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ABSTRACT

Developing Texts and Cubicle Courtesy

The materials of the ODL system are accessible to a heterogeneous audience by virtue of their multimedia characteristics. The Internet, and all emerging media of communication have already destroyed existing notions of privacy and confidentiality. In our system, isolated learners are taught by equally isolated teachers! We need therefore to shed our 'cubicle' mindset-a cubicle gives the impression that since we cannot be seen, we are also not heard or identified. Our materials must pass the litmus test of being sensitive, sensitized and of course, academically sound.

Every medium of communication – from simple e-mails to elaborate multimedia presentations- has its own etiquette. Rather than merely transforming a printed text for educational purposes into a multimedia one, we can use the four cornerstones of success for every medium of communication – articulate expression, expertise, enthusiasm and audience-oriented delivery as our signposts.

The watershed period for the teaching/learning materials of the open system is now over and our best learners are now our most discerning critics. We have many lessons to learn from those who have been through the mill. For this, both verbal and non-verbal communication lines must be in place.

In this paper I have tried to draw lessons from some texts I have occasion to edit (from the disciplines of management, education, social sciences, pure sciences, humanities etc.), programmes and courses I have developed and or had exposure to. I have identified possible pitfalls in the path of effective communication with the 'unreached and disadvantaged learner'.

Printed texts, prepared possibly by experts outside the ODL system need guidelines about sensitivity in the use of terms implying physical disability, ethnic, cultural, religious, national, racist and political diversity, in addition to maintaining gender sensitivity. Therefore we must have access to acceptable, accepted terms for ethnic groups, religious or national sensitivities for example in order to brief our academic associates as well.

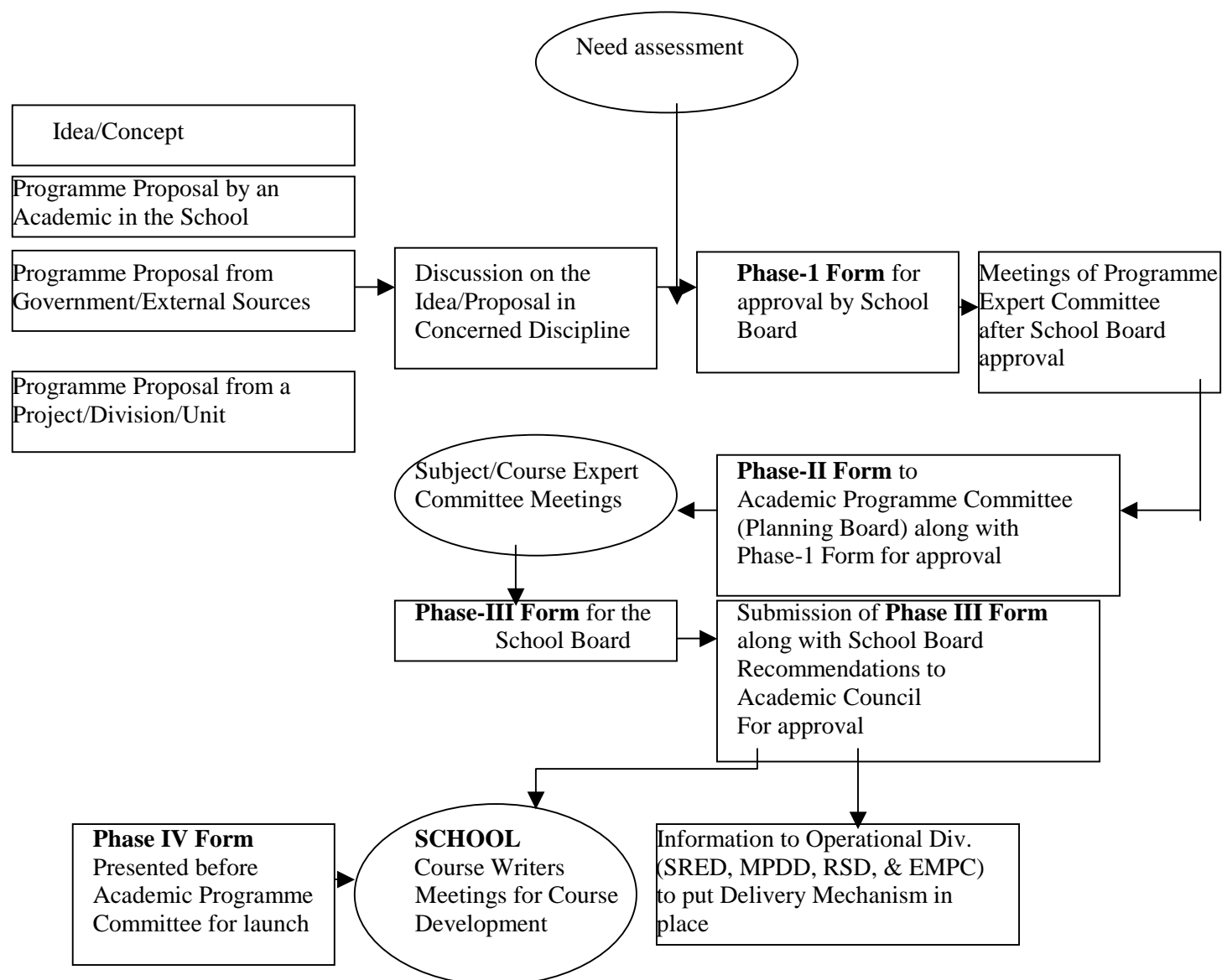
It is critical therefore that we now develop a reference dictionary, parallel to the "Broadcasting Standards Councils of Britain", or the "ITC Guidelines on music videos and program content", or the UNESCO Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language.

The via-media is to be attained interactively rather than prescriptively. Hence, I, propose as a first step, a questionnaire to be developed to provide the input for such a reference dictionary. I offer the scaffolding for such a questionnaire as **Appendix 1.**

Before proceeding further, I attempt a working definition-cum-explanation of the terms in the title of my paper.

