

ELTWeekly

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Edited and Published by

Tarun Patel

Bhaskar Pandya

Kaushal Kotadia

Rajesh Bharvad

Newsletter Contents

Word of the week: Blending	3
Video: Shaping the Way We Teach English: Learning Strategies	4
Susan Ryan's Tip: 'American English Pronunciation & Phonetics'	5
Article: English as she was spoke	7
Article: 'Cuisenaire rods in the language classroom' by TE Editor	8
Research Article: 'Indian Writing in Translation at Undergraduate Level' by Dr. Gurudutt T N	9
GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS	15

Word of the week: Blending

Blending is one of the many ways new words are made in English. It refers to joining the beginning of one word and the end of another to make a new word with a new meaning.

Example

Smog, from smoke and fog, and brunch, from breakfast and lunch, are examples of blends.

In the classroom

Discussion of blends can help learners understand how words are formed in English, e.g. Asking learners to identify root words. Learners can also invent new blend words.

[retrieved from <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk>]

Video: Shaping the Way We Teach English: Learning Strategies

The goal of teaching strategies is to create autonomous learners, learners who can learn by themselves inside and outside the classroom. Research and classroom practices are evolving in many directions to try to better understand and facilitate learning for students of all ages. In general, successful language learners tend to select strategies that work well together, according to the requirements of the language task. These learners can easily explain the strategies they use and why they use them.

An innovative offering from the Office of English Language Programs, Shaping the Way We Teach English, is a 14-module teacher training video series developed and produced in cooperation with the University of Oregon.

Watch the video at <http://www.eltweekly.com/elt-newsletter/2010/12/77-video-shaping-the-way-we-teach-english-learning-strategies/>

Susan Ryan's Tip: 'American English Pronunciation & Phonetics'

'Since English is not a phonetic language there is not always a one-on-one relationship between the letters in the English alphabet and spoken sounds. This lack of one on one correspondence can cause problems when you want to pronounce English words correctly.

The 26 letters in the English (Roman) alphabet make more than 26 sounds. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, American English has 25 consonant sounds and up to 18 vowel sounds (the exact number of sounds may vary from region to region). That adds up to about 43 sounds.

What this means is that many consonants and vowels have more than one sound. The position of a consonant or vowel within a word will frequently determine the way it sounds. One example of this is the consonant S.

When you are speaking English the consonant S can represent several different sounds. The sound of the S is determined by its location within a word. Here are two examples.

In the word soups the S sounds like /s/.

In the word lives the S sounds like /z/.

Here are four rules or patterns that you can use to help you decide how to pronounce the letter S.

1. When an S follows a voiceless consonant such as a P or a T, it is pronounced as /s/. Examples include stops, eats and likes.
2. When an S follows a voiced consonant such as a G or a D, it is pronounced as /z/. Examples include eggs, lids and boils.
3. Most of the time a double SS will be pronounced as /s/. Examples include essay, lesson and class.
4. Sometimes double SS will be pronounce as a /z/. Examples include dessert. scissors and possess.

The fact that S has more than one sound can be very confusing when you are trying to pronounce English from a written text! Correct pronunciation can sometimes be a problem even for native speakers!

Other consonants that have more than one sound are the T, TH and word final ED.

Please log in to next week's column when I'll discuss the many sounds of the consonant T.

Susan Ryan is an American English pronunciation teacher and accent reduction coach. She currently lives in South Florida. Read more articles by Susan at <http://www.confidentvoice.com/blog/>

Article: English as she was spoke

“ENGLISH is the most successful language in the history of the world. It is spoken on every continent, is learnt as a second language by schoolchildren and is the vehicle of science, global business and popular culture. Many think it will spread without end. But Nicholas Ostler, a scholar of the rise and fall of languages, makes a surprising prediction in his latest book: the days of English as the world’s lingua-franca may be numbered.

Conquest, trade and religion were the biggest forces behind the spread of earlier lingua-francas (the author uses a hyphen to distinguish the phrase from Lingua Franca, an Italian-based trade language used during the Renaissance). A linguist of astonishing voracity, Mr Ostler plunges happily into his tales from ancient history”...

Read the remaining article at The Economist at <http://www.eltweekly.com/elt-newsletter/2010/12/76-article-english-as-she-was-spoke/>

‘Cuisenaire rods in the language classroom’ by TE Editor

“The first time I saw Cuisenaire rods being used in the language classroom I had no idea how much fun they could be. Since then I’ve used them in both adult and young learner classrooms where they have always been received with enthusiasm.

In his book ‘Teaching and Learning Languages’ (1988) Stevick describes them as: “wooden or plastic blocks one square centimetre in cross section and one to ten centimetres in length. [...] I recommend that you get some for yourself. They are compact, portable and relatively inexpensive, but they are the most versatile teaching aid I know of at any price”

Read the complete article at

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/cuisenaire-rods-language-classroom>

Research Article: 'Indian Writing in Translation at Undergraduate Level' by Dr. Gurudutt T N

Dr. Gurudutt T N works with V V Puram Evening College, Bangalore University, Bangalore.

