. It became a medium to share their views, ideas, opinion and feelings. The continuous writing helped them to be descriptive and expressive in their other writings as well.

Not only this opened a new way of understanding for my students, it also helped me to develop myself as a teacher. The problem had been bugging me for a long time and it encouraged me to look for ways. I had to do something. My personal experience, few suggestions from my teacher and inspiration from a Hollywood flick helped me conceptualize this project and few adjustments along the way helped this journey to be smoother.



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Posted by Umes Shrestha

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## **Post-colonialism in Indian literature**

May 1, 2014

***Prakash C. Balikai***

Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is clearly an agenda for total disorder. But it cannot be accomplished by the wave of a magic wand, a natural cataclysm, or a gentleman's agreement. Decolonization, we know, is an historical process: In other words, it can only be understood, it can only find its significance and become self-coherent insofar as we can discern the history-making movement which gives it form and substance.

Decolonization is the encounter between two congenitally antagonistic forces that in fact owe their singularity to the kind of reification secreted and nurtured by the colonial situation. Their first confrontation was colored by violence and their cohabitation-or rather the exploitation of the colonized by the colonizer-continued at the point of the bayonet and under cannon fire. The colonist and the colonized are old acquaintances. And consequently, the colonist is right when he says he "knows" them. It is the colonist who fabricated and continues to fabricate the colonized subject. The colonist derives his validity, i.e., his wealth, from the colonial system.

– The Wretched of the Earth, Fanon

Fanon is the pioneer of postcolonial studies in the world. He is the first thinker to begin to realize the dire consequences of colonialism and again he is the first writer to register his strong opposition to various forms of colonialism. To overcome the trauma of colonialism and to challenge it, he thought, the process of decolonialization had to be initiated.

If the literature written during the hay day of imperialism to support the empire is called colonial literature, then, literature written after the empire ceased to exist to challenge the dominance of the empire on the so-called colonized nations is called postcolonial literature. Postcolonialism is an umbrella term which is inclusive of all discourses that

challenge the dominance of all kinds of hegemony in all walks of human life.

“Postcolonial scholars have pointed out that when two cultures sharing unequal power confront each other, the weaker culture seeks different alternatives to meet the situation. If imitation and internalization of the values of the dominant culture is one of the responses, to struggle to retain its identity by turning to its roots is another”. For instance, the seeds of British imperialism can be seen in Shakespeare and Marlowe who happen to be the two most significant British renaissance writers. It is Queen Elizabeth who gave the royal consent to the British Navy to sail across the European oceans and reach the far off places for the purpose of trade and commerce which eventually led to the establishment of the British colonies creating a new chapter in the history of British Raj. Prospero in Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, for his own political reasons, comes to an island for shelter for him as well as for his only daughter. He, in the course of time, acquires control over the original inhabitants of the island, considers them as savages, uncivilized brutes who need to be taught lessons in life and treats them as inferior forgetting the fact that he himself is an outsider and has come here to get shelter. He hates the culture, language and manners of the inhabitants living on the island and thinks that he has come here to redeem them from what he considers to be an uncivilized way of life. We hardly see any difference between what Prospero did on the island and what the British did when they annexed a large part of India. Similarly, we find no big difference between what the former British Imperialism did in their colonies and what the American neo-imperialism is doing now in some parts of the globe today.

One of the most exciting features of English literature today is the explosion of postcolonial literatures— literatures written in English in former colonised societies. This has given rise to a range of theoretical ideas, concepts, problems and debates, and these have been addressed in a range of articles, essays, talks and books. Here an attempt is made on to look at the postcolonial studies in Indian literature. It was a period which witnessed many changes in Indian society. The impact of Western education and industrial developments were led to radical changes in society. The writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Bankimchand Chatterjee, Sarat Chandra, Premchand, O. Chandumenon, Gulwadi Venkata Rao and many others from different parts of India wrote about the colonised India. They have addressed various developments and reforms in their works. People of that period including political leaders, nationalists, writers and the masses started to think in their own ways. However, colonialism became the centre of discussion for the people of all sections. In the early 19th century most of the writers focused more on social issues of the society. The social reformists played a significant role in changing the society. The social reformists like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanada Saraswati, K.C. Sen, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Annie Besant, Surendranth

Banerjee and Jyotiba Phule have tried to give a new life to the decadent contemporary society and thought about the social problems of the society through their writings. The intellectuals of this period started spreading the message of progressive and rational ideas.

