



NOVEL AND ITS FILM VERSION: AN EXPERIMENTAL TEACHING**Sanjay K. Khilare**

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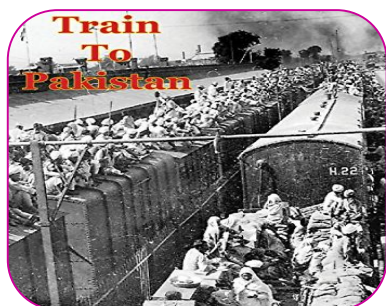
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ABSTRACT

The digital world has immensely affected the methods of teaching literature through its diversified forms of multimedia. The traditional methods remain useful but the introduction of audio-visual and multimedia techniques have supplied essential tools for effective learning in the literature class. It is a fact that learners are moving away from the printed text in the present era but the aural and audio-visual form of the text proved effective in drawing them towards the printed form for better comprehension. For instance, the audio-text and the adapted film assist the learners to appreciate the literary text with relative ease, if used innovatively. ELT experts are keen to employ this technique for effective teaching and to make learning an enriching experience. The elements of enjoying the text 'experience' and a sense of 'discovery' of meaning are crucial in ELT and the 'Filmic' experience enables the learners to appreciate the text in a better way. The film experience appeals to their senses and acquaints them easily with the setting and culture of the text. However, there is a danger of creating alienation effect on the readers hence, this method should be employed with proper technique and a detailed carved out plan that includes the selection of the scene, the differences in novel and film and the idiosyncrasies of the respective media so as to achieve the desired learning effect in the classroom. The present paper attempts to demonstrate how the film version of Train to Pakistan can be used effectively to teach the novel.

KEYWORDS: ELT, Methods, Novel, Film.**1. INTRODUCTION:**

Modern approach of teaching language and literature relies more on technology which includes using audio-visual forms such as films, youtube content and all other multimedia devices. The visual based teaching methods are not just in vogue but they are relatively effective these days. The learners feel comfortable with the visual forms of literature as they are equipped with and competent in using internet-based gadgets. They are endowed with the electronic gadgets from birth which makes them passionate to use them in all stages of life. It is acknowledged truth that the learners are going away from the written text and rather they are indulged in the visual based material of the text for appreciation. This has affected the



traditional methods of teaching literature to such an extent that students shun away from literature classes. Using the audio-visual method in the literature class is an effective way to maximise the learner's interest in literature teaching. However, the teacher has to adopt new techniques, activities and a detailed plan to teach literature through visual based material. The visual material such as documentary, film, edited scenes, film clips, drama form/clip etc. should be treated as enhancement in teaching and not as replacement of the target text.

2. PRINTED TEXT AND VISUAL TEXT:

Literature is traditionally classified into three types: Poetry, Drama and Fiction or Novel. Film emerged as an art form towards the end of the 19th century and designated as an independent form of literature in the 20th century. There are many parallels between novel and film and they influence each other in terms of plot, characterisation, narrative structure, and setting. Film embodies other key elements such as music, light, camera angle, mise-en-scene, montage etc. which provide film an edge over novel as it appeals to the senses of the learner. The concept of visualisation is at the centre of debate while comparing the responses of the printed text and visual text. While reading a printed text (for instance, novel), the reader visualises the written language and his/her cognitive faculties are quite active in creating the mental scenes on the mind screen. The writer presents a picturesque description which helps the reader to appreciate the text. However, the responses of the reader are often individual as per his/her socio-cultural background which plays a vital role in the appreciation of the text. On the other hand, the filmmaker provides actual images on the screen which limits the audience's mental faculties of appreciation. The audience need not visualise, instead s/he interprets those images. Thus, there remains a gap of meaning between the reading of novel and film. It is, therefore, the duty of a teacher to bridge the gap between the written text and visual text for better comprehension.

