Mandated Resistance, Embodied Shame: The Material and Affective Contours of a TESOL Method

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This article examines how a purportedly local, postcolonial reform effort to resist center-based methods is resisted by the students and teachers it seeks to serve. In this context, rather than take center and periphery for granted, the author attempts a processual geography of method. Drawing on data from a 19-month ethnography in the Indian state of Kerala, the author first traces the materials production process and reifications of resistance to argue that method produces centers. Specifically, privileged actors rearranged the terms of recognition from literacy to orality to resist supposedly structural, behaviorist pedagogies but in effect mandated resistance to locally available literacy resources. Then, foregrounding the *quality of classroom life* (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a) under reform conditions, the author witnesses diverse regimes of shame. Kumaravadivelu (2006b) distinguishes methods ("established methods conceptualized and constructed by experts") from methodologies ("what practicing teachers actually do in the classroom" to achieve their teaching objectives, p. 84). Because the material and affective registers of classroom life emerged as crucial domains of experience, the author attempts an intersectional analysis that foregrounds the material (Block, 2015; Ramanathan, 2008) in conjunction with that of the affective (Motha & Lin, 2013). Ethnographic attention to the "schema of agents, levels, and processes" (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996, p. 408) entailed in the production and consumption of a method illuminates the multiple and complex ways in which marginality is engendered and lived.
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Kumaravadivelu (2006a, 2006b, 2016) explains that methods attempt to (a) define conceptual terrains and allocate value, (b) distribute material and symbolic resources according to these values, and thereby (c) shape the aspirations and practices of teaching–learning communities. First, Kumaravadivelu (2016) points out

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that methods define ways of knowing and, further, allocate value and nonvalue within this conceptual system. For instance, methods define the conceptual terrain through "interested terminologies" like native and nonnative speaker (Kumaravadivelu, 2016, p. 77) and, in doing so, accrue value on native speakers' "presumed language competence, learning styles, communication patterns, conversational maxims, cultural beliefs, and even accent" (Kumaravadivelu, 2016, p. 73). The "potential for *thinking otherwise*" entails an epistemic break and a renaming (Kumaravadivelu, 2016, p. 79), which prompts García (2009) to adopt *emergent bilinguals* in place of "limited English proficient students" to realign the terms of discourse and rearrange the distribution of value.

Attempting a similar conceptual reorientation for the Indian context, I draw on Vaish (2005) to replace the native and nonnative *speaker* hierarchy implicit in discussions of TESOL with a more context-specific articulation: "English knowing" and "English speaking" Indians (p. 198). Though scholars such as Aneja (2016) clarify that individuals are not native or nonnative speakers per se, but rather are socialized into a range of nonnative-speakered subjectivities through historical and emergent institutional and individual practices, speech endures as a default marker of language use. Vaish underscores that non-elite Indians who learn English in school acquire "some necessary and sufficient foundations for workplace literacy" (p. 200) but have very little communicative ability (p. 199). In this context, the naturalization of language as speech erases non-elite language use (Vaish, 2005, p. 198). Meanwhile, English usage in India has historically been skewed in favor of literacy and literary activities, with older, enduring hierarchies clustering around two kinds of "literate-in-English" users: one expected to reason and express opinions and another limited to survival English and the minutiae of writing, like capital letters, punctuation, neat writing, and so on (Ramanathan, 2005, p. 59). Viswanathan (1992) calls this the literacy–literary divide of English teaching in India. Though present-day language learning opportunities are thus situated between older literacy–literary divides and emerging orality–literacy hierarchies, this entanglement has not yet attracted scholarly attention.

Second, through their definition of terms, concepts, and values, methods work to allocate material resources. Kumaravadivelu (2016) cautions that, although periphery communities may have recourse to resistance, method functions as an "operating principle" that shapes all aspects of language education: curriculum, materials, testing, and training (p. 73). For instance, Tickoo (1986, 1990) and Ramanathan (2005) describe how communicative approaches and functional syllabi deprived teachers and students in non-elite classrooms in India by introducing materials that taught survival English. Last, methods shape

learner and teacher subjectivities by assembling particular configurations of desire, shame, and practice. Theorizing desire in TESOL, Motha and Lin (2013) contend that "at the very center of every English learning moment lies desire" (p. 332); desire as "both a lack and an energy" or as simultaneously fleeing an undesirable condition and pursuing a desirable one (p. 335). Thus, methods (attempt to) teach learners what to desire (Motha & Lin, 2013, p. 348) and what to feel ashamed about (Bartlett, 2007). Attending to shame as a central affect in literacy and language learning, Bartlett (2007) proposes the notion of *literacy shaming*, wherein "legitimate" users shame aspiring learners and thereby exercise control over learners' speech as well as silence. Although methods thus operationalize a social space of desire, shame, and practice that inscribe onto particular conceptual and material worlds, critical scholars caution against deterministic analyses (Pennycook, 1999).