Course Development, as distinct from text development is a fairly well-systematized process in which institutional norms are to be followed, in a linear fashion and relevant appropriate clearances obtained from various academic and administrative bodies of an academic institution like the School Board, Academic Council, Planning Board, etc. (see chart/slide 1)

NEW PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE FLOW CHART OF IGNOU



The process of text development: We are all familiar with the process of course development, right from the time when a proposal from an academic or faculty member, govt. or external sources, a project or division or unit is discussed in the concerned discipline group, approved by various bodies at various stages of its development (School Boards, Experts Committees, academic planning committee, course writers meetings), is finally approved by the academic council is then passed on to Operational Divisions to put delivery mechanisms or place. Text development is the minute working out of the units in the course including content, design etc.

Developing Texts Since the ODL system uses a mix of media in which to offer educational content, merely designing a syllabus or identifying books already available off the shelf does not serve our needs in totality. We need, therefore, to develop texts keeping a variety of concerns and approaches before us. The use of a variety of media, moreover, means that unanticipated, unidentified and even unidentifiable persons have access to our educational materials.

Cubicle Courtesy may be used in our context as an overarching term to indicate an evolved degree of sensitization, precision and courtesy in the use of language and content both. What does the term mean? I quote at some length as it provides the underpinning to my paper.

“The cubicle is a curious invention. It gives the illusion of privacy without actually providing privacy. Engrain that fact in your mind..... Be careful in the language you use with co-workers... Your coworkers may have sensitivities you’re not aware of.....Respecting ethnic and cultural differences, inadvertently insulting someone with a racial or ethnic slur is one of the fastest ways to completely embarrass yourself and hurt others. ...As people from different ethnic, cultural, religious and national backgrounds unite, you need a tolerant and inclusive attitude, which means watching your language and your actions. Learn the accepted terms for the ethnic groups, religions and nationalities of these with whom you work.... Don’t identify or refer to others by race or ethnic identity.”

The **Thomas Theorem:** At the end of the 1920s, W. I. Thomas and Dorothy Swaine Thomas proclaimed one of sociology's most influential ideas: "If people define situations as being real, then they will be real in their consequences."

The 'Thomas Theorem' has a corollary in how we perceive language. If we perceive it as being insulting or negative in connotation, then the practical consequence will be that it is insulting, regardless of whether either the denotation of the language or the intent with which it was delivered had been.”

When I first identified the issue of sensitivity to learner needs, language sensitivity in particular, I did not realize I was plunging into uncharted waters. While the first courses of IGNOU have even been revised, keeping a variety of parameters like country/context specificity, relevance of case studies to learner’s own context and needs, it was impossible to find material on what I have termed “cubicle courtesies” while developing texts.

I did however, encounter books and references dealing with the issues of **multiculturalism** in (conventional face-to-face) education, management textbooks, marketing strategies. This led me to study whether it was viable to sensitise academic teams of the ODL system too.

Review of Voices: The Nature of Texts

World wide, academics theorizing about common curricula, overcoming obstacles to academic leadership, the educational use of integrated technologies, and designing and improving courses and curricula higher education have been concerned about the issues to be kept in mind while helping to develop an effective instructional sequence of language and content both. What then, should be the nature of a text?

In the age of globalization, media reach and homogeneity, when the move seems to be towards a common culture, it is paradoxical to note that people tend to cling more to their own sense of cultural identity (Costa et al) despite convergence of superficial aspects of behaviour. I present some voices expressing a diversity of views.

- David C. Paris asks, “Should educational policies and practices be more cognizant of individuals’ different characteristics? Can there truly be a common curriculum that suits students from urban and rural areas, different family background, cultures and religions? Is commonality always desirable in a diverse society?”
- Millard is concerned about “Overcoming obstacles to academic leadership in the 21st century” in **Today’s Myths and Tomorrow’s Realities**. He wonders whether the equity versus quality debate is a myth or is there something to it after all. He also wonders if access to higher education is “a revolving door” or whether the entire exercise will lead to development of the learner’s potential, career fulfillment and contribute to the well-being of society.

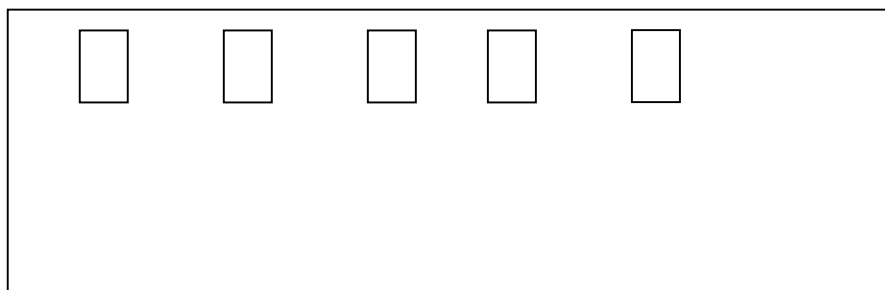
The ODL system in particular is often subjected to this scrutiny by the conventional system. Does certification alone, they ask, prepare a truly educated individual? The rapidity of changes in technology and the educational use of integrated technologies give Millard cause for concern.

- Millard also feels apprehensive that the faculty member is no longer primarily responsible for developing or delivering his or her own material but must work in collaboration with technician and instructional designers regardless of what technologies are involved.

This issue must concern us too in the ODL system lest we lay ourselves open to the risk of “technology in search of content and use” and in turn, create ‘electronically disabled’ learners..

A young, enthusiastic software developer of educational aids had demonstrated to us a programme for 8 std. learners on “Uses of Nitrogen”. He had the whole format in place, the mouse, the cute little cursor, the brightly-coloured text boxes, the animation – except that the content was missing! What was unnerving was that he had not even seen how many uses of nitrogen the students were taught .

Slide 2



And, in turn, do technology-driven texts become more insensitive to issues of historical and cultural sensitivities?

- To the issue of whether multi-media education is a surrender to the proponents of electronic aids in education, B N Koul and Janet Jenkins counter "...Learning theory supports the case for multimedia education, as this hybrid approach is called...but having access to two different media enables the teacher to present the same point in different ways with different emphases...Communication theory also supports the case for multi-media education".

They are silent, however, on multicultural education in the paper.

- Robert M. Diamond on the other hand, feels that "attitudinal data can be extensively useful in helping to develop an effective instructional sequence". This can be interpreted variously but the fact remains that psychology, emotion and cultural background influence how an individual learner perceives the text.

