

Nazir-ul-Haq



Speaking Urdu, Nazir-ul-Haq, final leader of the Birmingham ILT (Industrial Languages Training) team of the mid-1980s, offers memories and reflections - judiciously supplemented with poetic quotations - on the work of the local unit, as well as the national service, during that time. Part of the "Multilingual Memories: Birmingham 1984" project.

The intricacies of his speech, together with a characteristic high level code-mixing style, pose a distinct challenge for automatic translation, so for non-speakers of Urdu, the main thrust of Nazir's comments, thoughts, and arguments are roughly translated into English below. Live links will take you direct to the different sections of the video.

[00:09](#) Introduction

Good morning! Assalamu Alaikum! Sat Sri Akal! Namaskar!

My name is Nazir ul Haq.

Today I will share some of my experience of working in ILT services. My focus will be on its evolutionary journey from language training at workplaces for ethnic minorities & black people towards equal opportunities.

So the era in which I joined ILT...

What is ILT? Industrial Language (Training) Services which was set up at the national level.

I will record a separate clip about it, i.e. when did it happen? How did it happen? And what were its effects on the people of the black community and what was their contribution in it?

In that video, I would like to talk about the program that ILT was running at the time, that was very flawed in my mind, and the methodology that it had was completely wrong, which had a negative impact on our white colleagues, comrades, and associates.

They were being named and shamed, so I intervened on it and wrote a paper, which was published at the national level.

So I will talk about that. So what I am starting at the moment, this is the experience that I gained after joining this industrial service, and in this, I will share it with you at different intervals.

02:04 ILT 1980s role

Good morning! Assalamu Alaikum! Namaskar, Sat Sri Akal!

My colleagues! Greetings and salutations to all the colleagues of ILT!

In this second video I would like to talk about ILT...

How it was established, and what its brief was...

Basically ILT was an offshoot of industrial race relations acts.

In 1976, let's say ethnic minorities or black people as we used to call ourselves at that time, as part of the struggle, there were immigration laws.

There were movements that went on regarding them. As a result of this, the Race Relations Act came into effect, under which the local authority, the Community Relations Council were given powers by central government to offer something for ethnic minorities or black people, so that their empowerment, let's say their inclusion in the job market or in society as a whole, could be made viable.

So in this regard, at the national level, I think from 74 for 10 years, this scheme was established in every region.

For example, we were in Birmingham. Others were in different colleges or schools in Walsall and the Black Country. People joined from there and we had meetings at regional level and also at national level.

So in the beginning, the people who joined it were mostly linguists and very few from my background, meaning I joined this service after getting a degree as a sociologist from the University of Birmingham.

And I was registered for a PhD at that time at the University of Birmingham, but during Thatcher's era, that whole system had deteriorated, they destroyed all the social services departments. In every university. So, my PhD could not be completed as a result,

So when I joined ILT, it was going through that period, when its education programme was training workers in ESL, English as a Second Language.

Other linguists who had joined it, through their experiences, were equipping themselves with different methodologies that were towards Equal Opportunity.

That was the trend, and in this, I, along with my colleagues from Birmingham, used to go, and first prepare, let's call it a feasibility report for each local authority. And according to what they needed, we, two or three people, would train all the local authority officers for a whole day on that.

So, the experiences that were there during that period, I will share with you.

The method that was being used was the American psychologist Judith Katz who actually considered racism as a mental problem.

Someone has written in their mind, some prejudices. That was the method:

Prejudice plus, you know, something equals racism.

If this kind of language was being used, then I would intervene and will discuss it. Thank you very much!

06:16 Memory and reminiscence

“We also remembered the colourful celebrations

But now the decorations have become odd.”

“Celebration” (bazam) means that, friends, now to arrange a happy gathering with you.

So this verse means that I remembered a lot of our method of celebrating with friends and relatives.

But in the state I am in today, they say that all the decorations have become odd. All this which was the era of beauty or, better say, the era of feeling that has become towards memory loss, meaning the tendency that in the era that starts at the stage of diminished memory, that is the era of today.