INTERSECTIONAL INEQUALITIES AND METHOD

Although the role of methods in producing social hierarchies is now fairly accepted, a crucial but lesser examined theme in TESOL is the disproportionate impact of methods in deeply unequal societies. Ramanathan (2008) writes, "social inequities around poverty cannot be wished away" and "West-based TESOL needs to be more mindful of how lack of access to materials directly impinges on language learning and teaching" (p. 25). Therefore, I attempt a region-specific analysis of marginality, as enacted through language education projects. Block (2015) proposes a constellational model of social-class marginality that is at once experiential and discursive, profoundly material but also symbolic, sociocultural, and spatial (pp. 3–4). This calls for a robust understanding of the intersections of recognition and redistribution and, further, of the intersections of class with other dimensions such as gender and race or, in the context of India, caste. Anti-caste theorists and feminists in India too have been preoccupied with the complex and cruel relationships of recognition and redistribution (Devika, 2006; Guru, 2009). Rao (2009), for instance, notes that the redistributional agendas of anti-caste legislation stymied recognition and that it produced not the "emancipated citizen but the vulnerable subject at risk of conjectural violence" (p. 24). Meanwhile, Kapikad (2011) details painful histories of Dalits in communist Kerala, where emphasis on recognition atrophied redistribution. As for TESOL, Block (2015) and Ramanathan and Morgan (2009) contend that the poststructuralist turn has resulted in an overwhelming emphasis on recognition that siphons attention away from redistribution. Kumaravadivelu's (2016)

disquiet with "intellectual elaboration" (p. 77) and call for "result oriented strategic action" (p. 81) resonates with this perspective. To summarize, this article attempts an intersectional analysis of learners' and teachers' negotiations of methods and struggles with the paradoxical connections between (mis)recognition and (non)distribution.

ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDS

The larger research project examined the aspirational mobilities of differently positioned non-elites in the post–market-reform period in the southern Indian state of Kerala. Because aspirational mobilities had resulted in the disintegration of a historically robust, state-funded, regional-medium schooling system, the project was situated in Pathanamthitta district, which has the unfortunate distinction of being the district with the highest percentage of "uneconomic" schools: schools with classes of fewer than 15 students and therefore financially unviable for the state. A significant majority of uneconomic schools are in the lower primary sector, where Malayalam is the mandated medium of instruction (Government of Kerala, 2013). Economic stratification is thus intertwined with language education, with the poorest and most marginalized remaining at uneconomic state-funded schools (Mathew, 2017). To clarify, in state-funded Malayalam-medium schools, English is taught as a subject from first grade, but in private English-medium schools, all subjects are officially taught in English and unofficially taught in translation.

The ethnographic inquiry was situated in a state-funded, Malayalam-medium, uneconomic school and a neighboring low-fee private English-medium school to which many families had migrated in the present generation. This article draws chiefly on fieldwork conducted at the Malayalam-medium school, which was established in 1894 for slave-castes (*para-pallikudam*). I will call the school St. Thomas. Though slavery was legally abolished in 1855 in what was then the princely state of Travancore, social vestiges and educational segregation persisted into the early 1900s and, moreover, had reemerged sharply in the post–market-reform period (Mathew, 2017). In 2013, St. Thomas School had 12 Dalit (former slave-caste) students enrolled in Grades 1–4. During fieldwork, I was enlisted to teach English in second grade and I taught the Kerala state English curriculum to two second-grade cohorts—three students during 2013–2014 and four students in 2014–2015. Because the inquiry was also distributed along the pedagogic structures that regulated and supported state-funded schooling, I interviewed seven textbook writers (five face to face, one through Skype, and one by telephone), interacted with textbook writers during the

2014 textbook revision under way in the state capital Thiruvanantha-puram, interviewed key Kerala state project officers associated with two national education projects (DPEP and SSA, explained in detail later), and attended four teacher training programs, two as a practicing teacher and two as a district resource person.

RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

I grew up in Kerala during the 1980s and 1990s, and like many Ker-alites from dominant castes and communities I moved to a neighboring state for college education. During the course of a decade of study and work in various cities in India, I visited family and friends in Kerala often but for short durations. In 2010, I enrolled in a graduate course at a U.S. university and it was for my dissertation fieldwork that I returned to Kerala for a prolonged stay of a year and half. Migration is commonplace in Kerala, and my insider-outsider position was not unusual and even expected. Although my long absences and work with non-elites in other parts of India had made me ambivalent about dominant discourses in Kerala, it was teaching as a method of research that revealed the violence affected through seemingly egalitarian reforms.

In the data sections that follow, the first three trace the production and articulation of reform pedagogy to illuminate the dynamic and distributed assembling of pedagogic centers. The intermingling of local electoral politics, global economic aid, and disciplinary expertise remind us that sociopolitical worlds situate policy and pedagogy. Socialist unease with neoliberal expansion was the backdrop against which resistance was valorized, essentialized, and mandated. Meanwhile, extending sociopolitical and economic demands for resistance onto English pedagogy, reforms urged teachers and students to resist locally relevant literacy practices, which were the primary linguistic resources available. Mandating resistance along existing vectors of inequality, reforms explicitly defined linguistic and pedagogic expertise and morality around oral proficiency but implicitly retained expectations of literary proficiency.

TEACHING-LEARNING MATERIALS

In this section, I argue that reform-produced teaching-learning materials defined speaking as the appropriate way to know English and, further, urged teachers and learners to resist local literacy resources. The mandated teaching-learning materials in Grades 1–4, from 2008 to 2014, consisted of a student textbook and a teacher's

sourcebook for each grade. The teacher's sourcebook has two parts; the first part details conceptual underpinnings, and the second section compiles the texts to be taught in the classroom. The student textbook is a compilation of narrative fragments taken from the second section of the sourcebook (see Table 1).