Sensitization: Issues of courtesy and culture

While searching for literature on the issue of text development anticipating and incorporating cultural and national identities, I discovered that some of the strategies for globalisation of courses adopted by the ODL system include sensitizing counsellors, adapting case-studies to give them an international flavour and intervening to update information via counselor orientation (personal interviews). Prima facie, the printed texts themselves were not modified from the point of view of regional or cultural acceptability in most cases where trans-national collaborations existed. Exceptions there certainly are, but they only prove the rule.

Interpersonal relationships differ from culture to culture. What is polite in one culture may be gross in another. Culture determines the use of language in each of its main forms-spoken language and unspoken language. Elements of culturally conditioned behaviour and language -- gestures, symbolism, idioms-- all add to, or take away from, a pedagogical text.

Cultural diversity is an issue that many multinationals like, Ford, Procter and Gamble and even the UNESCO have studied and successfully provided for in their workaday functioning. The UNESCO has brought out a document on gender-sensitivity in language with the rider that it is possible to be over-cautious and detract from readability. Where then is the line to be drawn? What must we be sensitive and sensitized to when developing texts which are accessible to distance learners in a great variety of modes?

- Is it iconoclastic to even suggest that multimedia-intensive courses are disadvantageous and even discourteous to learners who are "electronically-challenged."

- Seated in our “cubicles” do we realize that even distance learners can judge us, faceless as we are and reject us by dropping out if we have inadvertently projected an ‘all of us and none of you’ picture?
- Is, the printed word to be made supreme and all other media to be mere handmaidens? This, in a sense, would be tantamount to an admission that the **new technologies** are ‘invading’ rather than ‘extending’ the classroom.
- Is it not possible to develop courses where the visual, aural, even tactile information is crucial or even supreme?
- Do the constituents of a learner’s background --regional, cultural, ethnic-- matter?
- Are there differing approaches to the teacher as father figure / first among equals or facilitator in different cultures.

In order to offer courses and programmes that can be useful on an international level we must rigorously screen unintended slights and **cubicle ‘discourtesies’**. Why? Learners who come from different language and cultural backgrounds bring with them the baggage of ways of perceiving, reading meaning and responding. This cultural diversity is an important factor in how adults learn. “Psychologists realize that development (or lack of it) during adulthood was inextricably linked....with their social and historical contexts” according to Janet Jenkins. The SIMS of the open system are equally vulnerable to attitudinal differences. What then, are some of the aspects of culture?

Culture has many facets: Ways of expressing emotions, religious practices, language, customs, aesthetics...form various components of the phenomenon called **Culture**. (See Chart)

CULTURAL UNIVERSALS

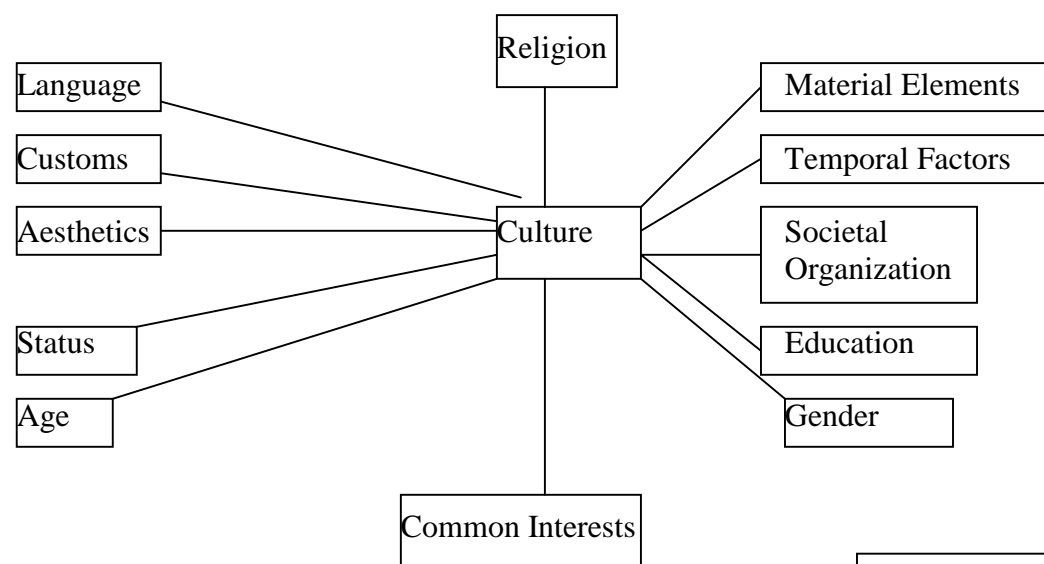


Chart from Manab Thakur et al

From the above chart, we can easily see that members with the same cultural identity have similarities of religion, customs, language, aesthetics and interests.

Issues in internationalizing ODL materials

Current **models for internationalizing** distance education programmes acknowledge the desirability of tailoring the subject matter of the courses for students belonging to different cultural groups. Evans and others have addressed the issue of “cultural appropriateness of course materials.”

““Problems arise when two cultures collide when they attempt to collaborate in knowledge creation” says Lam in ‘The social embeddedness of knowledge: Problems in international high-technology ventures’.

Placing **documents on the web**, during the process of globalisation (making courses available beyond defined territorial boundaries of the institution) has led to the loss of critical aspects of the contexts. This loss then has linguistic and semantic implications. Alastair Inglis suggests that the solution to change of (print) context is “providing additional explanatory material or providing diagrammatic or other illustrative material or enabling students to discuss their interpretations of course material”. Of course, problems arise when text developers have limited opportunities to either annotate or enhance the material themselves. As we are all aware, members of course teams have multifarious commitments and are exceptionally mobile.