3. EXPERIMENTING WITH FILM AS TEXT :

Film is a social text that embodies visuals and signs which are deciphered by the audience, scholars and critics. It has close affinities with the literary genres of Drama and Novel from which it borrowed the form, content and technique. It is more like a novel and maintains the feature of repeatability devoid of any change in it. As film is closer to novel, it is often studied with novel rather than drama. The elements of varied narrative structure, the complex structuring of plot with varied experiments, the techniques of flashback and foreshadowing, the constantly moving setting, and the flexibility in time structure etc. are commonly employed in both the film and the novel.

Therefore, the present paper attempts a case study of a 'filmic' experience of teaching literature, particularly; novel entitled *Train To Pakistan* (1956) written by Khushwant Singh. The novel depicts the partition woes of India and Pakistan in 1947 along with the issues of communal riots, the socio-cultural upheavals and the aftermaths of partition which are portrayed objectively in the novel. The teacher has to adopt certain strategies while teaching the novel through film to the undergraduate students in order to make it more effective. The film *Train To Pakistan* (1998) directed by Pamela Rooks is an interpretative type of movie that retains the spirit of the original text. Certain scenes and events are modified by the filmmaker but overall it is the truthful presentation of the written text. The teacher should devise a strategic plan to teach the novel with the help of the film.

Methods of teaching novel through film vary in aspect, degree and technique as per the need of the literature class. However, the method of classifying the teaching activity in the following three types of activity gives an enriching experience to the learners:

a) Pre-screening Activity:

It helps the teacher to judge the learner's background knowledge and also assists in making and revising suitable plan/activities in the teaching plan. It includes introduction of the theme of the novel/film along with preparing a chart about learners' background consisting of the following three aspects:

Prior Knowledge (PK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the learners know the background of India-Pakistan partition? Have they read any short story/novel about partition? Did they watch any film/serial episode on partition? Are they aware of the tensions between the communities during partition and during later phase of Indian history?
Desired Knowledge (DK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The political motives behind partition. The aftermaths of partition. Encouraging them to read the stories of partition written by Manto, Khushawant Singh and others. Showing them the edited scenes of the Hindi Movie <i>Earth</i> (1998), and selected episodes of the T.V. serial <i>Tamas</i> (1988). The agonies of the migrants at the refugee camp and violent acts during partition (edited clips) as depicted in the popular Hindi Movie <i>Bhaag Milkha Bhaag</i> (2013). The actual pictures and video clips of the partition woes.
Acquired Knowledge (AK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The learners know the consequences of the partition. The agonies of displacement and migration move them. They are well aware about the dark side of India's Freedom moment. They have read ample amount of short stories/novels on partition. They have watched visuals of partition available in diversified forms They are ready to respond to the historical events and empathise with human pathos. They are motivated to read the prescribed written text.

b) While Screening:

The teacher identifies certain corresponding scenes of the novel and film and plans his activity so as to give learners an enhanced experience. For instance, here are certain practical tips administered by the researcher in an undergraduate class with greatest effect.

Selected Scenes	Novel	Film
Exposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opens with the description of the hot summer Demography of Mano Majra The narrator's comments on the communal riots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demography of Mano Majra with hints of the tension between Sikh and Muslim Opens with hanging scene Three important events depicted through flashback <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Jugga as the protagonist His father's hanging scene Hukum Chand's rise
Chronology of the three dissolves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robbery and Lala Ram Lal's murder at Mano Majra Jugga and Nooran's love-making scene by the riverside Hukum Chand and Haseena at the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jugga and Nooran's meeting at her home Robbery and murder of Lala Ram Lal Hukum Chand and Haseena

	<p>circuit house</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These events occur simultaneously – the gunshot is the conjoining element 	<p>disturbed by the Inspector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two inter-religious love stories against the background of communal riots
The arrival of the Ghost Train	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented through two perspectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The villager’s perspective- concerned but alienated effect creating suspense ii. Hukum Chand’s perspective – recollection through flashback creating heightening effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented through single perspective of Hukum Chand: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Direct confrontation as opposed to the flashback in novel ii. Psychological ripples after watching the unbearable sight of the dead bodies.
Ending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final three dissolves <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Jugga’s visit to the Gurudwara ii. Hukum Chand’s restlessness and helplessness to control the riots and his concern for Haseena iii. Jugga’s heroic act of cutting the rope, saving many lives on the train and his supreme sacrifice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parallel Ending : four events- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Refugees boarding on the train ii. The rioters’ trap to kill the people on the train iii. The moving train and the focus on Nooran iv. Jugga’s heroic act and his noble sacrifice for love.