To give an example from second-grade materials, Unit Three consists of one story that ran from pages 85 to 111 in the teacher's sourcebook, with sections titled Interaction, Narrative, and Process. Unit Three has 15 narratives interspersed with 25 interaction sections and 12 process sections. *Interaction* typically lists a set of scripted interactions for teachers to introduce the story, provide space for predictions, and so on. Textbook writers explained that scripted interactions were provided so that teachers did not interact in "wrong" English. The *narrative* is the story proper, here in monolingual English. Narratives range from 67 to 277 words, most averaging around 150 words. These are largely descriptive in nature, written to produce "mental images" in children. To clarify, Grade 1 textbooks used bilingual narratives, and key plot elements were narrated in Malayalam. In Grade 2, the first two units attempt the same technique, but peripheral details rather than key plot details were narrated in Malayalam. From Unit Three, materials were monolingual, in English.

Of the 15 narratives in Unit Three, small excerpts from five narratives were compiled in the textbook and illustrated. Textbook writers clarified that the majority of the narratives were excluded in the textbook to thwart "traditional" teaching at school, home, or in the community: choral reading sessions and the repeated writing of fixed question-answers that passed for the teaching of writing. Instead, narrative fragmenting sought to ensure listening.

Last, the *Process* sections in the sourcebook contained activities, exercises, and picture-reading guidelines for the illustrated narrative fragments. Activities varied from concept mapping to making paper fish, with a constant flow of scripted teacher talk in English. Exercises,

TABLE 1
Reformed Pedagogic Materials

Teacher's sourcebook	Part 1: Theoretical assumptions and conceptual frameworks
	Part 2: Pedagogic materials: Five units, each comprising
	• interaction (scripted questions)
	• narrative (story proper, about 50 to 300 words each)
	• process (activities, exercises)
Student's textbook	Narrative fragments, activities, exercises

however, were standardized and expected literary proficiency. Four exercise items—writing a conversation, writing thoughts of a protagonist, writing a picture description, and writing a rhyming poem—accompanied every unit, and student proficiencies were tested by centralized, standardized examinations. The second-grade curriculum consisted of five such units, and the District Education Office periodically communicated a "scheme of work" to all teachers, indicating which units had to be taught for each of the three exams.

Pedagogic materials were thus fraught with the contradictory pulls of literary expectations, even as language pedagogy valorized orality. Through scripted interactions and narrative fragmenting, pedagogic materials not only reified speaking as the appropriate way to know English but also recognized teachers as English users with limited speaking abilities. The emphasis on listening extended this framework to students, with teachers' speech presented as the normative performance of knowing English. Over 70% of the material was intended solely for listening. As for reading, opportunities for practice were severely limited. In Unit Three, only five small excerpts of the 15 narratives were included in the student textbook for reading. Conceptual worlds thus defined material resources. However, exams were written tests, even though pedagogical emphasis on writing is minimal. The following two sections examine the theoretical arguments deployed to oppose particular literacy practices and the sociopolitical mores within which linguistic theories were interpreted and refashioned.

PRODUCING CENTERS

This section first gives an overview of the core reform team's evolution to note the overlay of institutional certification, electoral politics, and international aid funding that conferred recognition on a particular theoretical stance. Though this core team transcended bureaucratic dismantling, reform coherence did not arise singularly from their cohesion or zeal. A distributed network of teachers and teacher educators affirmed reform assumptions even though they contested specific features like scripted interactions or narrative fragmenting. During the 1990s, the structural adjustment agenda of the World Bank made unprecedented funding available for primary education in India, through the District Primary Education Program (DPEP; Kumar, Priyam, & Saxena, 2001). In Kerala, the DPEP was spearheaded by the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad, the cultural front of the Communist Party, in a context where a collapsing economy at home and the decline of socialism worldwide was precipitating "ideological and practical re-orientation" in the party (Williams, 2008, p. xvii). In this

context, Parishad members crafted a pedagogic socialism, reflected in "empowerment" projects as well as the education reforms.

Education reforms undertaken during this period systemically reworked pedagogic materials, teacher training, and evaluation in the formal school system for all school subjects. The revision of English language teaching was entrusted to Dr. Anandan, a committed socialist who also had a PhD in linguistics from a premier Indian institution (state project officer, DPEP, personal interview). A Chomskyan linguist, Dr. Anandan formulated the conceptual thrusts of the English reforms and built a core team of textbook writers and resource persons (Nair, 2004). When the DPEP was phased out, funding continued for its new avatar, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, literally the Education for All program. Meanwhile, when the left came back to power in 2006, the Government of Kerala undertook the drafting of a Kerala Curricular Framework in accordance with the guidelines of the National Curricular Framework 2005. The core team assembled formally during this time to produce materials that would institutionalize and legitimize what had earlier been an experimental and exploratory set of practices. This team included Dr. Anandan, his brother, and a group of teachers turned resource persons he had nurtured over the years. Thus, institutional certification, an extensive sociopolitical network, and significant economic capital were activated and converted into the intellectual and affective links of the core team to confer recognition on a particular set of theoretical postulations. Although the core team did not accrue any economic benefits, the significant funds implicated in the process gesture to the processual centrality of economic capital.