An experience of a revised course:
IGNOU’s PGDDE was revised and rigorously vetted and augmented as per the COL guidelines and case studies taken from an international sampling were incorporated when the course was to be offered to students in Liberia. Subject experts from various countries like Canada & Australia, and identified learners gave feedbacks.
(Source: Director, STRIDE and faculty)

- **Distortion of knowledge:** words that have a certain meaning in one context carry different meanings in different parts of the world. The story about “The Nightingale and the Rose” in which the prince held a ball in December when the white rose was blooming was totally confusing to my Indian learners who know a ball as a plaything, roses bloom in December in India anyway.....
- **Risk of cultural imperialism** and homogenizing effects of globalisation: people interpret messages, depending on the context and their own life experiences in which they receive them. In our Creative Writing programme we had cautioned learners about the riskiness of “cross-cultural raids” ie writing about something without first-hand experience of it projection of superiority of cultures may inadvertently creep into innocuous texts which have not been under the microscope.

My Kampuchean students, for example, could not construct a narrative from a storyboard showing skiers lost in a snowstorm and sheltering under an overhanging ledge, only to discover in the morning that it was the portico of their hotel. They imagined they were carrying guns – and constructed the story appropriately.

Within nations too, learners members may interpret texts differently, since they are in effect, coming from different cultural contexts: In India, “minority community” means ‘Hindus’ in Jammu & Kashmir and ‘Muslims’ in the rest of India.

Manab Thakur lists some examples of cultural dyads:

- In India, itself, not to speak of other countries accessing our materials, spoken languages have split the nation into a diversity of cultures.
- In Belgium, there are 2 definable cultures based on the 2 languages, French and Dutch.
- Switzerland has 2 cultures to match its 2 languages – German and French.
- Canada had problems since it has 2 distinct cultures stemming from English and French.

- **Medium of instruction**

Culture often determines which medium of instruction learners are most receptive to. Generations of learners in one country may have been accustomed to regarding print as unquestionable. Alternatively, in certain cultures, the oral texts handed down for centuries were equally the voice of authority. Whenever any text is transformed from print to the visual media for example, unspoken language becomes critical for communicating (or miscommunicating) the message. Learners need to be sophisticated enough to absorb and imbibe the relevant educational meaning.

- **Body language, hand gestures, colours** are used to convey visually what was only in print. In addition, when texts are adapted for the visually disabled, hearing impaired etc. each of these adaptations provide additional inputs into the content, by intent or otherwise.

How else can miscommunication take place?

Body language: personal space differs from culture to culture and what is a display of affinity in one may be threatening in another.

Hand gestures can be very expressive in some cultures but they often have different or even contradictory meanings.

Hand Gesture Miscommunications

- Making a circle with the finger and thumb to signify “OK” can get you into serious trouble all around the globe:
 - In France and Belgium, this symbol means that you are worth zero.
 - In Japan, it means that you are asking for a bribe.
 - In Brazil, the gesture is grossly insulting.
- In most European cultures, it is considered to be most impolite for a person to put both hands on the table.

(Manab Thakur et al)

Color symbolism can be equally confusing.

- Green, for example, is popular in Muslim countries but symbolizes disease in most jungle-covered countries.
- Christian brides wear white but so do Hindu widows. (ibid)

TRANSLATIONS

Texts, or even entire courses are sometimes translated *in toto* even within the same institution. The issues raised by the simple act of translating are many, involving the conveyance of the sense of idioms, proverbs, indeed the whole gamut of addressing a new cultural diversity.

Where technical terminology is concerned, translators face the issue of providing the exact equivalent even in intext or end of unit exercises – simple words like *explain & discuss*.

Terminology then is an area where particular care needs to be exercised. To simply translate the meaning will not suffice as there are collocations and context linked implications.

Translations sometimes have, unintended hilarious results:

- Kellogg had to rename its *Bran Buds* in Sweden because the brand name translated as “burned farmer.”(ibid).

Idioms: Idioms lose their meanings when translated:

- “To murder the King’s English” translates into French as “to speak French like a Spanish cow.” (ibid)

While it may lighten the atmosphere to read that Coca-cola in Chinese means “Bite the head of a deed tadpole”, my purpose in giving these examples is to strike a cautionary note: texts must be either developed initially in the language in which learners will access them (virtually impossible) or be translated by someone familiar with the cultural nuances of translating items.

Translation software too can provide unintended grounds for hilarity. A host welcomed his guest by expressing his ‘Sir, I am deeply indebted to you’ but the software translated it to mean “Sir, I am heavier than you”

[It is, however, beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the **issues of translation** per se which would require an entire forum devoted to them]

- **Study patterns**

Last but not least, nations and cultures differ in the **how and even why people study** --while some like periodic assessment, others do well only in terminal examinations. The scheduling of exams too may have to be linked to agricultural timetables.

A {NET) study on curriculum design looked at learners from the USA, Germany and Japan. It was interesting to see that perceptions of the teacher’s authority, the purpose for enrolling in a programme of study, the average time spent in academic units before taking a terminal assessment and even the requirement of assessment at all, periodic or otherwise, differed radically from culture to culture.

Having considered the issues of cultural differences, is it possible or even desirable to have different texts for different countries? Or can assignments, exams, counseling modified while learning the basic text inviolable?

TEXT DEVELOPMENT

Texts can be developed in a variety of ways. Most **objectivist** approaches are concerned with transmission of knowledge and facilitating the process of learning that knowledge. As we know, conventional systems have long been using this. The ODL system, as increasingly the conventional one too, has adopted the **constructionist** approach--putting the learner at the centre, and the text designer as collaborator. In practice of course, the package put together has interactivity only at the counseling, tele- and video-conferencing stages when the course materials are appropriately interpreted but not modified. (I am not covering web-enabled courses here.)

The process of Text design is thus

Needs analysis→definition of learning outcomes →subject specification→determination of teaching methodology→materials design & product specification →creation→trial & evaluation→revision, and offer.
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Adapting Existing Texts/Brainstorming/Research

While developing courses, sometimes texts are not developed from scratch. Here the procedure is to select an existing syllabus as a model and adapt it. Others could be brainstorming or research. Of course, a combination or permutation of the above is equally a viable proposition.

The considerations in adapting texts are

- Their intrinsic value
- Feedback from learners
- Potential for maximizing, learner engagement.
- Potential for incorporation of additional items: sequencing, structuring and pacing the text

Assisting in Self -help Enhancement

The ODL system incorporates the idea of learner being progressively autonomous uses of new and powerful concepts, ideas, technology and terminology. Any texts developed for these self-motivated learners must serve the purpose of enhancing their self-help capabilities. Since open University learner are adults who have chosen to upgrade existing skills, knowledge, go in for personal enrichment or professional certification, the responsibility of the entire course team lies in meeting their voiced and unvoiced needs.

