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(RE)STRUCTURING IDEOLOGY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN INDIA: ALTERNATIVE PEDAGOGY OF DECOLONIZATION

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ABSTRACT

As a language that assures vertical upward mobility and enhanced professional prospects, English may have been framed as a language of power in popular imagination, but its pedagogical dimension is indubitably seen as an unproblematic, value-free cognitive activity marked by ideological neutrality and essential apoliticality. Such a theorization is deeply embedded in its utilitarian value in the increasingly globalizing and digitalized world. However, neo-Marxian critique of education in the last quarter of 20th century has underscored the politics inherent in pedagogical practices through which English is taught in academic institutions. On closer analysis, such a critique evidently forges continuities between the colonial and postcolonial agenda of English Language Teaching (ELT) as a tool for manipulation and consolidation of power and ideology respectively. The primary objet of the paper is to locate and critique these political continuities and ideological overlaps between policies and practices that govern ELT in these eras. In doing so the popular methodologies of ELT like grammar and vocabulary, audio-lingual method and communicative and ICT-enabled approaches will be investigated and possibilities of devising such an alternative pedagogical model will be discussed as would subvert the imperial ideological framework and bring about an abiding decolonization of discipline and nation. Finally, suitability of avant-garde framework of critical pedagogy will be assessed to realize such an ambitious project.
Keywords: *ELT, ideology, critical pedagogy, Indian literature, translation, decolonization*
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INTRODUCTION

Popular humanistic conception of education in general and language learning in particular dictates that these processes, idealistically imagined to be great levellers in the socio-culture system, iron out differences and inequalities operating at the level of class, caste, religion, language and culture. The logic behind juxtaposition of these two categories derives from the fact that language constitutes the primary vehicle through which education is furnished, knowledge is acquired, produced, processed and disseminated and subsequently power and pelf are negotiated. In a world globalizing and digitizing at a breakneck pace, English has come to be seen as a vector of power and material success precisely because of its being a common denominator to the processes of educational dissemination and knowledge production. A group of Indian theoreticians who have upheld the neutrality of English in bestowing empowerment and enablement across the multifarious divides that characterise the country (Illaiah, 2005; Anand, 1999) are not unjustified in celebrating the prowess of the language which has removed historical barriers to knowledge and communication for the marginalized sections of Indian society. In fact, they are not isolated in singing hosannas to Goddess of English; many representing the privileged sections of society like Gurucharan

Das, the corporate guru and management maestro, have ferociously argued for English education; "It seems bizzare that India, whose success in global economy derives from its facility with English, should remain hostage to the deep insecurities of its vernaculars." (Das, 2005) However, what is problematic and grossly simplistic about this position is that is contrives haves and have-nots of the colonial language in monolithic terms, probably echoing the official sentiment expressed in University Education Commission way back in 1950 which contends, English "…divides the people into two nations, the few who govern and the many who are governed, the one unable to talk the language of the other and mutually uncomprehending. This is a negation of democracy." (chap. 9:316)

Evidently English in this debate is pitted against vernaculars which, with their centuries-old rich literary, philosophical and intellectual traditions, have a greater connect with the cultural roots, shared memories and collective unconscious of the masses than English with its tainted history of colonization and deculturation. While not completely discounting the merits of English education in contemporary India, it would be too naïve to posit that the language and its pedagogy are immune to any kind of politics or ideological manipulations or that it unconditionally enables democratisation and social equity and mobility. For example, a random navigation through social networking websites and posts on internet bulletins would make one run into such cries for help: "Hi my name is Akash and I am from India. I dream of working in a Call Center, but I've MTI (Mother Tongue Influence). How am I supposed to get rid of it? Please help."(Anand, 2008) This imparts another complicating dimension to the debate of language of instruction and education in India and renders jingoistic positions reductionist and redundant. Akash's testimony underscores the two-fold truism that the English-speaking is a highly differentiated category with inherent strata and hierarchies and that sheer knowledge of the language is not a passport to social mobility and professional success. What is it that keeps Akash away from professional success in spite of his MTI-hued command over English? Why is he so ostensibly averse to what his mother tongue has to offer to him? Will his dream really come true if he rids himself of his MTI? These are uneasy questions that defy easy answers. Another argument advanced by apologists of English and not entirely incorrectly, is that "…(Western/colonial) 'modernity' that comes with English is something that is not inaccessible to the 'untouchables' – the Dalits and Bahujans whose marginalization has been justified over centuries by dominant variety of Hinduism." (Anand, 1999) While there is little reason to discredit this assumption for historical reasons, it cannot be generalized to posit evolution of newer cultural meanings, altered structural realities and reformed psychological orientations in the contemporary history of India ensuing globalization which concomitantly sparked off unprecedented demand for English-speaking workforce. Systematic studies undertaken in this regard have enough evidence to suggest that in India cultural orientation are rooted in structural realities