Further, textbook revisions under way during my fieldwork period revealed how centers were multiple, connected, and contested. Though Dr. Anandan was not part of the 2014 textbook revisions, members of the official team sent drafts to him for feedback and approval. The official pedagogic center was thus subverted by an unofficial core team that had emerged out of two decades of reform activities. After the textbooks were written, a second level of teachers who were also district resource persons was deployed to orient practicing teachers to the revised textbooks. I attended two such sessions in Pathanamthitta and found that district resource persons were English speakers inducted to display and explain a PowerPoint presentation authored by the core team. Meanwhile, a more loosely networked community of English-speaking experts, including faculty at the District Institute, undertook extension activities that contested yet affirmed reform assumptions, which I describe in greater detail later. Though various experts—textbook writers, teachers as resource persons, and teacher educators—were expected to have diverse kinds of expertise,

none of the experts I met were non-English speakers. However, the majority of teachers in the state system knew English but did not speak it. English speakers were thus normalized as legitimate users and potential experts, and both their scarcity and legitimacy were crucial to the production of pedagogic centers.

CENTERING RESISTANCE

Given that the core postulates of the reforms emerged out of diverse impulses as described above, this section analyzes the disciplinary justifications put forward to mandate resistance to particular literacy practices. I argue that the reforms proposed a theoretical-linguistic solution (resist structural behaviorist theories) for a sociolinguistic problem (the literacy–literary divide). The first section of the sourcebook, which details the conceptual logic of the reforms, articulates an emphatic resistance to the structural method of language teaching and behaviorist pedagogy (pp. 7–12, 15–18). The sourcebook explicitly places earlier pedagogic materials within the paradigm of behavioral psychology and structural linguistics (p. 7). These supposedly present language at the "sentence level or word level" rather than at the meaning level (p. 19); for instance, practices such as "beginning with ABC" (p. 8), "beginning with words or sentences" like "this is a pen" (pp. 9–10), "teaching rhymes" (p. 11), and "teaching formulaic expressions" like "May I come in?" (p. 12) fragment language and erode meaning (p. 18). Yet what is unstated but implicit throughout is concern for the literacy–literary divide, for all the literacy activities picked out for comment and later prohibition are of the survival English variety. These are not the literary textbooks Tickoo (1986) describes, which also professed to teach preselected grammatical structures but "hid and clothed" structures in narratives and "exciting story lines" (p. 47).

The reforms thus translated sociolinguistic pedagogic hierarchies into a theoretical distinction between form and meaning. According to the coordinator of the textbook writing committee,

Textbooks approached language as a bricklaying process. They didn't put forward language pedagogy. Letters are taught through mechanical drill. It was animal training. A for Apple. Can A be only for "apple"? We are still in colonial times? What is "hot cross buns"? Does anybody know? There was no meaningful transaction in language classrooms. Wren and Martin will have 101 sentences to demonstrate different conjugations for the word "love": "I am loving a girl," "I am being loved by a girl," this is to teach form. Wren and Martin were grain merchants! Language is not about form, it is about ideas and meaning. Meaning is

paramount. So we wanted to shake everything up, bring about a paradigm change. Importance is given to linguistic discourse. Both input and output have to be in discourse form.

The distinctions drawn here are between form and meaning. To illustrate his point, the coordinator went on to describe a lesson on prepositional phrases from the first English textbook he had encountered as a student, the 1997 Kerala English Reader for fifth grade. English was introduced in fifth grade during the 1990s. Unit Five, titled "A Rat in a Hat," required students to "look at the pictures" and "read the phrases": "a dog on a log," "a cat on a mat," "a cup on a saucer," "a mug on a table," and so on (pp. 9–10). Although this lesson is explicitly labeled "prepositional phrases," it is also a classic example of the "literacy in English" textbook described by Ramanathan (2005, see pp. 49–50). However, textbooks with literary pieces prevailed in privileged private schools, the most popular of which was the *Gulmohur* series edited by Tickoo from 1974. The literacy-literary divide is, however, narratologically absent in reform articulations even though it permeates the narratives.

Last, the reforms index the "traditional" through both theory and practice registers, assuming coherence between linguistic theory and teacher practice. The sourcebook, for instance, laments that "most teachers still take recourse to mother tongue translation" and to asking comprehension questions that elicit "fixed answers," which result in "teacher-dominated" (State Council of Education Research and Training [SCERT], 2009, p. 19), "undemocratic" classrooms that force children to be "passive" (SCERT, 2007, p. 15). Thus, structuralism and behaviorism produced fragmented, non–meaning-full pedagogic materials, which teachers embraced in practice. The descriptions distribute value along the purportedly coherent theory–practice domain using terms such as *animal training, mechanical drill, brick laying, undemocratic, authoritative,* and *teacher-dominated.* Tickoo (1990) explains that the official method, which supposedly focused on the teaching of form through mechanical drills, had never found favor with classroom teachers in India and that there was a "total mismatch between curricular expectations and classroom practice" (p. 413). In fact, although reforms assume that the structural method disallowed meaning, teachers may have translated "each lesson and every sentence in it into the regional language" (Tickoo, 1990, p. 413) due to their preoccupation with meaning.

In effect, reforms prohibited all "traditional" teaching-learning practices like the teaching of the alphabet, words, and rhymes; choral reading; and writing drills that taught spelling, grammar, and question-answers in the name of resisting structuralism and behaviorism.