Anticipating Different Needs

This means, then, that academics must anticipate the diverse needs of the specially-or differently-abled. For example, it is easy to slip in an in-text activity which cannot be performed by the visually disabled, the hearing, impaired or the orthopaedically handicapped learner. One must be constantly on guard, to the extent that it is pedagogically realistic to do so.

We do not really need to re-invent the wheel in many of the cases. UNESCO has already said that if people everywhere show greater sensitivity to the implications of the language they use, a higher degree of precision will result. It should be remembered that imprecise word choices may be interpreted as biased, discriminatory or demeaning, even if they are not intended to be (**Thomas Theorem**).

Two problems that the UNESCO document on gender-sensitive language has identified are **ambiguity**, in cases where it is unclear whether the author means one or both sexes (e.g. the use 'man' and 'men': there is plentiful evidence that the word 'man' conjures up a male image, even when the intended meaning is generic), and **stereotyping** where the writing conveys unsupported or biased connotations about sex roles and identity.

Converting texts from one (print) medium to another must be kept in mind, particularly when we are dealing with differently-abled learners. It is my thesis that the various modes in which texts are presented need guidelines about the use of "racist terms, terms implying physical disability, ethnic, cultural, religious, national and political sensitivity in addition to gender sensitivity.

Texts must be usable by the visually disabled, the aurally disabled and one suggestion is that they must be sensitized to the orthopaedically disabled as well. This would particularly be true for in-text activities.

We, as academics, and as developers of teaching texts must have access to acceptable, accepted terms for the above groups.

While looking at the issue of causing unintended offence and what can one do about it, I have looked for precedents at the guidelines drawn up by the "Broadcasting Standards Council of Britain" and the "ITC Guidelines on music videos and program content".

In addition, some listings retrieved from the Net on "Multicultural Education Resources for Distance Learners" indicate that there already are books on "Teaching Asian American Students, Teaching Hispanic students, Teaching Muslim students and Teaching Native American students. (**Making Choices for Multicultural Education: five approaches to race, class and gender.**Christine Sleeter.) In a nutshell, what I would emphasise is that the regional and denominational backgrounds of learners/viewers need to be kept in minds by educationists.

Though developed for a somewhat different purpose, the **ITC Broadcast Rules (ITC Guidelines on Music Videos and Programme Content)** list for broadcasters the most common and crucial areas that are affected by and fall foul of taste and offence in some detail. Besides the obvious ones – sex, drugs, alcohol, tobacco misuse, knives, other sharp implements, swearing, the **Guidelines** also take into consideration unsuitable news footage, occult, politics and religion.

Programmes are appropriately scheduled too – "even after 9 pm great care should be taken to avoid offence". "Family Viewing Time" and "Family Viewing Policy" are important considerations. In fact the ITC's Programme Code concludes "The U.K. contains so many committees with different faiths and cultures, each with their own particular religious sensitivities. It is important for broadcasters to make themselves aware lest they give

unintentional offence. Stereotyping of racial minorities, use of humour based on physical, mental or sensory disability are all to be scrupulously avoided lest they give offence. IGNOU in particular has TV time in thousands of hours courtesy Gyan Darshan and can play a leading role in sensitizing learners too towards some of these issues.

In order to steer clear of cubicle ‘discourtesies’ via controversial terminology, we could remember that people are people, exercise care in use of names and titles, avoid labels, sexist terms, always making a conscious effort to speak inclusively, in short, listen to the things that slip out of our mouths. **Translation software**, in its infancy yet, translated “I am deeply indebted to you” as “I am heavier than you”.

The exponential rise in multimedia resources means that, increasingly, it is possible for people who may never have met to collaborate in developing texts for distance learners. Terms which are neutral, perfectly acceptable and transparent in one regional context may take on quite another hue on being transferred into another context. In fact, the context may only change with timing.

Lessons We Have Learnt

In our approach, then, three things have to be identified while developing an instructional sequence or text: the what, the who and the why. Before a course team gets to work, the proposer of the course has already done the exercise of identifying who his learners are going to be, what is the nature of the course- professional, technical, skill upgradation, personal enrichment etc. and to what end use is the learning to be applied to.

1. While developing a text, if it is possible, the academic team must know whether it is going to be used in a different cultural context as well (possible), and if so, the nature of the context (virtually impossible). However, with the ODL system extending its outreach exponentially, this is, to put it mildly, a contentious issue. Probably we can screen the entire programme/ course when it is to be used in a different context. (see reference to PGDDE).

Our proposed “Reference Guidelines/Dictionary” could come in handy here.

2. Language being a critical element in the development of any texts, be it spoken or written, verbal or non-verbal, the team must be sensitized to the nuances of the content and context. The **UNESCO Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language** recognize the fact that “Language does not merely reflect the way we think: it also shapes our thinking -----Hence the need to adjust our language when our ideas evolve. Language is a powerful too: poets and propagandists know this, as, indeed, do victims of discrimination.”.
3. Information about the media mix, insofar as is possible, must be provided to the course team. Sometimes, when a unit of information is offered in another medium, the audio-visual documentary for example, the producer needs to add visual cues, sound effects etc. which are the demand of his medium. The printed text may not

have made provision for these and thus the **process of text development is dynamic** rather than static.

Saxenian for example, feels that “ideas and experiences, designs and documents can easily become de-contextualized and thus difficult to transfer/transpose and replicate, especially when there is much *textual knowledge* involved.” He of course, makes a case for co-location. **Knowledge that has to be transmitted** to a learner needs to be “captured, codified, transmitted **in trans-cultural forms**”.

4. We have already seen that colours, gestures etc. do not have universality of meaning. This would mean that, firstly, there must be sensitization to the danger of literal translation or transference. Secondly, that when texts are being developed/adapted/created for distance learners, guidelines about the careful use of “racist terms, terms implying physical disability, ethnic, cultural, religious, national and political sensitivity in addition to gender sensitivity” must be in place.