Indian society in the colonial period was very rigid and was beset with social evils like the Sati, widow-remarriage, the caste system and the social, religious as well as all kinds of hegemony. The primary aim of the writers of this period in most of the Indian vernaculars was to alert people of the consequences of these evils and also to bring awareness among them. For instance, in Malayalam, O. Chandumenon in his work *Indhulekha* (1889) takes "issue with the colonial characterization of Nair society and especially of Nair women."<sup>2</sup> "The modern education Indhulekha received gives her a necessary strength to shape up her own life. She is able to use the new education to help consolidate the strength of her own community in relation to the Nambuthiris."<sup>3</sup> In Kannada Gulvadi Venkatrao in his novel *Indirabai* (1899) presents the question of widowhood and supports widow remarriage in the transition period. M.Vedanayakam Pillai in his collection of poems *Penputtimalai* (*The Garland of Female Wisdom*) emphasises the need for women education. Ishwar Gupta in Bengali and Dalapatram in Gujarati wrote poems about widow remarriage, women education and patriotism.<sup>4</sup> The sati system, child marriage, marginalisation of women, widow-remarriage were in vogue during the period. The intellectual-reformists tried to uproot such evil practices from society and to translate their dreams into reality, they used theory writing as a tool to bring these issues to the notice of the people of their times.

In postcolonial writing a greater emphasis was put on the process of colonialization and attempt was made to record a strong resistance to the masters of the colonized societies besides insisting on contemporary realities of life. It deals with the literature written in colonized countries about the sufferings of the masses and also about the resistance of the people who were at the receiving end. Postcolonial writings can be considered as the historical marker of the period because it deals the literature which comes after decolonization. Postcolonial writers engaged themselves in opening up the possibilities of a new language and a new way of looking towards the world. Their writings can be taken as a medium of resistance to the former colonizer. Their themes focus on the issues like identity, national and cultural heritage, hybridity, partition, contemporary reality, human relationships and emotions etc.

The rise of Indian English writing in postcolonial era was a significant development in Indian English literature. In the Indian context, postcolonial writing with its new themes and techniques makes its presence felt in the English-speaking world. Subaltern study is

also a major sphere of current postcolonial practice. Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak, Kancha Iliah, Ranjit Guha and others have focused on the subaltern issues in their works. The literary works of the colonial nationalist period revolved around themes like marginalization, widowhood and widow remarriage. It was Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, who for the first time, sought to bring the national movement and patriotism in his novel *Anandmath* (1882). Later, it was followed by Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and others. Tagore's *Gora* (1910) is also the product of the colonial period, which ultimately questions nationalism and the reader at the end of the novel wonders whether nationalism is an illusion or a reality.

The entire history of Indian English novel can broadly be divided into two periods—pre-independence novel and post-independence novel. The pre-independence period witnessed a slow growth of Indian English novel. It begins with the publication of Bankimchandra Chatterjee's *Raj Mohan's Wife* in 1864. Most of the novelists of this period like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Rabindranath Tagore, and Raja Rao wrote mainly under the influence of Gandhism and nationalism. They exposed social evils, customs and traditions, rites and rituals, poverty and illiteracy, bonds and bondages in their novels on the one hand and on the other, they made their writings a powerful medium to highlight the east-west encounter and thereby to spread the nationalistic ideas of the great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi among the people. Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao presented the radical social and national issues in their novels. The novels produced in the pre-independence period depicted the changing socio-political scene.

But a paradigm shift took place in the post-independence novels both in terms of content and style and novelists like Mulk Raj Anand wrote novels extensively dealing with social evils such as exploitation of the untouchable, the landless peasants, tea garden workers and the problems of industrial labour. The novels like *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936) *Two Leaves and A Bud* (1937) and *The Village* (1939) are milestones in Anand's journey of social reform. These novels concentrated on social reforms so much. The trend of presenting the social issues for the purpose of social reform got strengthened with the publication of G.V. Desai's *All About Hatter* and Bhavani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers*. While G.V. Desai's *All About Hatter* concentrates on the frontiers of social realism and stresses the need for social reform, Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers* studies the socio-economic effects of Bengal famine of early forties. Many women novelists in postcolonial period like Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shobha De, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, and Kiran Desai carved a niche for themselves in Indian English fiction.

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