Instead, as we saw earlier, an orality-centered pedagogy with literary expectations was introduced to supposedly replace fragmentation with meaning. Though reforms attempted to correct the literacy-literary divide, the elision of a sociolinguistic issue into a theoretical-linguistic problem superimposed a literacy–orality divide onto the literacy–literary divide. To summarize, I have described center-formation as a set of the material and affective relations that worked to engender and stabilize recognition and redistribution (see Table 2).

The following sections detail the materiality and affects of periphery formation. While the register of center-formation is authoritative, that of periphery formation is permeated with shame. In retelling the story, the data sections too shift registers.

TEACHING AS CONFRONTING DESIRE

The ethnographic sections that follow describe the relational production and performance of affect, the first focusing on desire and the second on shame. This section describes the material deprivations that situated particular expressions of desire at an uneconomic, Malayalam-medium school. Every morning at St. Thomas School began with

TABLE 2
Material and Affective Relations of Kerala State Language-in-Education Policy

Centers		Peripheries		
Supranational institutions	Immediate articulations	Teacher Trainers	Teachers in state-funded lower primary schools: Linguistic resources mis-recognized	Students in state-funded lower-primary (uneconomic Malayalam-medium) schools
World Bank	Funds • Materiality of center-formation • Redistribution of economic capital			
Communism, linguistics	Communist Party of India (Marxist) in Kerala, Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad, Dr. Anandan, core team • Affects of center-formation • Recognition of conceptual claims			Homes/ families: Segregated caste "colonies"
			Materiality and affects of periphery-formation	
New hierarchy	English speakers		English knowers	
Old hierarchy	Literary users			Literacy learners
CONTEXT: Expansion of private English-medium schooling				

a morning assembly, one of the key features of which was "news reading" by students. With only 12 enrolled students, every student from second to fourth grade was expected to do this activity. Students had to write down three or four news items from any daily Malayalam newspaper in a specially designated notebook and read these out during the assembly. This performance of reading, writing, and rereading was one of the key mechanisms through which students were taught to read and write in Malayalam. The school subscribed to one newspaper, and those who did not have any newspapers at home came to school early to do this work. Teachers too came in early or took time out during the day to read the newspaper with struggling readers, identifying letters that students did not yet recognize. During the morning news reading, students, especially younger students, fumbled with recently learned consonants or vowel diacritics and required help, day after day. Only by the fourth month or later did second graders typically read with some level of fluency. Reforms advocated a "non-conscious" language-learning strategy (SCERT, 2009, pp. 7, 15), but reading was learned intentionally and even laboriously.

Reading English was a different story. No graduating student could read "grade-level" textbooks, and no other reading material was available. The dire need for more appropriate materials led me to survey the children's books market in India, and I began sourcing beginner-level reading materials. In what follows, I describe four second graders' responses to one such book, titled *Come*,[1] published by Tulika. I choose this book for two reasons: First, it was one of the students' favorite books; they repeatedly asked for it. Second, in the test described later, one of the words produced in both its spoken and written forms is *come*.

Every time I handed out a picture book to the class, students read it with their hands, tracing the lines of the pictures and the words. Emilia also took to hugging and smelling the books. State textbooks are printed in cheap color, and the luxuriousness of picture books contrasted with the dullness of our textbooks and the emptiness of our walls. I typically asked students to look through the pictures and write down words they thought they knew. They wrote down *the* and *to* as they leafed through the book, spending time on each page to soak in the colors and the pictures. Picture after picture reinforced the singular theme of the book: temporality, indicated by the simple word *come*. Night turned to day, flower became fruit, clouds brought rain. "Come, said the big yellow leaf to the tiny green leaf." The students, all girls, paused on the yellow leaf but decided that they did not know the word *yellow*.

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[1] The book can be viewed here: https://www.behance.net/gallery/4792897/Come.

Emilia: Ithariyamallo? Yellow?	*Emilia: Don't we know this? Yellow?*
Jis: Ithu yellow ano?	*Jis: Is this yellow?*
Parichayamunde.	*It [the word] looks familiar.*
Annu-nu ariyamo?	*Annu, do you know it?*
Annu: Illa.	*Annu: No.*

Egg, on the other hand, did not pose any problem. Annu wrote it down as soon as she saw it. Emilia said, "Egg *muttaya* [Egg is egg]," and Jis promptly responded, "*Njanum ezhuthatte* [let me also write it down]."

These word recognition instances were punctuated by an intermittent commentary about the pictures. The long strange beard streaked with white, in particular, drew some laughter and ridicule. Black hair grayed and became white, but nobody had that long a beard! By the time the students finished, their combined list had eight words. After the picture walk, I read the book, slowly, finger on each word. "Come, said the stars to the sun." Annu's puzzled face prompted some explanation and I said, "Stars *ba paranju,* sun *vannu* [stars said come, the sun came]." Annu turned to Jis and said, "Come." Jis nodded. We continued reading. Much to my embarrassment, they liked to repeat after me, at the top of their voices. I had learned that my middle-class sensibilities of "proper" reading did not match their desired performances. By the second reading, they could recognize the patterns and Emilia told me, "*Teachere vayikkale* [teacher, don't read it yet, let me try]." We ended the session with a drawing activity. They drew four of their favorite illustrations from the book and captioned each picture "come." Desperate for more writing and rereading practice, I insisted that they also label the pictures: "bird," "egg," "star," "sun," and so on. I filled in the pattern words in case they wanted to read at home. That evening, as we got ready to leave, Annu called out to Ajin, who was idling behind, "Come, come." Ajin broke out into a hop and they began their walk back home.