5. What the new technologies are capable of doing is, literally, indefinitely extending the classroom as the place of learning and in the process actually increasing the interaction between student and faculty. Lest we find ourselves in a situation, while developing teaching/learning materials, of “technology in search of content and use” i.e. technology invading rather than supporting the classroom we need to exercise control over the *What*.

The apprehended “threatened faculty” scenario – a myth in fact because the new technologies in fact enable programme and faculty-sharing via teleconference, telephone-conference, etc.(Hugh Jenkins et al) must not cloud our vision. That our academic objectives must remain central, the role of the faculty member as key to content development, as authoritative in the subject field in question, and as facilitator must not be sacrificed to technicians are truisms, we recognise. At the same time, all the participants in the learning process must be adequately trained in the use of the various technologies.

Appendix 2: (Handout 2) At the time of discussion after the paper presentation

UNESCO “Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language”

6. Handling Cubicle Discourtesies:

Management studies tell us that it is possible to be unintentionally discourteous in ways that are culturally-determined. Concepts of time and punctuality are notoriously different in different cultures! Modes of address, public displays of emotion, work attire (formal/informal), attitudes towards women (roles of women in particular), work ethics (work hard play hard/ work hard, no play) can cause serious misunderstandings between collaborators. When selecting counselors, for example, an issue similar to “merger of work forces”, we need to see that our texts are appropriately interpreted and relevant case-studies used by them to reinforce teaching points.

□

The **Appendices** are meant as further references points for discussion. The **Handout** could be used after the paper presentation.

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HANDOUT 1

1. Examples of spoken language miscommunications

- When Braniff Airlines translated its “Fly Leather” slogan for its Latin American campaign, the translation became, “Fly Naked”.
- Kellogg had to rename its Bran Buds in Sweden because the brand name was translated as “burned farmer”.
- When GM’s theme, “Body by Fisher” was translated into Flemish, it read, “Corpse by Fisher”.
- GM’s Nova translates into “doesn’t go” in several languages.
- ESSO had problems selling gasoline in Japan because its name meant “stalled car” in Japanese.
- In Chinese, Coca-Cola means “Bite the head of a dead tadpole”.
- One company found too late that, in its marketing material, its “hydraulic ram” was translated into Italian as its “wet sheep”.
- A cigarette as claiming “low tar” came out “low asphalt”.
- “Computer software” is often translated as “computer underwear”.
- An American deodorant company, trying to introduce its product in Mexico, found that its slogan, “If you use our deodorant, you won’t be embarrassed in public” was translated to read, “If you use our deodorant, you won’t get pregnant in public”.
- Idioms also lose meaning when translated. For example, the expression, “to murder the King’s English,” translated in French as “to speak French like a Spanish cow”.
- Searching for a name for its new soap powder, one company tested the name in fifty languages. In English, the name meant “dainty”, but:
 - in Gaelic translation, it meant “song”;
 - in Flemish translation, it meant “aloof”;
 - in African translation, it meant “horse”;
 - in Persian translation, it meant “hazy” or “dimwitted”;
 - in Korean translation, it meant “crazy”, and
 - in a number of Slavic translations, it had an obscene meaning.
- Words that simply sound like other words can complicate languages. For instance, Channel No. 5 would have been a failure in Japan, if it had been called Channel No. 4, because the Japanese word for four (shih) sounds like their word for death. That association between our number 4 and their word for death, caused IBM to change the identification of its Series 44 computers for the Japanese market. For the same reason, a U.S. firm found that it couldn’t sell golf balls to the Japanese in its traditional four-ball package.
- Because the Japanese have trouble pronouncing “snap, crackle, and pop,” Kellogg advertises its Rice Krisples in Japan with the caricatures, “patchy, pitchy, and putchy.”
- A Romanian hotel posted a notice to its English-speaking guests that the elevator was not working. The notice read, “The lift is being fixed. For the next few days, we regret that you will be unbearable.”
- A sign in a Czechoslovakian hotel said, “Take one of our horse-driven city tours. We guarantee no miscarriages.”
- An Italian shop sign advertised, “Dresses for streetwalking.”
- There was a sign in a Paris dress shop window which read, “Come inside and have a fit.”
- A notice posed on the door of a Moscow tourist hotel read, “If this is your first visit to the U.S.S.R., you are welcome to it.” [28]

(from Manab Thakur et al)

APPENDIX 1:

The Questionnaire: issues and parameters

When I proposed to present a questionnaire at the question-and-answer session after my paper, I had not anticipated the magnitude of the task, I must admit! The foremost problem in designing any questionnaire whatsoever the format is the ethical one of delinking identifier and response so as to maintain confidentiality and yet retain reliability. The second problem was to make it sufficiently comprehensive and yet provide for serendipity. The third was to provide for multifaceted responses – observations, visual clues, ‘any other’, or ‘none of these’.

I therefore proposed to provide the scaffolding on which such a questionnaire could be constructed and administered with context and country specificity. The last and most important aspect in developing any questionnaire interactively is pretesting. I shall be happy to receive suggestions to identifying difficult and confusing concepts, instructions, format and design problems, and related items.

Since the best questionnaires benefit from

- a. the diversity of team members
- b. a brainstorming approach
- c. an ability to incorporate multiple views and different approaches so that problems are clarified and
- d. having provision for serendipitous questions,

I therefore propose the following scaffolding:

The scaffolding:

1. Team leader
2. 4 to 6 participants varying in backgrounds, knowledge of topics, variety of experiences, specialists and generalists and those who resemble target learners in age, ethnicity & educational background
3. generate broad areas (in which interference of learning occurs) some of which could be
 - phonological aspects (stress, rhythm, intonation, speech)
 - grammatical aspects (word order, pronouns, determiners, tenses, aspects)
 - lexical aspects (stronger→weaker, borrowing from mother tongue, spelling)
 - cultural aspects (language, sensitivity, regional & religious sensitivities, ethnic & cultural difference, attitudes of inclusivity/exclusivity, modes of address etc.

Such a questionnaire could be fleshed out collaboratively, pre- tested and then administered depending on the nature of the questionnaire developed.

