

A Day at One World Camp

by Haroon Habib



The uncommon gathering was organised by two Non-governmental organisations — 'Bangla-German Sampreeti' (BGS) and 'Society for Peace and Development' (SPD). I was not a familiar face to those young foreign friends and even to many of those who were there from my own country. As a believer in universal love, I looked at them from a distance, and with deep interest, as they cut jokes among themselves, exchanged simple gifts, played together, sang in chorus, danced in groups and gossiped.

My trip to Santosh was organised by my poet friend Ashim Shaha, who looks after the cultural section of the 'Bangla-German Sampreeti'. But Ashim was too busy a man that day as he had to perform many a responsibilities to organise an evening cultural function for the delegates. However, the gap was partly filled by a fine young woman, Ms Seema Roy, who is an official of the BGS. In fact, it was Seema who took me to all corners of the campus, introduced me to charming Lisa Van Gerven of the Netherlands, Park Sueng Keuk of Korea, ever smiling Jiri Rezac of Germany, Brigitte

Schiessl and Torsten Grasseier of Germany, Masaddus Catherine of Pakistan etc.

Why such a gathering was held in a country like Bangladesh? In every sense, the organizers believe, Bangladesh, a new and developing nation, is the ideal place to hold a symbolic One World Camp with the people of diverse economic, cultural and religious backgrounds. I spent my time in the camp gossipping with a smart young girl from Congo, an elderly fine lady from France and friends came from Germany.

From February 3 to 12, the Santosh University campus housed a miniworld whose residents, most of them from host Bangladesh, discussed and shared a wide range of topics on youth, culture, inter-religious harmony, development,

peace and non-violence. They also worked together worked fields, did a bit of gardening, cleaned surroundings, planted trees and levelled roads. They also visited villages, village markets and dairy farms.

Father Claus, adviser of the two NGOs which organised the gathering, was tremendously busy supervising everything. Also deeply involved was writer Ahmed Safa, General Secretary of the BGS in making the multi-coloured human gathering a success. A similar meet is going to be held next year at the same venue.

The road between Dhaka and Tangail is rough. When I was coming back to Dhaka, I thought, the journey of these boys and girls was not smooth either. I wished them success in whatever they may be seeking travelling far from their homes and societies.

THE barbers' scissors and police batons are on a collision course in Iran and both appear to be dangerously poised against each other. Since scissors are deployed by the barbers only to clear hair jungles from human head to lend it the look of trimmed garden, they are not strong enough for use as weapons to withstand the lethal thrust of police batons which are no instant connoisseur of art of artefacts and are not known to approach the target with apology or entreatment. They are punitive and meant to destroy.

The Iranian police recently warned their barbers against giving fashionable haircuts to young Iranians. The Iranian authorities, alarmed by hair styles of western youths who duplicate women at least by hairstyles, have asked all school students not to follow what they alleged the degenerated western youth in hair styles. In their place the Tehran authorities have figured out local variety of hair styles. The right to choose any hair style in exercise of democratic rights will remain suspended until alien influence is wiped out. The Iranian barbers consider this restriction as an infringement of their artistic pursuit if haircut falls under any artistic category.

The Iranian barbers, the community often claiming style setter artists with razor-scissors as tools and human head as canvas, angrily reacted to the order infringing their rights. They vowed to avoid giving what they claimed decadent haircuts. The official reaction to this vow was still stern and sharper. The police chief asked inspectors to check whether haircuts conformed to official 'blueprint' limiting length-breadth, thick-thin regions or bushy or grassy

Distant Drum

M N Mustafa

zones of hair. It was not however clear as to who was accountable for the haircut, the wearer or the barber.