constructed by institutions and onslaught of global cultural definitions institutions has seldom altered or reoriented institutional rigidities. (Swinder, 2001; Derne, 2005)

Eminent post-colonial theorist and scholar Harish Trivedi has tried to locate English education in its present avatar as instrumental in production of an army of "cyber coolies" (Das, 2003), a term he uses to designate Indians working in mushrooming call centres. Add to this the ever-inflating battery of service sector workers employed in transnational chain of eateries, satellite channels, communication-technology service-providers, attendants in malls, hotels and mega shopping marts etc. and one gets a sizeable population of young India well-versed in the functional variety of English but unable to construct a sustainable discourse in the language, responsive to western/American modernity but still walled-in by the divisions of caste, class, gender, creed etc., making virtues of industry, humility and loyalty but completely oblivious to their life-condition and the socio-political establishment that shrewdly structures it. Many scholars and theorist working in the realm of philosophy and praxis of education have advanced radical positions criticizing the highly partisan and manipulative role of educational institutions in conditioning the behaviour and developing the personality traits of students. (Bowles and Gintis, 2011; Young and Whitty, 1977; Krishna Kumar, 1991; Freire, 1970) Avant-garde contentions of these theorists have destabilized the humanistic and liberal foundations on which the edifice of institutionalized education supposedly stood and identified these sites as loci of political manoeuvring and domesticating machinery. As Bowles and Gintis put it, "…schools prepare people for adult work rules, by socializing people to function well, and without complaint, in the hierarchical structure of the modern corporation. Schools accomplish this by what we called the *correspondence principle*, namely, by structuring social interactions and individual rewards to replicate the environment of the workplace." (2011) Bowles and Gintis belong to a group of neo-Marxist thinkers who have brought about a paradigm shift in the field by undertaking an insightful study of the political history of education in the wake of industrial revolution and contending that education replaced religion in mid-nineteenth century as a force to maintain social status quo and upper class hegemony.

English Language Teaching (ELT hereafter) in India has turned into nothing short of a booming industry with both organized and unorganized sectors scrambling with all their pedagogical might to tempt aspirants of global economy. Following their Anglophone models, universities in India have established full-fledged departments in the area isolating ELT from literary studiesand further invented functional specializations like English as Second Language (ESL), English for Special Purposes (ESP) and so on with their corresponding pedagogical models as if in response to specific social contexts and locational particularities. The principal premise of this paper is to postulate that ELT as a discipline in India suffers from historical

amnesia and its pedagogical apparatus and practices are continuous withcolonialmodels and motivations since its inception in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century India. The discipline has failed to respond to Akash's angst and paranoiaabout his MTI, his subtle antipathy to his native tradition and his unflinching faith in the promise of English – complete with American accent, phonetics, syntax, orthography and culture –for his deliverance. One of the primary reasons for this failure is that ELT in India hasn't been amenable to post-colonial socio-cultural realities; rather than cementing, it has reinforced the rift between classes and masses that colonial English struck in India; its poetics and pedagogics have effectively recast it in a scientific, cognitive, positivist and utilitarian frame thus blinding the learners to the language's problematic historicity and political function. In this paper, attempt will also be made to search for alternative pedagogics that would alleviate some of the above-mentioned uncertainties, challenges and anxieties.