Sunaina Kumar

APPENDIX 2 (not to be considered as part of my paper and only to be used for discussion)

UNESCO Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language

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Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language

Introduction

UNESCO is committed to justice and to the avoidance of discrimination in all its field of competence, notably in the area of education. Despite the existence of all the necessary legal instruments to enforce these principles, the majority of women and girls are still not benefiting from the educational programmes that do exist. The reasons for this are varied and complex. The fact is that women and girls cannot claim their equal rights as long as the economic, political, social, and cultural environments they live in are exclusionist. Concerned with the persistent discrepancy between internationally accepted norms of equality and the actual living conditions of women, UNESCO seeks to transform behaviour and attitudes that legitimize and perpetuate the moral and social exclusion of women.

The representatives of Canada and the Nordic countries raised the issue of sexist language for the first time at the 24th session of the General Conference (1987). A call was made for the avoidance of gender-specific language in UENSCO, and the General Conference adopted a resolution dealing with this issue. The General Conference went on to adopt an increasingly firm stance on the issue at its 25th (1989), 26th (1991) and 28th (1995) sessions. This development indicated a growing awareness that language does not merely reflect the way we think: it also shapes our thinking. If words and expressions that imply that women are inferior to men are constantly used, that assumption of inferiority tends to become part of our mindset. *Hence the need to adjust our language when our ideas evolve. Language is a powerful tool: poets and propagandists know this – as, indeed, do victims of discrimination.* (stresses added by me, Sunaina Kumar)

If people everywhere show greater sensitivity to the implications of the language they use, a higher degree of precision will result. It should be remembered that imprecise word choices may be interpreted as biased, discriminatory or demeaning, even if they are not intended to be. Two problems that arise are ambiguity, in cases where it is unclear whether the author means one or both sexes (e.g. the use of ‘man’ and ‘men’: there is plentiful evidence that the word ‘man’ conjures up a male image, even when the intended meaning is generic), and stereotyping where the writing conveys unsupported or biased connotations about sex roles and identity.

Since the booklet was first issued, the term ‘gender’ has come into general use. This is a term which should be treated with care. There is a tendency to employ it as a synonym, not to say euphemism, for ‘sex’ – no doubt because ‘sex’ can also be used to denote sexual activity. This entails a regrettable loss of the distinction between the two terms, a distinction which may be defined briefly as follows. A person’s **sex** is a matter of chromosomes: in the female, the 23rd pair consists of two Xs, and in the male it consists of an X and a Y. A person’s **gender**, however, is a social and historical construct and is the consequence of various kinds of conditioning. A transsexual, for example, might arguably be said to be of the male sex but of feminine **gender**. There is an important sense in which it is impossible to change one’s sex. Gender, however, is legitimately entailed a change of pronoun, e.g. the feminine gender ‘she’ instead of the masculine gender ‘he’. The term ‘gender’ continues to be appropriate in purely grammatical contexts. A language may have words of masculine, feminine or neuter gender, and indeed there may sometimes be a mismatch between gender and sex (*la sentinelle* in French, for example).

There is also a tendency to use ‘gender’ as a synonym for ‘women’s’. Care should be taken here to consider what is really meant. In fact, ‘gender’ is in danger of becoming such a vogue word that it becomes overstretched, both for the sake of the language and for the cause of sexual and gender equality.

The following examples, which have been amended and augmented in this edition, show how, with some rephrasing and careful attention to meaning, it is usually possible to improve the level

of accuracy while avoiding giving offence. Where both sexes are meant, it is always preferable to use a term which includes, or at least does not exclude, women.

We have also included some definitions of terms used in connection with the advancement of women and women's rights, and suggestions for further reading.

The aim of this booklet is not to abolish certain words or to alter historically established text; not is it suggested that these guidelines be followed to the letter. For the sake of equality, however, writers are asked in every case to pause and consider the alternatives.

Examples of phrasing: Ambiguity

Example	Alternative	Comment
1. Man's search for knowledge has led him to improve scientific methodology	The search for knowledge has led us to improve scientific methodology	Rephrased, using first person.
	People have continually sought Knowledge. The search has led them, etc.	Rewritten in Two sentences
	The search for knowledge has led to improvements in scientific methodology	Rephrased, leaving the agent implicit.
2. The use of experiments in psychology presupposes the mechanistic nature of man.	The use of experiments in psychology presupposes the mechanism nature of the human being.	Noun substituted.
3. Man, mankind	people, humanity, human beings, humankind, the human species, the human race, we, ourselves, men and women, homo sapiens, one, the public, society, the self, human nature	In this group of examples a variety of terms may be substituted.
Man's achievements	human achievements, achievements of the Human species, achievement of our ancestors	
The average man, man in the street	the average person/individual, people In general, one	
Primitive man	primitive people or peoples, primitive human Beings, primitive men and women	
To man (a project, etc.)	to staff (a project), hire personnel, employ staff, operate, run, administer	

Manfully	valiantly
Committee of wise men	committee/panel of counselors, eminent persons, advisory panel

Example	Alternative	Comment
'Man and the Biosphere' (programme)		Existing titles of programmes documents, etc. cannot as a rule be changed, but it is advisable to avoid generic man in new titles.
'History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind'	'History of Humanity'	This has been the official title since 1992.
Manning table	staffing table	
Manpower	staff, labour, work force, employees, personnel, workers, human resource, human power, human energy	
Man-made	artificial, synthetic, manufactured of human construction, of human origin, human-induced, technogenic, machine-made	The appropriate term will depend on the context (avoid man-made unless males alone are involved).
Brotherhood of man	human fellowship, human kinship, solidarity	
Brotherly	comradely, friendly, co-operative	
Man and wife	husband and wife, wife and husband	
Man-months	work-months, staff-months	
Businessman	business manager, executive, head of firm, agent, representative, business traveller ; (pl.) business	the appropriate term will depend on the context.

	community, business people	
Cameraman	photographer, camera operator; (pl.) camera crew	
caveman	cave dweller	
chairman	chairperson, chair, president, presiding officer	
Example	Alternative	Comment
Craftsman	craftworker, artisan, craftperson; (pl.) craftspeople	
craftsmanship	craft, craft skills	
draughtsman	designer	
fellow countrymen	compatriot	
fireman	fire-fighter; (pl.) fire crew, fire brigade	
foreman	supervisor, superintendent	
gentleman's agreement	honourable agreement	
landlord	owner, proprietor	
layman	layperson, non-specialist, non-professional, novice	
ombudsman	mediator	
policeman/men	police officer, or (pl.) just police. 'John Smith is a policeman' but 'it is the duty of every police officer...'	
Salesman/girl	shop assistant, sales assistant, shop worker; (pl.) sales staff	
spokesman	spokesperson, representative, official. 'Ms X was the spokeswoman' but 'The delegation shall appoint a spokesperson/'	Use spokesman or spokeswoman

representative', etc.