The confrontation here is not between the 'hair owners' and the Iranian fundamentalists but between the law enforcing agencies (the police) and the Iranian barbers. The barbers who, like tailors, claim that they make out the best man or woman out of their hairs. Tailors, likewise, echo the same tune and boast that they made man civilized sartorially. Iranian barbers feel that if cutting of hair, falls within the category of art, its performance is the sole discretion of the artist in order to render it some artistic form; the dictation by the police as to the shape of hair certainly is the infringement of the right of performer barber. By law, fundamental, foul or fake constitutional or common, one cannot bring out artistically accepted shapes of hair. Creative art does not follow grammar. The barber's mood and mind work out the best size of the haircut to suit hair-owner's facial shape and contour. Police and fundamentalists who hardly create anything as such cannot just dictate, the barbers asserted.

Barbers by now have widened the dimension of their trade and tools. They now style as hairdressers, providing shampooing, manicuring, hair dyeing, making permanent waves in hair and polishing shoes within their shops or salons. In ancient Greece and Rome, barber shop was a familiar institution for gossip and exchange of opinion. Barber's salon was considered

as nursery of rumours. The prosperous people in Greece and Egypt used to maintain their own barbers among their retainers and offered the services of barbers to their guests. Napoleon, Caesar, Hannibal and other great generals included their barbers in their entourage. Robert Clive, The five-sterling a year worth clear whom destiny elevated to Lordship maintained his own barbers. In his magnanimity Lord Clive gifted valuable land to his barber who later emerged as a rich aristocrat.

For six centuries the barbers of Europe practised surgery. This custom began with the papal decree of 1163 that forbade clergy to shed blood through surgical operation which they used to do by that time. Now the barbers, besides cutting hair, used to perform minor operations like those of lancing of abscesses. They were part of monasteries as they used to shave the clergy and monks. Destiny brought the surgeons and barbers close to each other at some critical juncture of history, though the surgeons and barbers today stand at opposite poles socially. Ambrose Pare, one of the great pioneers of surgery, was among those who gave shaves and haircuts for a living. When surgery did not help him, he used his razor to clip or remove hairs.

Fortune smiled more generously on barbers again. In France, a royal decree of 1383 declared that the king's first barber must be head of the guild of barbers and surgeons. Finding French barbers going high socially and materially, the English barbers formed a

guild in combination with surgeons and Henry VIII granted them a charter with the right to be addressed as Master and Mister. The barber-surgeon combination used to be called the 'doctors of the short robe' to distinguish them from university-trained physicians who were known as the 'doctors of long robe'. In 1745, surgeons were separated from barbers and the Royal College of Surgeons received charter in 1800 but the barber-surgeon combination received the charter 260 years earlier in 1540.

By their association with church and monastery, the barbers almost stepped into the realm of divinity but failed to elbow out their way and settle there. In thirteenth century the clergy was forbidden to shave whiskers which so long became symbolic of heavenlyness. As extermiator of this heavenly symbol, the barbers drew farther away from ecclesiastic order and also from those who helped ways to paradise.

Iranian police should study the heredity and pedigree of this 'barbaric' profession. The barbers at one stage of history were part of the ecclesiastic order and themselves were cousins of fundamentalists. With the advancement of civilization the barbers, men of short robe, lost both robe and reputation and now surviving with the original tools — the razor and scissors. If the Iranian police in the name of fundamentalism or to establish it, take away their artistic creativity in hair styling, barbers would be left only with their faculty of gossip mongering which is a lethal weapon to cut any 'ism across. Mouth could spread more venom than the viper which is more lethal than razor or scissors, or even the police baton.

The Spirit of Falgoun

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homage to the martyrs. All the developed countries in the world aspire to prosper through their mother tongue. In the higher learning institutes also the medium of instruction is their mother tongue. There is no cogent reasons to become passive in introducing Bangla in all spheres of our life — which, of course, does not mean boycotting foreign languages. One should equip himself/herself

with one or two foreign language to enrich his/her own language. It is high time to think Ekushey in terms of Falgoun — that is, to be mindful about Bengali. It is the spirit that will work for all that we envisage.

We recall with gratitude the sacrifices made by the martyrs but for which we would not have established Bangla as national language then, nor we would have achieved independence in the final analysis.

