



UGC-Human Resource Development Centre BHARATHIDASAN UNIVERSITY

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UGC- ACADEMIC STAFF COLLEGE BHARATHIDASAN UNIVERSITY TIRUCHIRAPPALLI

REPORT OF THE 21 DAY REFRESHER COURSE IN ENGLISH 25 SEPTEMBER – 14 OCTOBER - 2013

The 21-day refresher course in English titled *Language and Literature : An Interdisciplinary Approach*, focusing on language and literature, theory and criticism started on 24.09.13 with the Inaugural session chaired by the Director, Dr. A. Selvam of the Academic Staff College, Bharathidasan University and the Presidential address was given by Dr. V. Rajagopalan, Member, Vice-Chancellor Committee, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli.

In the afternoon **Dr. Sujatha Vijayaraghavan** of Pondicherry University spoke on re-defining the Canon, the inclusion of oratures & endangered languages. She said that earlier literature was canonical. But later, there was a paradigm shift and a redefining of the Canon. A significant step in this was the emergence of new literatures – ethno poetics came into being. What matters now is the performance of the narrative not the pedagogy. It encourages readers to be part of the text.

In the morning of 25th **Dr. Laura Dameris Chellajothi** of Bharathidasan University gave an introductory lecture by validating the topic of the Course and presented a diachronic review of literary research starting from the Classical Age to the Post Modern Age. The highlight of the lecture was the shifting of centres both, topographically and ideologically. The progression and shift in themes during every age was also dealt with.

On the 25th afternoon **Dr. Ganesan** of HH Rajah's College started off his lecture on feminism by tracing the advent of feminism. He briefed on seminal writers of feminism like Sappho, Mary Woolstomecraft, and Periyar. During the second session he focused on cultural studies and introduced feminists in diverse areas like sports, women's rights etc. The crux of his lecture was "Nobody is born a woman, but is made one".

On 27th morning **Prof. William John Bosco** of Periyar EVR College spoke on *Structuralism and Post Structuralism* first session on structuralism. He simplified the profound theory of structuralism using simple, everyday examples. Structuralists down the ages and the shift in their findings were explicated. His second session was on Post Structuralism. He summed it up in the words of Nietzsche: "There are no facts, only interpretations".

In the afternoon, **Dr. Meenakshi Sundaram** of NIT, Trichy focused on *English for Employability*. He emphasized on the life-long role of English teachers, of teaching students for a lifetime. He suggested methods and measures to increase the comprehension and retention level of students. The eye-opener of his talk was: "Don't teach students new words. Help them to use what they already know".

On 28th morning **Prof. Dhanavel** of Anna University Chennai talked on *Vocabulary Learning Strategies*. He underscored the importance of vocabulary that it has the power to move the world. He differentiated the various kinds of learning strategies, like cognitive, affective, metacognitive, etc. He also briefed us on the different aspects of vocabulary learning.

On the afternoon of 28th, the textual novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* written by Harper Lee Collins was discussed alongside with the pictorial representation of the same. Set in the imaginary Maycomb County, the movie presented a holistic idea of race relations in America. It was a moving microcosm of the racial reality of the 1960s.

On 29th Morning **Dr.Senthilnathan** of Bharathidasan University focused on how we can maximize student learning with the use of technology, in this digital age. He expounded on how technology can infuse more realism into language teaching. He listed out the various uses of ICT in English Language learning and Teaching. He also re-emphasized the role of the teachers in handling today's digital immigrants by tapping the learning opportunities created by ICT.

It was followed by **Dr. Laura's** lecture on Semiotics. She highlighted that there is no inherent meaning in a word and that language is only a system of differences. Moreover, it is also a system of signs understood by convention.

On 30th morning **Dr.Vinayagaselvi** of Bharathidasan university spoke on *Indian feminist Theories*. She pointed out that self-conscious writing mode has made women the key markers of the nation's culture and identity. She reiterated that the Indian feminine cannot be traced on the lines of the western theoretical model. She also stated that the Altekarian vision has to be demystified. She also stressed that feminism was highly relevant to India.

In the afternoon **Dr. Vinodh Balakrishnan** of NIT Trichy spoke on *Spiritual Pragmatism*. He started his lecture by differentiating spirituality and religion. His connotation of the word spiritual referred to our spiritual engagement with a text. And he referred to the pragmatic role of the spiritual reader to interact authentically with the options available. For this he cited the representative men of Emerson. He also spoke on poem as an allegory and on the palimpsest.

On 1st October morning **Dr. S. Armstrong** of Madras University spoke on *Testimonial Literature*. At the outset he defined testimonial literature, as a discourse of liberation that began in the 1960's in Cuba. He stated that three occasions give rise to testimonios namely – war, oppression and revolution. He then discussed the different types of testimonios and also listed a few popular ones. To substantiate his views on testimonio, he explicated Aurora Levins Morale's "My name is this story".

In the afternoon **Dr. Bennet** of National College discussed the *Contemporaneity of Space as a Critical Category in Critical Discourse*. He highlighted the ideas of space of diverse thinkers like Leonardo da Vinci, Lacan etc., He then briefed us on the different types of spaces like real space, ideal space, virtual space etc., and He then traced the fundamental relation between the body and space with illustrations for the different offshoots of space theory.

Dr Kishori Nayak of Mangalore University spoke on *Women's Personal Narratives* on the forenoon of 3rd October. She drew the lineage of autobiography through different ages, countries and cultures. She gave a holistic account of the growth and development of autobiography. She also presented an exhaustive list of critics and writers of Indian Women Autobiographers and discussed the problems they face in presenting their life as the text.

Dr. M. Balasubramanian, Retd. Prof. of Bharathidasan University put forth a brilliant session on *Lexico-Syntactic Analysis of a Poem*. He explicated the method of analyzing a poem using poetic techniques like iteration, contrast and syntactic dislocation. He suggested to the participants to use poetry for teaching interpretation and language.