as appropriate when a specific person is intended. Use non gender-specific term when reference is indeterminate, i.e. to post or function. This

Example	Alternative	Comment
		applies to '-man' terms generally.
Sportsman	athlete, sportsman/sportswoman	
Statesman	political leader, stateswoman (where Appropriate), public servant	
Statesmanship	statecraft	
Workmanlike	serviceable, well-made, well executed, skilful	
4. The teacher is usually appointed on the basis of his training.	Teachers are usually appointed on the basis of their training.	Changed to plural
5. The learner should not be cut off From his roots; his own culture And traditions should be Respected.	Learners should not be cut off from their roots; their own culture and traditions should be respected.	Rewritten in plural.
6. The individual is strongly influenced by his family's values.	As individuals, we are strongly Influenced by our families' values.	Pronoun substituted, his omitted.
7. There were 16 girls and 16 boys in the class. Each child was to Write an essay on his favourite Hobby.	Each child was to write an essay on his or her favourite hobby.	Change his to his or Her; however, use sparingly to avoid Monotonous repetition.
8. Anyone disagreeing with his statement should give his reasons.	All those disagreeing with this statement should give their reasons	Another possibility would be 'Anyone... Should give their reasons' since use of

they as a singular pronoun of common gender is widely used and has sound historical antecedents.

Examples of phrasing: Stereotyping

Example	Alternative	Comment
1. This woman's husband lets her work part-time.	This woman's husband 'lets' Her work part-time.	Punctuation added to clarify Location of the bias, that is, with husband and wife, not with author. The word 'sic' may also be inserted. Always consider the context. In some cases the example quoted may be literally accurate.
	The husband says he 'lets' His wife work part-time.	If necessary, rewrite to clarify as allegation.
	This woman works part-time.	The author of the example Quoted intended to communicate the working status of the woman but inadvertently revealed a stereotype about husband-wife relationships.
2. John and Mary both have full-time jobs; he helps her with the housework they share the housework.		The example quoted implies that housework is a duty for a man. The alternative is still comprehensive enough to designate a traditional situation, since it does not imply that they necessarily share equally. Whether they do can be made clear by the context.
3. Research scientists often neglect their wives and children.	Research scientists often Neglect their families	Alternative wording acknowledges as well as

men are research scientists

4. transport will be provided for delegates and their wives. Transport will be provided for Delegates and their spouses or persons accompanying them.
5. The survey shows that Americans of higher status are less likely to have fat wives. The survey shows that American men of higher are less likely to Have fat wives

Example	Alternative	Comment
6. The doctor...he	Doctors.. they, the doctor.,she	Be specific. Change to plural if discussing women as well as men or use he/she (the form 's/he' may be used in moderation).
7. The nurse...she	Nurses...they; the nurse...he	
8. Woman doctor, male nurse	Doctor, nurse	Specify sex if sex indication is relevant to the context.
9. Mothering	Parenting, nurturing, child-rearing, childcare, affection (or specify exact behaviour); mollycoddling, fussing (if pejorative sense is intended).	Noun substituted. Fathering, in addition to its sense of an act of procreation, now has a Meaning parallel to mothering.
10. Men and girls	Men and women, women and men.	Use parallel terms. Of course use men and girls if that is literally what is meant. In casual use, girl is acceptable as parallel to guy/bloke/chap, etc. (In the United States, guy may refer to both sexes).
Girl	woman	Use woman is reference is to An adult.
Girls	Acknowledge their status, whether Secretaries, typists, keyboard Operators, office assistants, a team Etc.	All of these may also be male.
11. Housewife	homemaker, consumer, customer,	Be specific according to

	shopper, 'housewife'.	Context. The person designated need not be female.
12. Lady	woman	Use lady only as a parallel to gentleman.
13. Emasculated	weakened, enfeebled, diminished, toothless, tame, watered-down	

Example	Alternative	Comment
14. Effeminate	delicate, feeble, fussy, soft, languid, affected, gentle	
15. Ambitious men but aggressive women	ambitious women, men, people, individuals; aggressive individuals, people, women, men	Some adjectives, depending on whether the person described is a man or a women, connote bias. The examples illustrate some common usages that may not always convey exact meaning, especially when paired as in column 1.
cautious men but timid women	cautions men, women, people; individuals; timid people, men, women, individuals	
Outspoken men but strident/shrill Women	outspoken individuals, women, men, people; Strident/shrill men, women, People, individuals	
Emotional men but hysterical Women	emotional men, women, people, individuals	
16. Forefathers	ancestors, forebears	
17. Founding fathers	founders	
18. The student's behaviour was typically female.	The student's behaviour was.... (specify)	Being specific reduces possibility of stereotype bias.
19. Authoress	author	Avoid-ess wherever possible. It is often pejorative or

Poetess	poet	Perceived as such
Steward/stewardess	flight attendant; (pl.) cabin crew	
20. Tomboy	intrepid child, boisterous child	
21. Woman driver	driver	

Examples of phrasing: Title and forms of address

Example	Alternative	Comment
1. Mr. and Mrs. John Smith	Jane and John Smith, Mr and Mrs. Smith,	In the example in column 1, the wife's identity has been Wholly absorbed by her husband's.
2. Miss, Mrs	Ms	If possible, ascertain which courtesy title the woman herself prefers, otherwise use Ms (of which the accepted plural is Mesdames). A woman's marital status is very often irrelevant to the matter in hand (participation in a meeting, etc.) and there is no masculine equivalent of Miss/Mrs.
3. Chairman	Chairperson, chair, president, Presiding officer. When addressing the individual: Madam Chairperson, Mister Chairperson	When new bodies are set up or the rules of procedure, etc are updated, chairperson, chair or president should be used in place of chairman