c) Post Screening Activity:

This includes discussion and exercise which reinforce the learning.

i) Discussion:

The teacher initiates discussion on the comprehension based questions. Certain factual questions about the setting, character, plot, narrative technique etc. help the learners to comprehend the text in a better way. Exploring the literary devices employed by the novelist and the filmmaker also generate critical responses from the students. For instance, a brief discussion activity can be conducted on the use of ‘*montage*’ which is employed three times by the novelist but it has been eliminated by the filmmaker. These three instances of *montage* depict the fight between two geckos which represent the tension between India and Pakistan in general and the communal conflict between Hindu/Sikh and Muslim in particular. They represent Hukum Chand’s mental conflict which adds authenticity to the narrative structure of the novel.

But such a wonderful cinematic technique is missing in the film version. Instead, the filmmaker employs Hukum Chand’s mental conflict through voice-over narration.

ii) Exercise:

Students are encouraged to carry out the following activities:

- **Analysis of the selected scenes:**

The class can be divided in 4-5 groups and each group is assigned to analyse a particular aspect such as, Exposition, Characterisation, plot and structure, Setting, Narrative Technique, Climax, Ending of the novel and film etc. A participant from each group presents the analysis in front the class.

- **Performance:**

A voluntary group is assigned to write a script of a selected scene from the novel/ film and ask them to perform it after practice.

- **Writing a Review:**

The learners are asked to write a review of the novel and film at the individual level which should be supervised and examined by the teacher.

4. BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE NOVEL AND FILM:

It is observed that after watching film based on novel, learners understand the text in a better way. They respond to the questions well in the class. Their level of participation and comprehension also improve as the visual images are deciphered by them easily as compared to their encounter with the written text. Their understanding of the characterisation, narrative structure, development of plot, their familiarisation with setting, the flashback and foreshadowing etc. are enhanced by watching the events on the screen. The images, music, sound, narration, voice-over, psychological conflict etc. appeal to their mental faculties and they are encouraged to participate in the classroom discussion.

However, screening a film without the teacher's comments and questions is a futile activity. The novel and film have their idiosyncrasies as they belong to two different media. The film production is often motivated by commercial or artistic purpose and it is hardly made for academic or educational purpose. Therefore, the market forces tend to bring many changes in the film. These changes in the film may mislead the students towards 'misinterpretation'. In order to bridge the gap between the written text and the visual text, the learners should be made aware of the changes in the film version. A separate project may be given to a group of students to identify the transformations. For instance, there are certain changes in the present novel and film which are discussed briefly as follows:

a) Change in the Narrative Technique:

- The filmmaker employs the Internal Narrator in the film in the form of Hukum Chand as opposed to the third person omniscient narrator in the novel.
- There are three narrators in the film: Hukum Chand, Camera as Narrator and Nooran as opposed to Omniscient Narrator in the novel

b) Projection of the protagonist:

The novelist depicts Hukum Chand as the contender for the protagonist along with Jugga. But the filmmaker clearly presents Jugga as the protagonist from the beginning of the film.

c) Addition of a character:

The filmmaker adds the character of Telephone Babu which enhances the effect of the film.

d) Deletion of partition woes:

The filmmaker has deleted a number of casualties and events which are crucial to understand the sufferings of the partition.

5. CONCLUSION:

The novel is pictographic representation consisting of various cinematic techniques. The film version encapsulates the essence of the novel and makes it more mass based therefore, it appeals to the young learners as well. This kind of 'filmic' experience of teaching literature improves the learner's confidence and encourages them to return to the written texts. It also assists in developing their critical thinking and enhances their literary competence. Students have inherent interest in visual culture and they are by birth competent in technology therefore, the visual images engage their minds and keep them motivated and connected with visual images. The teacher has to empower them by providing richer learning environment and assist them in their exploration of new areas which will eventually enhance the teaching-learning process.

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