On 4th October morning **Dr. Vinodh Kumar** of Bharathidasan University refreshed the participants on post colonial theory by applying it to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. He pointed out that colonialism is not just controlling the colonized people's wealth but also their mental universe. He then screened two movie versions of Robinson Crusoe and showed the change in post colonial perspectives in the two versions.

In the afternoon **Dr. Suresh Fredrick** of Bishop Heber College started his session on Oiko poetics by introducing the concept of Eco – criticism. He then traced the shifts in eco-criticism from being anthropocentric in the 1960's to becoming bio-centric in the present-day scenario. He highlighted the present precarious condition of nature by analyzing a few eco conscious poems like Caged Bird, Snake etc., The parting note of his lecture was "Let the nature speak..."

In the morning of 5th October **Dr. Catherine Edward** of Holy Cross College enlightened the participants on the *Learning Centered Teaching*. She explained the need for change from

learner centered to learning centered class rooms. It was a highly interactive session in which she used two different kinds of activities to enhance student's active participation in the class room. In the afternoon participants' micro teaching was supervised and evaluated by **Prof. Vinod Kumar**, Bharathidasan University.

On 6th morning the first part of the session was handled by **Dr. Laura** wherein the participants were instructed on the mechanics of writing a thesis and on the reference books to be used for research.

Dr. M.S. Nagaraj, Retd. Prof. of Madras University was the resource person for the second half of the morning session. His lecture was on composition of literary history and Narratology. He traced the prospects of rethinking literary history. His afternoon session on Narratology was all-encompassing including its elementary requirements, kinds of narration, narrators, etc.

On 7th morning **Dr. Isaac Jebastine** of Bharathidasan University spoke on *literature as history and history as literature*. He brought out the differences between Traditional/ old historicism and modern historicism. He explained how old historicism foregrounds literary texts in historical contexts, whereas new historicists juxtapose literary and non-literary texts of a particular period. He also listed out the merits and demerits of New Historicism.

In the afternoon, **Prof. Papu Benjamin Elango** of St. Joseph's College lectured on *the five critical approaches to literature with a special emphasis on the archetypal approach*. He explicated the different features of these approaches with suitable illustrations. He also presented a clear picture of the diverse images such as water, the sun, circle, etc. which function as archetypes in literature.

On 8th morning **Prof. Gurumoorthy**, Retd Prof. of Periyar E.V.R. College's lectured on the various literary strategies adopted by various successful people in effective communication, by analyzing the different ways of truly effective people. He also elaborated on habits that made people succeed in their lives.

The afternoon session on Micro teaching by the participants was chaired by **Prof. Isaac Jebastine**, Associate Professor of English Bharathidasan University.

The morning session of 09-10-13 was handled by **Prof. Karpaga Kumaravel** of Bharathidasan University who presented an information packed lecture on innovative teaching skills and techniques in higher education. He traced the advancement of knowledge down the years in India, thanks to the inclusion of technology in the class room. He stressed the urgent need for further innovation in teaching strategies as the government of India had declared the decade 2010-2020 as the Decade of Innovation.

The spokesperson for the afternoon session of 09-10-13 was **Prof. Jinnah of Jamal Mohammed** College who spoke on the literature of the Diaspora. The eye-opener of his talk was that the so-called modern concept of Diaspora was infact as old as 1702 AD. But William Safron had given it its contemporary academic connotation. He also spoke about the diverse issues like the different Diasporic spaces surrounding Diaspora. He finally pointed out that today's Diasporic writers no longer want the tag "Diasporic" to be attached to them.

On the morning of 10th October, the participants were taken to the central library of Bharathidasan University. The first session was handled by **Dr. Surulinathi** of Bharathidasan University who spoke about the mining of web resources. **Prof. Jayaprakash** who took over the second session informed the participants about several open access and free e-books and how to gain access to them.

In the afternoon session on 10th October **Dr. Radhika Priyadharshini** of Vellalar College, Erode spoke to the participants on symbols and archetypes. With a remarkable collection of PowerPoint slides she clearly projected the use of symbols and their significance. The spectrum of her lecture ranged from Hardy to Melville to R.K. Narayan. She also brought out the analogy between the symbols and religious texts like the Bible.

On 11th morning, **Dr. Elango** of The American College, Madurai presented a highly dramatic lecture on drama. He emphasized the need for enacting drama to prevent it from

becoming a closet play. He pointed out the reader of dramatic text is at a loss unless he visualizes it. He said that students should be sensitized to visualize the play and also interrupt and decide for themselves the goodness / evil inherent in it.

Prof. Azhagarasan of Madras University lectured on *Sign and Signification* on the 11th afternoon. He presented a synchronic analysis of Saussure's *langue* and *parole* and Chomsky's competence and performance. He used clippings from cinema to show how meaning changes with context and how meaning can easily be misinterpreted since it is arbitrary. He concluded that sign is not just linguistic but also cultural.

On the 12th morning, **Dr. Tharian Mathew** of Ramakrishna Engineering College spoke on writing, journalism and communication. He brought out the differences between speech and writing and proved how the spoken word surpasses the written one. Nevertheless he invoked the participants to develop the written word as it showed the stamp of one's personality. The crux of his lecture was 'convey maximum information using minimum words'.

An evaluative test was conducted in the afternoon. In the post tea session there was a group discussion on what action could further be planned to improve the academia and personal research.

14th October had a fitting final lecture on Translation by Prof. Ramasamy Retired Professor of Periyar EVR College in the forenoon session. The Valediction function was like the crown in the jewel of the whole Refresher Course Programme conducted by the UGC-Academic Staff College of Bharathidasan University.