Language Acquisition in Colonial India

In order to comprehend the typically derivative nature of pedagogical practices currently prevalent in the domain of ELT and their academic and psycho-social implications, it is imperative at the outset to decipher the rationale behind the mammoth and rigorous project of language study that the British undertook in late 18th and early 19th century India. This was also the period in which high-decibel polemic over the language of instruction in education was kicked up among orientalists, vernacularists and Anglicists who strongly advocated education of Indian subjects in Sanskrit/Persian, vernaculars and English respectively. Though Nativists eventually lost ground to the Anglicists whose insidious discourse on imperial education policy reached its apogee in the (in)famous Minutes of Macaulay, it is significant to note that despite apparent contradictions in interests and difference of opinions, the three discourses were sensitive to the overlaps and convergences in political implications of their respective ideologies which markedly undergirded the programme of colonial rule. "…they conceived of education as a means of shaping Indian subjects, who, equipped with disciplined minds and bodies, would not only be in a better position to understand Imperial laws, but also have the necessary ethical discrimination and mental cultivation to desire and appreciate the rational, humane and impartial government that the new rulers were trying to set up" (Tharu, 1998). Understandably, this was the logic behind the introduction of English education but the only justification for the single-minded focus and commitment with which the colonizer learnt of Sankstrit, Persian, Arabic and even 'vulgar' vernaculars gets reflected in the letter of Warren Hastings addressed to Nathaniel Smith, Chairman of the Court of Directors in 1784. "Every accumulation of knowledge and especially such as is obtained by social communication with people over whom we exercise dominion founded on the right of conquest, is useful to the state…it attracts and conciliates distant affections; it lessens the weight of chain by which natives are held in subjection; and it imprints on the hearts of our countrymen the sense

of obligation and benevolence." (qutd. in Wilkins, 1785) While the express object behind and validation for introduction of English education was to expose the natives to the virtues of European science and edifying literature – the proverbial white man's burden -, the vernaculars were made compulsory study for imperial officers who, equipped with the languages, would supposedly be in a better position to understand peculiar rituals, customs, mores, beliefs etc. of the natives and consequently control and conciliate them effectively. On the other hand, the purpose behind the studying elite languages like Sanskrit and Persian was two-fold in nature. First, what the British naively termed as the imperial effort to preserve and promote the 'traditions' of the colonized, something which could be accomplished by funding and patronizing the institutions and experts who were deemed responsible for their maintenance. Second, "what the Europeans defined as 'discoveries' of the wisdom of the ancients, the analogy being to the restoration of Greek and Roman thought in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries…the end being to construct a history of relationship between India and the West, to classify and locate their civilizations on an evaluative scale of progress and decay." (Cohn, 1997) Needless to say the language policies and practices born of these motivations collectively tried to construct the essential civilizational superiority of the British over Indians and ensure domination with consent. In order to accomplish these ambitious mission, the British undertook the colossal project of textualizing India through unceasing production of grammars, dictionaries, language histories, religious texts, classbooks etc. on and translations from Indian languages. The inevitable fall-out of this formulation of new epistemological space fashioned and adjusted in terms of European categories was the formation of a distinct monolithic discourse under which Indian macro-traditions were selectively "museumized" and specific cultural categories were essentialized. What is of particular interest here is the fact that some of the pedagogical practices and academic assumptions undergirding these projects of orientalism and imperialism are internalized by the discipline of ELT as it exists today.

Pedagogy of Orientalism

One of the fundamental problems with the language learning and teaching in colonial India was the bizarre imperial conceptualization of language as a pure phenomenon which existed in its pristine form in past but which got alloyed over a period through interpretation, commentaries, local usage and periodic wear and tear. Perhaps, this was the primary reason why the Orientalists turned to Sanskrit and Persian over the vernaculars – despite their several-hundred-year old literary and scholarly traditions- in their search for the essential cultural and knowledge traditions of Indian subcontinent. Consequently, when the Orientalists like William Jones hunkered down to compile *Grammar of the Persian Language* (1771), he naturally prescribed grammatical principles based on his reading of Persian poetry written in Shiraz literary dialect between tenth and fifteenth centuries A.D. and not contemporary literature. Further, Jones provided an