Even though I found our routine reading of picture books productive and affirming, the limits of teacher work that is not aligned with state-sanctioned methods was painfully evident. Our interactions and students' emergent reading skills could not be converted into the reified written responses required by state-mandated tests, and students were forthright in requesting "traditional" drill exercises like dictation (*kettezhuthu*). The more interesting a picture book, the more eager students were to have dictation words. The activity involved identifying

key words, which would then be written out five or six times, vertically, in a notebook. The writing had to be accompanied by the saying of the word, letter by letter. The process was incomplete without a written test. Writing out the words from hearing, rather than by copying, afforded them access, albeit partial, to legitimate performances in satisfying ways. Whereas the state-mandated test produced them as ignorant and my reading sessions generated a community of learners, it was solitary, accurate writing that permitted them to produce themselves as legitimate learners.

Students further refigured the "lacks" characterizing their classroom instruction by foregrounding a crucial discarded object, the blackboard. Every Friday evening, the four girls enrolled in second grade crowded around the prolific hibiscus plant adjacent to the school verandah to pick wilting flowers. They took these flowers to the old, decrepit blackboard that stood in one corner of the classroom and wiped it down, crushing the flowers to release their sap. The tallest of the four, Emilia, stood on tiptoe to wipe down the top borders. I rarely used the blackboard. For one, it was so old that any writing was barely legible, even for a four-student class. Second, neither the state method nor my informal picture book methodology had much role for blackboard work. The state method was orality-centered and the picture book work was focused on a different material object, the picture book itself. In contrast, at the other ethnographic site, the neighboring non-elite English-medium school, literacy practices were regimented to produce functional language ability and students' primary classroom obligation was copying off the blackboard. While this task was undertaken with absolute sacrality, it was also marked by a banal disregard for the material object of the blackboard as well as ardent loathing for both practice drills and testing. This dialectic—disregard for a much-used object and practice at the non-elite English-medium school and longing for an object and practice in disuse at the uneconomic Malayalam-medium school—reveals the relational nature of desire. As Motha and Lin (2013) point out, desire cannot exist in isolation or out of a social context (p. 344). The next section analyzes formal mechanisms like centralized exams and teacher-training workshops to posit shame as the dominant pedagogic affect generated by state institutions.

EMBODYING SHAME

In this section, I describe two shaming incidents: the first from a state-mandated centralized exam that I administered to the four learners introduced earlier and the second from a teacher education

program I attended as a practicing teacher. I argue that, though the exam attempted to bridge the literacy-literary divide that produced two kinds of "literate-in-English candidates" (Ramanathan, 2005, pp. 58–59), it afforded students effective opportunities only for rudimentary literacy performances. Expectations of literary and oral fluency meanwhile engendered regimes of shame.

The exam unfolded in December 2014. After the usual morning assembly at St. Thomas, the head teacher handed me the question papers in a sealed brown envelope, ceremoniously, wrong side up, to display that the envelope was indeed untampered with. Indexing the larger scale institutions and practices associated with centralized exams, the envelope was marked with several bureaucratic notations: the district and the subdistrict where the school was located, the grade and subject of the examination, the name of the school, the number of answer scripts (five) and question papers (two) contained inside, a serial number, and another set number. Ironically, inside the elaborately annotated envelope was a pale green "Instructions to Teachers" sheet that began, "The teacher should create a child-friendly environment before starting the evaluation process," contradicting the numerical and administrative specificities of the envelope. The sealed envelope evoked discourses of fair and impartial evaluation of individual student ability, but the instructions acknowledged the enterprise of evaluation as always potentially unfair and partial. Meanwhile, the five-page answer sheet began with the typical demand for student and school name. The four students, all girls, spread themselves out on the single low wooden bench and began writing their names. They knew the performances expected of fair evaluations.

In keeping with the textbook format, the test was organized in the form of a singular narrative, which had four "narrative gaps" or "slots." Building on the characters in Unit Three, this newly scripted narrative had slots for a conversation, thoughts, a poem, and a description. The pale green question sheet, available only to the instructor, began in the following manner:

Interaction
- Do you like picnic?
- Which place do you like to visit?
- With whom do you like to go?

(Elicit free responses)

Narrative

Gopi nerathe ezhunettu. Avan nalla santhoshathillanu. He is going to visit zoo today. *Avan yathrakulla orukkangal thudangi. Appozhanavanorthathu* "Oh! I didn't say Manu about this." He ran to the telephone and called his friend Manu.

[My translation: Gopi woke up early. He was very happy. He is going to visit zoo today. He began preparing for the journey. Then he remembered "Oh! I didn't say Manu about this." He ran to the telephone and called his friend Manu.]

The answer sheet continued the question with a picture of two boys talking on the telephone followed by the conversation exercise in a fill in the blanks format:

ACTIVITY I—CONVERSATION

Write the conversation between Gopi and Manu.

Gopi: Hallo, Manu. Good morning.

Manu: . . . .

Gopi: How are you?

Manu: . . . .

Gopi: I am going to visit a zoo.

Manu: . . . .

Gopi: . . . .

Manu: . . . .