But with this chapter of ILT that has started, or the recording about it that my dear friend and kind colleague Gordon Wells has started, now I can gradually say that those things I am emphasizing, that these memories are coming back.

So what I will record today is basically something about myself, where I was born, how I came here, but I had said at the beginning that I, most of the time, will not develop my memories about where I came from. But since there is also a requirement that I say something about myself, in this regard, I will try to briefly describe my journey here, that is, let's say... Apart from academic and intellectual matters, I mean any contribution I have made to the community, or whatever I have learned. Again, there is a saying of

Sahir Ludhianvi: Whatever the world has given me in the form of experiences and lessons, I am returning, so these are my experiences of life. I hope I will share this with everyone. Yes, I had forgotten to say good morning, Sasri Akal, Assalamu Alaikum etc. etc. at the beginning, but let's say this is the beginning of a series, so I left it out.

So thank you very much! I will say something about myself in the next one or two clips, and I will also share with you the memories that are coming back about ILT. Thank you very much.

09:53 Personal journey

Asalamu Alaikum! Good morning! Satsri Akal and Namaskar! My ILT colleagues!

And my colleagues...

In today's clip, I will record some memories about myself and also some aspects of ILT that were left.

I will also share my experiences with you. I was born in the divided state of Jammu and Kashmir, in the Pakistan-controlled area, I was born there, in a small village.

And I came here to the UK in the sixties. My father was here, and I was here during that time, I mean I arrived in the UK in the sixties, so for the first four or five years I had to struggle, to adjust myself to this environment, and to call my family and children.

So when I had to wait for that five years, then the children and family came, I settled them, so to put it differently... I went through jobs and I mean the duties that were my family's, I did all kinds of jobs to fulfil them.

But finally I registered at the University of Birmingham. For my first degree and PhD, I have mentioned earlier that because of the political situation that was there, that is, the changes that have come in the UK since the era of Margaret Thatcher, I could not complete my PhD due to that.

But I spent four or five years in ILT, at a stage when our unit's director resigned and encouraged me to apply for this post. So, I did. I was selected as director of the unit.

So I spent three or four years with it, and finally what happened was that, when the ILT term ended, which was for a period of I think 10 years, started under the Manpower Service Commission, let's say the scheme was then taken over by our college administration.

They disbanded the different units, and tried to adjust us in different areas. But I resigned, and then I started a business after a while. I opened a restaurant for my family, and in Wales I took a small farm and started raising sheep and goats.

I tried that for five years, and after that the circumstances... let's say the political and economic conditions of Britain came to a downturn. There were a lot of losses in business, so that my project also flopped.

So then I went back, that is, I became unemployed, but in the meantime I got an offer from the University of Birmingham that, well, we have a program, if you want, join it. So in 1994, I started working in the Applied Social Studies Department of the University of Birmingham.

And that was a special course that we used to teach, MA and BA as well.

There was a diverse, that is, multidisciplinary team. Some people, let's say, they worked in social work training before, or they are social workers themselves. After that, they got an education degree and got a lectureship, and some people, like me, for example, there were two or three friends and colleagues in this team, who were sociologists.

So we had this input, in other words, let's say expertise, amongst those who joined. So that was also a good experience for me. And I spent 10-15 years in this service and retired. So I will present all these experiences to you, in the upcoming clips. Thank you very much.

14:57 Equal Opportunities: appreciation of colleagues and contributions

Assalamu Alaikum! Good morning! Namaskar! Sat Sri Akal.

In this upcoming clip, I will record some of those memories, with those people from ILT with whom I spent time.

It was like a family environment. We, that is, the Equal Opportunity project that we had, when we changed the direction of Language in the Workplace, then there were other people with us, who after ILT... were appointed in local authorities besides... so that Equal Opportunities could be promoted.