elaborate commentary on the phonetics, morphology and syntax of Persian which is precisely what grammar and vocabulary based approach to ELT undertakes in classrooms today. Almost all the anthologies prescribed in Indian schools and universities for learning English before the advent of more progressive models like Audio-lingual Method (ALM) and Cognitive Learning Theories (CLT) compiled poems, stories, essays and excerpts from novels and autobiographies written by Romantic and Victorian writers. It is obvious that the educationists privileged trite and high-falutin Victorian variety of English over a contemporary idiom probably in deference to colonial fascination with the chastity of language. Further, in his grammar, Jones also mouths common linguistic platitudes on acquisition of fluency, native-like accent and pronunciation through interaction with native speaker of language. It would be instructive to note thatALM, which pre-supposes a formal set-up like a language laboratory, is also marked by an over-emphasis on repetition and accuracy in language acquisition. In such classrooms, students are made to listen repeatedly to recordings of conversations – which replicate Anglophone situations, cultural contexts and modes of articulation - and their attention is focused on accurate mimicry of the pronunciation and grammatical structures in these pre-recorded interactions. The point is that rather than becoming a facilitating mechanism, such a methodology alienates Indian students from their existing socio-cultural milieu as well as the contemporary idiom and local texture which English has come to acquire over decades in India. Such approaches to ELT are unmindful of the fact that just because a language is used in a socio-cultural matrix, which is always in flux and transition, it is subject to constant mutation and miscegenation. This tendency for self-reinvention and reinvigoration impart a language not only a distinct freshness and richness but also enlivening topicality and relevance.

An almost identical mindset charged the exhaustive Orientalist project of fathoming the religious and philosophical secrets allegedly harboured by Sanskrit. As noted earlier, Sanskrit was considered by the British as one of the classical languages of India, whose knowledge, like Greek and Latin, was indispensable to rule India. Throughout the period of extensive orientalist activities, one sees an unremitting likening of Sanskrit with Greek and Latin so much so that an entirely new area of scholarly enquiry called comparative philology was launched to investigate and establish historical relatedness of Indian as well as Continental languages. The discipline arranged languages in neat typologies based on similarities in formal features, lexis, syntax and phonetic as well as morphological properties. The explicit aim behind the comparative analysis of languages was to outline the kinship among languages by foregrounding the 'genes' – the recurrent commonalities – as also to work one's way back to reconstruct "the unrecorded languages of the past" (Trautman, 1979) and discover a pure language of humanity in the Babelian sense of the term. However, unfortunately in doing so, the discipline served to limit variety and contain

differences among languages. Thus, for example, the genealogical trees reflecting the evolution and interconnections of languages drawn by the British always corresponded to northern European one like oak and maple and never the banyan which "grows up out and down at the same time." (Cohn, 1997)

The fervour to learn Sanskrit was also rooted in the desire for better and unchallenged domination which was well reflected in Warren Hastings' plan (1772) to govern the natives by native laws only. For Hastings, Hindus – which he construed as a homogeneous category - were "in possession of laws which continued unchanged from remotest antiquity." (qutd. in Gleig, 1841), laws which were in the hands of Brahmins. As no such foolproofcode of laws was anywhere in sight, the administrator decided to invent one; a fixed compilation of *shastric* laws, assembled with the help of pundits, which can later be translated into English for effective adjudication of civil matters.He commissioned a project under the supervision of Nathaniel B. Halhed to put together appropriate *shastric* literature which later came to be known as *Vivadarnavasetu*. However, the methodology of compilation later became a sore point with William Jones who rejected the English translation of the compilation done by Halhed as twice removed from reality as it received the original via Persian. Dissatisfied with the translation and agitated by the distrust of the pundits which assisted him in court, Jones travelled far and wide in search of authentic Persian translation of "Dherm Shastr Menu Smrety" as well as an apolitical teacher who could initiate his training in Sanskrit language. By 1786, Jones had acquired such command over Sanskrit as encouraged him to embark on a macro project of translating a fixed, objectifiable and classifiable body of Hindu and Muslim laws straight from source languages into English. However, the project remained incomplete because of his untimely death.This episode also goes to prove the British thesis that just as in case of language, even in case of laws, ancient India had an "Ur-text" of laws and codes waiting to be recovered. It also reveals the colonial obsession with the notions of purity, originality, homogeneity, authenticity and accuracy when it came to learning, classifying and codifying languages and indigenous knowledge systems.