The concept of the Indian Writing in English might have been elusive but definitely evolving. On the one hand it had to be accepted by ourselves, as there had been an urgency of establishing our creative identity in the English literary world and on the other; we found it, in most cases, to be outlandish. The reason for this could be beyond the realm of literature. Despite the fluidity of its condition, the Indian Writing in English translation goes on. And it has entered the undergraduate curriculums. The present paper considers the question 'why Indian Writing in English Translation?' and an instance of integrating IWET in an undergraduate syllabus.

Salman Rushdie and the likes believe that the best literature in India is produced in English. But have they got first-hand access into the vast literatures of the Indian languages? Really doubtful. Many personalities who have intimate contact of the literary canvass of various regional language literatures and who are practising themselves have a different view in the matter. U.R. Ananthamurthy (Kannada), M.T. Vasudevan Nair (Malayalam), Sunil Gangopadhyay (Bengali), Balachandran Nimade (Marathi), Dilip Chitre (Marathi), Ashok Mitran (Tamil), Gurdial Singh (Punjabi) and others are not convinced of the claims made sometimes in favour of Indian Writing in English at the cost of regional literatures. "Indian Writing in English is export oriented; it lacks cultural baggage; it is read by less than thirty percent Indians; there are many more significant

writers in the regional literatures than the Indian Writers in English; it is an artificial success just because of global linguistic medium” are some typical reactions of several regional writers.

U.R. Ananthamurthy feels that there are any numbers of top quality regional writers who do not get international recognition only because their language is not the global language of America. Writers in Indian languages have a rich backyard-centuries old literary traditions, folk-tales and life all round them. The Indian Writers in English have only a front yard. Nirmal Verma (Hindi) says: “My language links me to a tradition of 5000 years, to the medieval writers, the Bhakti poets, to the Sanskrit classics and also connects me to the philosophical texts of Indian culture. But English writers are deprived of all this unless they are very sensitive. Only one percent of the Indian Writers in English are able to link themselves to the culture of their region, its real life, its metaphors and images”. Sunil Gangopadhyay (Bengali) says: I know why Indian writers in English write in that language, it is because they’re insecure in their own mother tongue.

There is a similar problem in the context of African Writing in English. Some African writers argue that they should shape the English language to suit the communication of African life and experience while some others detest such a suggestion and feel that they should get back to their mother tongues. Gugiva Thiango, while observing the recording of the African English literature as a part of the English literature, says that it lacks the African roots and at the most, it could be called ‘Afro-European literature’.

Though these remarks appear to be sensationally judgmental, the readers and teachers of the Indian Writing in English also often feel this way. The Indian Writing in English is rightly indomitable but ‘somewhere something is missing’ in

it. Then what is the solution to this catch? May be we have to formally strengthen the necessity of accepting the Indian Writing in English and the Indian literatures (in translation) as twin entities that are mutually complementary. There is a kind of continuity against a backdrop of perpetual change right from the Rigveda to modern days. This feature is found among the regional literatures also. They had a free and independent growth through the centuries, taking what they liked from Sanskrit, Prakrit, Persian and English. Indian Writing in English has not imbibed this in a great measure. A wide spectrum of views, values, voices and visions we find from the classical Sanskrit to urban contemporary English should belong to both the regional writers and the Indian writers in English, pluralistically. This can be achieved by translations into English.

Now we are in the era of globalization. There could be a lot of differences with regard to political and economic aspects of globalization. As for as literary globalization is concerned, it is already a welcome history, which is strengthening itself in time. In the light of this, the Indian Writing in English demands authenticity, holisticity and comprehensiveness. Sociologically speaking, now we need to look at the world, make the world look at us and importantly, make ourselves look at ourselves. Many Indian readers are more familiar with Shakespeare and his cousins than many Indian writers like Pampa, Kumaravyasa, Basavanna in Kannada and their

counterparts in other Indian languages. The structure of the Indian Writing in English has out served its age. Unless it stretches its aerial roots into the Indian soil across the cultural and societal sections, it lacks the purpose, authenticity and scope.

The Indian Writing in English Translation is bridging many gaps in the structure of the Indian Writing in English. This has helped and continues to help in attempting de-colonization, identifying the multi-cultural fabric of the nation, inter-textuality etc.