So for example: Erica Davis was in the Midlands region, in Redditch, the officer for Equal Opportunities. She invited us and together we first surveyed the entire Redditch area, which was a local authority department, and made a feasibility study. After that, that programme started. In addition, among those who delivered Equal Opportunites, there were two or three colleagues. So I will not consider this memory complete without mentioning their names. For example, in Birmingham, we used to go to deliver with two or three colleagues, including Ingrid from Dudley, Ingrid Widdows, and Anita Bhala, who was a lecturer in Walsall. But she was in our region, and we basically used to go with two or three colleagues and deliver for the whole day.

It is also very important to mention those colleagues here, who we lost during this journey, or after it, forever. Zohra Ali Shah, who came from India, and she was a lady in

our unit full of insights. And Clarice Brierley, who was our director. She encouraged me to apply for her post, which I got.

So these were unique people, we were like a family. And these memories when I look back on this period from time to time, let me tell you that it is very sad that we lost them. For example, Zora Ali Shah and Clarice Brierley parted ways with us.

So about this, Ghalib has a verse in one of his poems, which I will recite here.

“Then those dear ones and relatives who broke the oath of loyalty on this side of the horizon, on this side of the twilight, lost in solitude, fell asleep in solitude, the thought of them suddenly takes a pinch in my heart, makes me cry, absolutely makes me cry.”

So these were the people who worked with us like a family, we did it together as a team. And they parted from us. Often when I miss them, I had been meeting Zohra, post-ILT she used to come here because her mother was from Scotland. And she kept coming every year, and at the last stage, I had an appointment with her. But the meeting could not happen. Similarly, Clarice Brierley also fell ill, so I went and met her. But when the final parting came, then those meetings could not happen, let's say that I miss them very much. And I prayed for their forgiveness... I will do everything, God willing.

So next time I would like to say more about ILT, finally. Thank you.

19:35 Summary critique of ILT approach to racism awareness and anti-racism

Assalamu Alaikum! Good morning! Sat Sri Akal! Namaskar!

Now in this final session... I will talk about the difference between racism awareness and anti-racism in the methodology of ILT again today.

So when I joined the scheme, at that time the model that was running was of racism awareness...

It was a model from America, which was associated with Judy Katz. And the people who were running it were neither linguists, nor did they have any sociological background. They were people who, let's say, in the black community, in the Asian community, in the Labor Party, to establish their status, let's say, in order to do equal opportunity there, they had achieved some position. They were running this.

So I was surprised that these people who have no background, are repeating this parrot fashion. So, the essence of this model is that prejudice plus power equals racism.

So, instead of viewing racism as an ideology constructed on fictitious psychology and sociology to justify empire, on a fictitious basis - the data came later - British psychologists or sociologists exposed it - Colton was from America, Eysenck from Britain, these were psychologists, who went to people from Africa and different

countries, their physical features, let's say, were linked to intelligence by measuring them, all of which was exposed repeatedly.

So these people were running (the programme), whereas in my training, there is also critique. There were people who were neither linguists nor did they have a background in psychology and sociology, so those black caucuses who were from the Labour Party and they had their own, let's say they worked in different fields, they were in charge.

So when I saw this “prejudice plus power”, that is, absurdity, when my direct experience of racism was from the skinheads - powerless, that is, marginalized working class people - who were the extreme version of it, then I said to them, that this method is wrong, because the focus was on the entire team, our white colleagues - they used to name and shame them proudly...

The point is that there was paralysis amongst our white colleagues. This was totally against my experience, in the community, in the society, where we had jointly run movements against racism, against fascism, all white and black, that is, jointly.

This was the complete opposite.

So I challenged that, and then again regularly, that is, the new model was that racism was an ideology, let's say, to justify that colonial system that was British, and there were people who collected this data and promoted a ridiculous ideology. And later they were exposed.

So that's why I will say here that the people who were in charge - the only qualification they had was - what is your background? “Oh...300 years of oppression as a colonial subject of British Empire.”

So I was really amazed that these people had power that, let's say, was being misused. So in this I challenged again. And then this model of racism was explored... How did this happen? From the slave trade to the current situation that exists in British society... Let's say it is prevalent to an institutionalized extent.

Against this with great effort, we presented a new model.

Thank you very much.