'Vulgar' Vernacular as Language of Command

Another problematic notion cherished by Oriental scholars like Halhed, Jones, William Carey and C. P. Brown was denigration of the vernaculars or spoken languages of India as "fallen, broken or corrupt versions of some pure authentic, coherent, logically formed prior language" (Cohn, 1997) In his *A Grammar of the Bengal Language* (1778), Halhed wrote: "The following work presents the Bengali language merely as derived from its parent Shanscrit." He and later Edward Hadley who wrote the first grammar of what the British pejoratively identified as 'Moors' or Hindustani, concurred on its derivative nature and traced its affinity and roots to Sanskrit and Persian. However, despite this low opinion for the vernaculars, a sizeable number of scholars and administrators couldn't ignore them for their penetrationfar and wide among the masses and

thus advocated their use as medium of instruction in primary and secondary education. But the difficulty lay in quantifying and negotiating the immense diversity in form and usage of the vernaculars or the dialects, as the British called them, as one travelled from region to region. Such variety in texture and timbre foiled the ruler's plan to disseminate colonial ideology and culture through these languages and consequently the British resolved to undertake standardization and systematic homogenization of different spoken languages of India bywriting their grammars and dictionaries. Interestingly enough, in carrying out these tasks, the colonizer's fixation with the idea of evolving a pure and refined language made Halhed expunge Bengali of all Urdu and Persian words and led C. P. Brown to resort to reverse lexicography as he attempted to standardize and sanitize several Telugu texts with help of professors of Sanskrit and Telugu. In western India, William Carey wrote the grammar of Marathi using Devnagari script – and not the Modi which was used by commoners – as he set out to standardize the language on the basis of common tenets of pure Marathi spoken by elites in and around Pune district. In his review of Marathi grammar (1868), R. B. Gunjikar takes cognizance of the role of the social class which is crucial in determining the standard in a given language. (Chavan, 2013)

Such ruthless reconfiguration of vernaculars goes to prove that the imperial zeal to map, codify and acquire spoken languages of India was not inspired by a sense of appreciation for the intrinsic merit of these languages or the need to preserve their hoary and rich traditions but simply by a strategy to inscribe and fashion an imperial language of command in the colony.The knowledge of vernacular was also deemed expedient for the Company servants in as much as it would help them in carrying out the work of assessing and collecting revenues and adjudicating land disputes. (Roy, 1994) Officers like J. B. Gilchrist, who wrote the grammar of Hindustani and a dictionary to equip the rulers with a means of direct communication with the masses, gave imaginative accounts of the origins of Hindustani and tried to invent spicy narratives about its the love-hate relationship with classical languages.The *ad hoc* and tentative methodology used by Gilchrist in preparation of these texts testify to the political end he had in sight. Gilchrist aggressively lobbied for the institutionalization of the study of Hindustani which resulted in the establishment Fort William College in 1800 where he became the professor of Hindustani. Here, in collaboration with William Carey, he published *Dialogues* (1809) on various real-life situations that the Englishmen were to encounter in India. In addition to facilitate interaction with the native servants on domestic matters like bringing food, preparing for travel etc., the dialogues primarily served the function of putting the native "on his guard" – what Althusser calls creating subject position- by issuing an interpellative command '*sunno'*. What is worse is that the dialogues served to entrench certain stereotypes about the natives as being stupid, irresponsible, careless, docile but ignorant, lethargic, work-shirk and so on and fashioned the Englishman as their binary

opposite.Thus, the discourse framedthe Englishman and the native subject as a mutually exclusive pair; one commands and the other obeys, one is knowledgeable while the other is ignorant, one is superior and the other is inferior. This asymmetry of statuses and discursive politics of otherization form the keystone of *Letters Addressed to a Young Person in India* (1828) written by Lt. Col. John Briggs in which he advises: "...our power in India rests on the general opinion of the natives of our comparative superiority in good faith, wisdom and strength, to their own rulers". (qutd in Cohn, 1997)

In the battle between Anglicists and vernacularists in the early nineteenth century over the medium of instruction for mass education, the Anglicists made their political agenda clear by saying that the huge difference in language, customs, manners, religion, culture and civilization between the colonizers and the colonized put a formidable distance between the two and thus posed danger to British dominion. (Boman-Behram, 1943) As an effective tool of cultural assimilation, Macaulay famously proposed the creation of "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in words and in intellect." (qutd. in Boman-Behram, 1943) However, the aims of the ardent vernacularists like Elphinstone and Col. Jervis in Bombay presidency were not very noble either. Jervis astutely imagined the role of education through vernaculars as a sure-shot means of reaching out to the teeming multitudes with ease and efficacy and constructing the consciousness of the subjects in such a manner as to maintain the social status quo and elicit unreserved compliance. He wrote:"For the general well being of society there is no greater blessing than education, for by means of it, the poor are enabled to ascertain their just rights; the middling classes are led to pursuits of industry, economy and contentment; the rich to the acquirement of influence and respectability; and the community generally to a strict observance of that social order and ready obedience to the prevailing authorities which is the most valuable text of public opinion." (qutd. in Parulekar, 1951) In a nutshell, the British education policy tried to sustain an unchallenged continuance of class consciousness and social-linguistic hierarchy in India, something which is reflected glaringly in the differential education policy framed by Mount Stuart Elphinstone in his Minute on Education (1824).