The new literatures in English made entry into the Indian universities after a bit of delay and hesitation. Now we are losing no time in recognizing and asserting our new pedagogical constructs. Many universities have included several works in translation for their under-graduate and post-graduate studies. For instance, the Bangalore University has prescribed a separate paper titled “Literatures of India: An Introduction” wherein more than half of the syllabus is dedicated to the study of regional literatures in English translation. As rightly said in the introduction of the text book (Texts and their Worlds- Ed. Anna Kurian /Foundation Books) this syllabus explores the problematic notion of an ‘Indian’ literature; it allows the readers to read literatures written in India, providing tremendous scope for discussions of commonalities and differences; it challenges assumptions about the ‘Indianness’ of regional literatures versus the ‘foreignness’ of Indian literature in English, thereby facilitating a transcendence of linguistic nativism. It encourages an examination of the necessary politics of language and an ethnic and national identity.

The selection of the texts tries to give an idea of ‘how we in India responded to English literature’ and ‘how India was depicted in English literature’. The issues of depiction, self-perception and place and position of texts and their contexts have been thoroughly considered. The issues of gender, race, human rights and other concerns are included. Both the classical and the contemporary find place in the syllabus. The ancient Sanskrit writing, the writing of pre-Independent India, the

modernism of the post-independent India and expressions of the present times find place here.

The chunks of texts in translation are of Kalidasa, Bhavabhuthi, Bharthrhari (Sanskrit), Tagore (Bengali), Umashankar Joshi (Gujarati), Agyeya (Hindi), Adiga (Kannada), Mirza Arif (Kashmiri), Premchand (Hindi), Ismat Chugati (Urdu), Vaikom Basheer (Malayalam), Girish Karnad (Kannada), O N V Kurup (Malayalam), A.Jayaprabha (Telugu), Daya Pawar (Marathi-Dalit), Sitakant Mahapatra (Oriya), Mahaswetha Devi (Bengali) and C.S. Lakshmi (Tamil).

Naturally, the choice of authors or their texts cannot be exhaustive in a syllabus. But any such selection fairly represents the large body of Indian literature. The present selections provide a sampling of diverse texts, which opens up the worlds in which they were created. The students easily relate themselves to the themes of regional works and get a better insight of the context with which viewing, assessing and assimilating the Indian Writing in English becomes easy and more effective. The students study literatures written in India in English along with many other literatures produced in India. Even some students lacking in studies come out with relatively better participation in the discussions. This is the experience of many teachers.

Now we have to take care of our roots and the branches as well. For this, learning the fragments of global literature would not help in as much as the learning our regional literatures do. We cannot hope to do this through the literature papers of the regional languages owing to unavailability of considerable mass of translations. In spite of some limitations, the English language, the unofficial lingua franca of India, is the window into the Indian literatures yet. It is a national interpreter. It is true that translating from one Indian language to another is easy and effective when

compared to English. Since there are a very few direct translators, we cannot have the advantage of this convenience. We have to harness the target language that is English and its readers to suit our needs of translation.

Some sections of the students still feel baffled at the integration of non-British and hybrid writings in English and in English translations in their curriculum. It is because they are more conscious of the frames rather than the purpose of the frames. A dynamic society cannot afford to just sit gaping romantically at the aesthetics of 'pure' English or any particular literature any longer. The literature should make a nation understand and interpret itself more meaningfully. And it is possible by way of grappling the sociological, political and spiritual dimensions of its people. Today we have to shed our nostalgia about the 'pristine' form of our literatures and make way for their broader constructs with a post-colonial democratic outlook. The evolution is unstoppable and a day will come when there will be just one literature for whole world, comprising all the polyphonic voices through translations. May be, bringing together of Indian Writing in English and Indian Literatures in English translation is an exercise in making way for such a Maha-evolution.

Dr. Gurudutt T N is an Associated Professor in V V Puram Evening College, Bangalore, Bangalore University. His field is Postcolonial Studies. ELT is a hobby horse arising out of new teaching contexts. He was well into Journalism as well. He can be contacted at gurudutt.tn@gmail.com.

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

- 1. Papers / Articles:** All articles should be computerized using double-spacing, including tables, references and footnotes. Submission of manuscripts should be done in electronic more only. Electronic version of the article/research paper should be e-mailed to the Editor, ELTWeekly at info@eltweekly.com.
- 2. Abstracts:** An abstract in approximately 200 words should assist the article.
- 3. Abbreviations:** No stops are needed between capitals e.g. ELT, IELTS.
- 4. Figures and Tables:** Tables should be numbered sequentially with Arabic numerals.
- 5. Notes:** Notes should be consecutively numbered and presented at the foot of the page.
- 6. References:** References in the text should follow the author-date system. The complete reference list should be given at the end of the article. They should be in alphabetical order.
- 7. Book Reviews:** Book reviews must contain the name of the author and title / subtitle of the book reviewed, place of publication and publisher and date of publication.
- 8. For Event Submissions:** Please submit your event details at least 30 days prior to the event.
- 9.** For a **more detailed stylesheet**, please write to The Editor, ELTWeekly at info@eltweekly.com.