I had accompanied the students on a zoo visit the previous year and knew they would engage with the interaction questions enthusiastically. Unlike the survival English exercises described by Ramanathan (2005), the test sought to provide students with opportunities to develop their own "writing voice" (pp. 54–56). I quickly scanned the rest of the narrative. The second exercise, however, had nothing to do with the zoo trip; it introduced a puppy that Gopi was pining for in order to situate the mandatory "thoughts" exercise. The third narrative came back to the zoo trip, but in the form of the compulsory "writing a poem/song" exercise. It would require much affective management to turn off students' interaction and steer them to the next exercise. Even more would be required to transform students' interaction into monolingual written products. The task was daunting. I read out the narrative without using the "interaction questions" and moved into the conversation excerpt students had in front of them.

Me *(reading aloud): Hello, Manu. Good morning.*

Annu *(responds): Good morning.*

Me*: How are you?*

Annu*: evideyanennano? [Does this mean, where are you?]*

Me*: No. (trying again, pretending to initiate a genuine conversation) How are you?*

Annu*: I am nallathanennu enganna? [How do you say fine?]*

Emilia*: Beautiful.*

Jis*: Happy?*

Me*: Okay, "I am happy."*

I selected "happy" from the two English responses because "beautiful" would pose greater difficulties in writing. I waited for them to write.

Students copied "Good morning" from the conversation excerpt given in the answer sheet but got stuck with the next line, unsure of how to write "happy." Frustrated, Annu wrote, "Hallo" instead of "I am happy," again copying the spelling from the question paper. Ajin attempted "happy" and wrote it as "I am nppy." Emilia hesitated until Jis, on a sudden epiphany, wrote, "I am happy." Emilia copied the spelling from Jis.

I read the next line from the answer sheet.

Me*: I am going to visit a zoo.*

Annu *(to Emilia): Njan tourinu pova, ni varunno? [I am going on a tour; you want to come?]*

Emilia*: Nga [yes].*

Ajin *(recalling a phrase from a picture book we had read together): I am playing.*

Emilia*: Varunno ennu chodikku [Ask if she wants to come].*

Annu*: Yes, njanum veram [I will also come].*

There was no provision in the narrative to accommodate Manu joining Gopi on the trip. The "thoughts" question that followed were scripted around Gopi and a puppy who was introduced after the conversation.

Ajin started doodling.

Annu: *Nivaa, engane parayum? [How do you say come?]*

Ajin wrote "ox" in the slot after "I am going to visit a zoo." I thought she meant "ok." She continued writing. She carefully and painstakingly wrote "Larng is" on the next line, and finally "This is Mlpr" on the final blank line.

The others' answers were as follows:

Jis: *ork*

Annu: *I am going to visit a zoo. (copied from the conversation bit)*

Emilia: *I am halying. (I think she meant "playing")*
     Manu is come (I think this was meant to be "Manu, come")

The exam went downhill as we proceeded, each new section burdened by the frustrations from previous sections. The girls became fatigued, trying to produce words, sentences, and spellings they had not previously encountered (see Prabhu, 1987, p. 49). In the previous cohort, one of the students typically responded to these demands with rage and then tears. This cohort doodled, giggled, and meandered into play. But while the others talked and laughed, Ajin maintained an almost stoic silence that I found deeply metaphoric. Ajin's performance of writing was careful and painstaking even when the letters themselves did not come together into a legible form for others. Though reader uptake may have been negligible, the act was undertaken with utmost sacrality. As her activity indicates, (solitary) writing became legitimate language use; the answer sheet erased everything else. The answer scripts were to be marked by an "impartial" outsider, and there was nothing but nonsense awaiting her. Shame and anger flooded through me. I knew what students could do. I knew the books they read and their engagements with and critiques of these texts. Further, I knew the obsessive hope mothers invested in their children's education and how much they looked to tests to validate their dreams (Mathew, 2017). How could I face mothers with an answer sheet that recorded only absences?

This brings me to the second event, a 1-day mandatory teacher training program held a few months earlier at the District Institute for Educational Training. According to the program plan, teachers had to conduct a pretest with their students, which would inform the day's work. The pretest consisted of a picture of a temple festival along with

a prompt to write a description of the festival. When teachers came in for the program, the day's plan was explained to us. The morning session would identify "errors" in students' written responses, and the afternoon session would focus on teaching methods that would rectify these errors. Fourteen teachers from the subdistrict attended the program that day. We formed groups with three or four teachers each and were given student responses from another group. As we pondered the responses handed to us, a demure teacher dressed in a starched yellow cotton sari stated matter-of-factly, in a voice that carried:

> All four are the same. *Ithezhuthipichatha. Kuttiyude* level spelling mistakes—*il ninnu manasilakkanam.*

> [These are not "authentic" student responses. You can make out differences in student learning levels only from the spelling mistakes students made while copying down the teacher-made answer.]

She stated what was obvious but never spoken out loud in "official" spaces: Teachers administering the test had manufactured student answers to satisfy state demands for students' linguistic production. As teachers nodded in agreement, I sensed an opportunity to formally discuss some of the central issues teachers faced in their everyday teaching practice. As a resource person, I was familiar with the lead facilitator, Rani, and during tea break I shared the observation with Rani. However, I returned uneasy, remembering an earlier program where my efforts to bring in data from my classroom had come to a humiliating end. All the "mistakes" in students' written responses had been attributed to my lack of English usage in the classroom. As the day progressed, this deficit model resurfaced in individualized and collective forms.