Ironically enough, this methodology of language learning is zealously imitated in ELT classroom today and recognized as the most effective way to teach second and foreign languages. CLTrecommends what is called the notional-functional syllabus under which a notion denotes a specific social context and function refers to a variety of purposeful expressions that a speaker normallyuses to handle it. For example, to communicate tolerably well in a specific context like 'shopping', an interlocutor is most likely to use functions like greeting, request, polite questions, invitation etc., a set of alternatives expressions for which will be taught to students in ELT classrooms. One really wonders whether this functional approach to language teaching is not differentially targeting students like Akash who are able to parrot out and mimic a

standard set of functions but are woefullyimmune to a variety of inequalities and oppressions they are subjected to. The command of English cyber collies flaunt with a sense of self-importance is certainly not the language of command in the colonial sense but its obverse.Under the garb of being value-free and apoliticality, these academic practices wittingly or unwittingly become instrumental in creating subject-positions and play substantive politics of calculated marginalization and domination.The neo-Marxists stand vindicated in their thesis especially when students like Akash are pretty eager and readily become the receptacle of such oppression and mediocritization.

ELT, Indian Literature in English (Translation) and Critical Pedagogy,

In his remarkably insightful book *Cultural Politics of English as an International Language* (1994), Pennycook calls attention to the paradoxes English has come to represent in post-colonial societies. He says, "...it is both the language of modernity and the language of decadence, the 'first language' (the medium of education) but not the 'mother tongue' (the racially assigned language), a neutral medium of communication yet the bearer of Western values, the language of equality and yet the distributor of inequality...". Despite such Janus-face, English remains the most desirable language among the masses and powerfully anchors the discourses of pragmatism, materialism and globalism which unfortunately underpin it hegemony.

However, this hardly means that all the possibilities of resistance stand aborted in a socio-cultural context marked ineluctably by huge diversity and variety of spoken languages. In fact, peripheral resistance to English is very much visible in the realms of the literary and the social. The discipline of Cultural Studies has framed post-colonial and diasporic contexts through the concept of "hybridity" so as to theorize how colonized and border cultures develop by synthesizing themselves out of elements of multiple cultures as against the supposedly monocultural colonial societies fixated on purist notions of identity and belonging. Post colonial politics of language and literature, whether written originally in English or in English translation, is marked by subversive and self-assertive practice of 'abrogation' and 'appropriation'. Abrogation refers to outright "refusal of the notion of the correctness of usage, fixed meanings and assumptions dictated by the categories of imperial culture. 'Appropriation', on the other hand, is the process by which English is adopted and adapted to express cultural experiences which are very different from imperial ones." This perhaps aptly explains Rushdie's conscious interspersing of Hindi and Urdu words and expressions in linguistic texture of his novels. Rushdie makes a particularly poignant observation upon the negative reception of *The Satanic Verses*: "Those who oppose the novel most vociferously today are of the opinion that intermingling with a different culture will inevitably weaken and ruin their own. I am of the opposite opinion. *The Satanic Verses* celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas,

politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure." (1991)

Even in the extremely vibrant digital realm, enlivened by information and technology revolution, where English is the singular medium of navigation and interpersonal communication among users of varying demography, nationalities and culture, it is mediated by spoken languages, ethnic idiom, unique lingo and symbolism. This increasing informal character of English in cyber space serves to formulate a cohesive group and develop communitarian solidarity amongst users. Concerns have been raised about the negative impact of communication technologies and internet based applications on the overall English proficiency of learners as they facilitate deviation from standard and pure English. (Rankin, 2010; Mphahlele and Mashamite, 2005) On the other hand, a number of surveys and experiments have proved the superior efficacy of technology-enable learning methodologies over their traditional counterpart on the social constructivist ground that technology improves social interactions between students which in turn expedites and facilitates knowledge production and knowledge sharing. (Vygotsky, 1978; Rossi, 2006, 2010) Pros and cons of informalization notwithstanding, it needs to be reaffirmed that the digital sphere as a space of cross-linguistic negotiation is extremely important for one it mirrors emergent social realities and other it is becoming increasingly popular as a pedagogical tool in English language classrooms.