After tea break, the groups were invited to present their error analysis. When it came to our group, Rani called on the teacher in the yellow sari. The teacher was asked to read out student responses. As noted earlier, the responses did not have many errors, except for spelling mistakes. So instead of an error analysis, Rani picked the sentence "We are going to a temple festival" and began asking why it was meaningful.

Rani: Why is the sentence meaningful?

Teacher: Structure

Rani (interrupting): Structure mathrameollo? "We are going to a temple festival" meaningful anu. Enthu kondanathine meaningful ennu parayunnathu? "Are going"; plural—"we"; "to"—a preposition; "a" village festival—article, indefinite article; enthu konde the paranjilla?

Specific ayittum teacher ariyanam.

Teacher: Preposition.

Rani (Correcting pronunciation): Pri-position alla, pre-position.

Rani: Why is the sentence meaningful?

Teacher: Structure

Rani (interrupting): Is there only structure? "We are going to a temple festival" is meaningful. Why is it meaningful?

"Are going"; plural—"we"; "to"—a preposition; "a" village festival—article, indefinite article; why didn't the child use "the" (instead of "a")? You have to be specific in your answer.

Teacher: Preposition.

Rani (Correcting pronunciation): Not pri-position, it's pre-position.

Delegitimizing both the linguistic (pri-position) and pedagogic (grammatical labels) performances of the teacher, Rani effectively silenced her. Throughout the rest of the day, the teacher in the yellow sari stayed quiet, invisible and yet hypervisible. One teacher's critical response was thus transformed into an individual lack, and a more banal collective lack was articulated in the afternoon session, when facilitators moved from the error analysis to the "solution" through a

demonstration lesson. Gita, the lead facilitator for the afternoon, explained to the assembled teachers:

> When we discuss the problems in the morning, we are convinced that lack of interaction in the classroom. That is why they [students] fail to use expressions, prepositions, ask questions. They fail to use these because we fail to use these in the classroom.

Students' "errors" were thus transformed into teachers' pedagogic and linguistic "lacks." Students did not produce (written) responses because teachers did not use (spoken) language in the classroom. However, all 14 teachers who attended the training program were English users. Most teachers had bachelor's degrees and a few also had master's degrees, and all their post-10th-grade education had been in English. Meanwhile, only about four of the over 160 teachers practicing in the district were fluent English speakers; they had been inducted as resource persons by the District Institute. I was one of them. Like me, the other three selected teachers also had migration experiences; two had spent considerable time in other Indian states and one frequently traveled to the Persian Gulf, where her husband worked. Unlike the more typical non-elite migration to labor colonies in the Persian Gulf (Mathew, in press), where Malayalam rather than English tended to be the interethnic language of contact (Gardner, 2010), we were embedded in privileged migrational linguistic geographies. The normalization of English proficiency as the ability to speak English made other more readily available resources invisible.

Gita then proceeded to her demonstration lesson where, interestingly, she did not use the state-mandated textbook. Preferring a more spontaneous interactional classroom to the scripted textbook, she chose a boat-making activity where she could deliver a continuous flow of teacher talk. Thus, though teacher educators did not affirm state materials, they did foreground orality. The demonstration lesson did not have any reading or writing tasks. The teacher development program was thus conceptualized with the twin assumptions that (1) oral interaction in the classroom is the primary teaching method and (2) student proficiencies in English can be documented only if they are written. Although both teachers and school families thus had ample reason to exit a school system that marginalized and humiliated them, their differential social locations were perhaps most poignantly illustrated by their varying costs of exit. To leave a system that shamed them, teachers in state-funded schools, most of whom were women, would have to court economic dependence and spatial immobility in a deeply patriarchal system. For students remaining at state-funded schools, the only exit option was dropping out of the

school system, which was too high a price for former slave-caste mothers whose hopes of climbing out of millennial poverty were almost singularly located in the education system (Mathew, 2017). For Dalit mothers whose lives were already marked by spatial segregation, economic deprivation, and sociocultural marginality, exit foreclosed the possibility of hope itself.

CONCLUSION

Kumaravadivelu (2003, 2016) writes that the concept of method is a construct in marginality that defines culture, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production. This article attempts a processual geography of method, describing the diverse claims, distributed performances, and affective landscapes that accrue as center and periphery. I began by detailing the ways in which reformed pedagogic materials reified resistance. The materials production process further revealed how privileged actors rearranged the terms of recognition from literacy to orality by activating a redistribution of economic and political capital. Block (2015) clarifies recognition as "an ideal reciprocal relationship between subjects in which one sees the other as an equal and also separate from it" (p. 2). English speakers became potential equals while the majority—English users who did not speak the language—became marginalized. Meanwhile, intellectual elaboration legitimized this shift as ethical and desirable. The specific articulation of misrecognition erased non-elites' literacy resources while maintaining it as an unattainable aspirational performance, advancing curricular violence through a radical-egalitarian stance. But classroom spaces have a life of their own that cannot be reduced to method; there is always an excess that escapes structural constraint. The quiet dignity of aspiration and desire coexisted with shame and loss. However, when redistribution becomes dependent on the (im)possibility of an "ideal relationship," it preserves and promotes marginality.

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