In post-colonial societies where hybridity is the defining principle of lived realities, the English language teacher can no more hide in his ideologically blind cocoon and chant the glory of Standard English bequeathed by the colonial masters. He/she has to develop a historical perspective on his/her profession as well as language and overhaul his teaching methodology, curricular patterns and overall ideology in order to make ELT progressively relevant, counterhegemonic and democratising force. The pedagogical practices in ELT classrooms should be responsive to and accommodative of the emergent communication trends and practices in social-cultural sphere so as to positively impact popular misconceptions and the psycho-dynamics that freeze people in linguistic stratification. One of the ways in which this can be accomplished is through the privileging of Indian English Literature (IEL) and Indian Literature in English Translation (ILET) in the curricula of ELT. The postcolonial strategy of seizing "the language of the centre and re-placing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonial place" (Ashcroft et. al, 1989) has been used quite effectively in this category by a vanguard of Indian English writers led by Raja Rao. In his novel *Kanthapura* (1938),the deft use of linguistic strategies like collocational deviation, semantic shift, loan words, calque, syntactic disruptions and literal translation etc. by Rao to convey Indian realties and cultural milieu has been discussed comprehensively (Kachru, 1989; Mukherjee, 1971) and upheld ceremoniously as a model for several generations of Indian English writers many of whom like Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai have enhanced the paraphernalia by introducing code-mixing and code-

switching in their novels. Thus the turn of speech, movement of thought, tonality and the music of language which reflect a specific worldview and philosophy of existence nurtured by a Punjabi character would be translated rather differently by a Mulk Raj Anand than an R. K. Narayan who attempts to impart voice to a Tamil-speaking villager. What naturally emerges from the above discussion is the fact that an Indian student of ELT will come across not *the* English but a cline of Englishes in such a classroom which would sensitize him not only to the linguistic but existential diversity of the country. Preferably, the focus of ELT curricula should be on the study of such translations as would explore "a whole continent of experience so far left to silence and darkness" i.e. the literature of the marginalised (Satchidanandan, 2008). If the achievements of translation during Bhakti movement in medieval India are anything to go by, the study of English translation of literature by women, Dalit, tribal, ethnic minorities and folk singers/narrators would go a long way in democratization of language, transformation of cultural forms and building resistance against ideological domination.

Alongside the formulation of democratising curricula and language, ELT has to mark a departure from envisioning classroom as a magisterial space to forging it as a social and democratic space where students are sensitized to their macro social, cultural and political contexts. A very effective way of doing this is adoption of Critical Pedagogy, a radical pedagogical innovation posited by Paulo Freire (1970) whereby a student is made to reflect upon the criticality and crisis of lived experience, debate the issues and ideas that bring about that condition and identify means and measures to fight and resist those oppressions and inequalities for social transformation and empowerment of the subjugated. Rather than supplanting extant pedagogical models, critical pedagogy supplement them by imparting the element of critical engagement, democratic thinking and deconstruction to them. Critical pedagogy classrooms stand in opposition to colonial classrooms with magisterial climate, "with physically divided spaces marking off once class of students from another, as well as teachers from students", with regular examinations measuring acquisition of fixed body of knowledge. (Cohn, 1997) Conversely, here non-formal setting of classroom space encourages students to initiate non-authoritarian dialogue with teachers and peers without pressure and fear of examination and punishment respectively. In a typical EFL context like India where students hail from diverse backgrounds in terms of caste, class, gender, ethnicity and mother-tongue, critical pedagogy promises to bring out the contexts of power that define socio-political relationship amongst them. Especially, "when the learners are actually the elite members of society who exercise power, critical pedagogy might play an important role...for them to understand how to dominate societal power, how to convert that power to the less-powerful and how to exercise their influence in right way to make the world better and more equal place." (Riasati, 2012) In a nation like India, with its 'multi' realities - lingual, cultural, religious, ethnic

– such critical curricula would be a technology of decolonization and build cross-cultural bridges amongst a large variety of linguistically diverse locality and to accomplish emotional and intellectual as well as cultural and national solidarity.

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