REFLECTIONS

Letter from a Friend

A few weeks ago, some friends and I sat up till almost six in the morning at the Denny's in Macon, Georgia, solving all the world's problems. We made abortions safe for and accessible to women around the world; made sure that human beings were given the rights they deserve; sentenced rapists, murderers, child and spouse abusers to death; eradicated hunger, poverty, pestilence, famine, AIDS; ensured that all children had enough to eat, were clothed, and educated. We made flowers bloom everywhere, everyday. What a fabulously wonderful world!

But wait! Reality check! The world may not be all

horrible, but there are some pretty gruesome things happening. Since you last heard from me, I have lost a few more friends to AIDS, watched a few more crack babies struggle for life, seen a number of people lose their jobs, heard a few more children tell horror stories about abuse and neglect, and helped some more battered women find their own identities. I could continue, but I am certain that you're tired of my lists by now.

As you may have gathered, my life now is very different from the way it was almost four years ago. I arrived in Macon in late August, 1989, scared stiff by the prospect of having to face life ... alone. Prior to that mo-

ment, I had lived a pretty sheltered life and knew very little about responsibility. I had visions of tons of schoolwork and many, many bills, all of which I would have to take care of. It took a while, but I got over this paralyzing fear. I found out that I alone could make things better for myself and took control of my life. I began to get involved in activities on campus. I joined many organizations that year, and coordinated several big college events. I also decided that I hated living on campus and so moved.

I made many new friends after that. These were people of all ages, from backgrounds different from mine, and our days and nights were filled with interesting conversation and exchanges of information. I also joined in the struggle for human rights — rights for People With

AIDS (PWAs), rights for people of colour, for children, and for gays.

I discovered that it's our differences that make us interesting, and that it is possible for people of all colours, races, and creeds to live together in peace. My friends and I were unable to fathom why people felt the need to discriminate against one another because of issues such as skin colour, sexual orientation, and religion, when they could just as easily band together to combat hunger and poverty. After all, doesn't the world have enough to deal with, considering that there are hundreds of disasters and thousands of diseases that cause millions and millions of people so much suffering and loss?

My friends and I have "rainbow things" scattered

throughout our houses — streamers, flags, stickers and so on — with the colours of the rainbow on them. They are symbols of freedom and unity and are there to remind us that just as so many different colours can create a spectacle so beautiful, so too can all people unite to form a beautiful world in which happiness and peace reign. We have not been able to come up with any concrete solutions to current problems, but we know that education provides the key to a much brighter, freer future. Each one of us is responsible for the well-being of our neighbours, and the Golden Rule "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you" should guide our thoughts and actions. The well-being of the earth is our responsibility also, for, as Native Americans believe, it is on loan

to us from our children. Chief Seattle once said, "We are part of the earth and the earth is part of us, for all things are connected."

I urge you to please look around you and to do what needs to be done to improve your lot as well as that of others. Give of yourself freely and remember that every experience, good or bad, provides us with an opportunity to learn. Most importantly, do not forget to take time to "smell the roses"; do not overlook the simple things in life. Walk in the rain, gaze up at the stars, *Abandon* and appreciate. Live, don't simply exist. Above all, have a fantastic time — enjoy what you do.

Take care. Peace.

— Nipu Sattar

The British Council Language Matters

The Intro

This week's column has the third in a series on the use of articles (a, the, etc) in English. There is also the usual Wobbly Words puzzle.

Finally today we also have a second little exercise on idioms in English.

Wobbly Words

Try this word puzzle. In each shape the letters are jumbled up. Put them in the correct order. What do they all have in common? Be careful. Some shapes might have more than one word.

1. 2. 3. 4.
5. 6.

Good for a Game?

How did you get on with the idioms last week? Here are some more for you to try. We hope you realised that the best way to find out the correct answer is to look up the 'main' word in a good dictionary. This will usually be the most important noun or verb in the phrase.

1. He's certainly full of beans this morning.
a/ He has eaten a large plate of beans today.
b/ He is very lively and energetic today.
c/ He seems to be feeling lazy today.

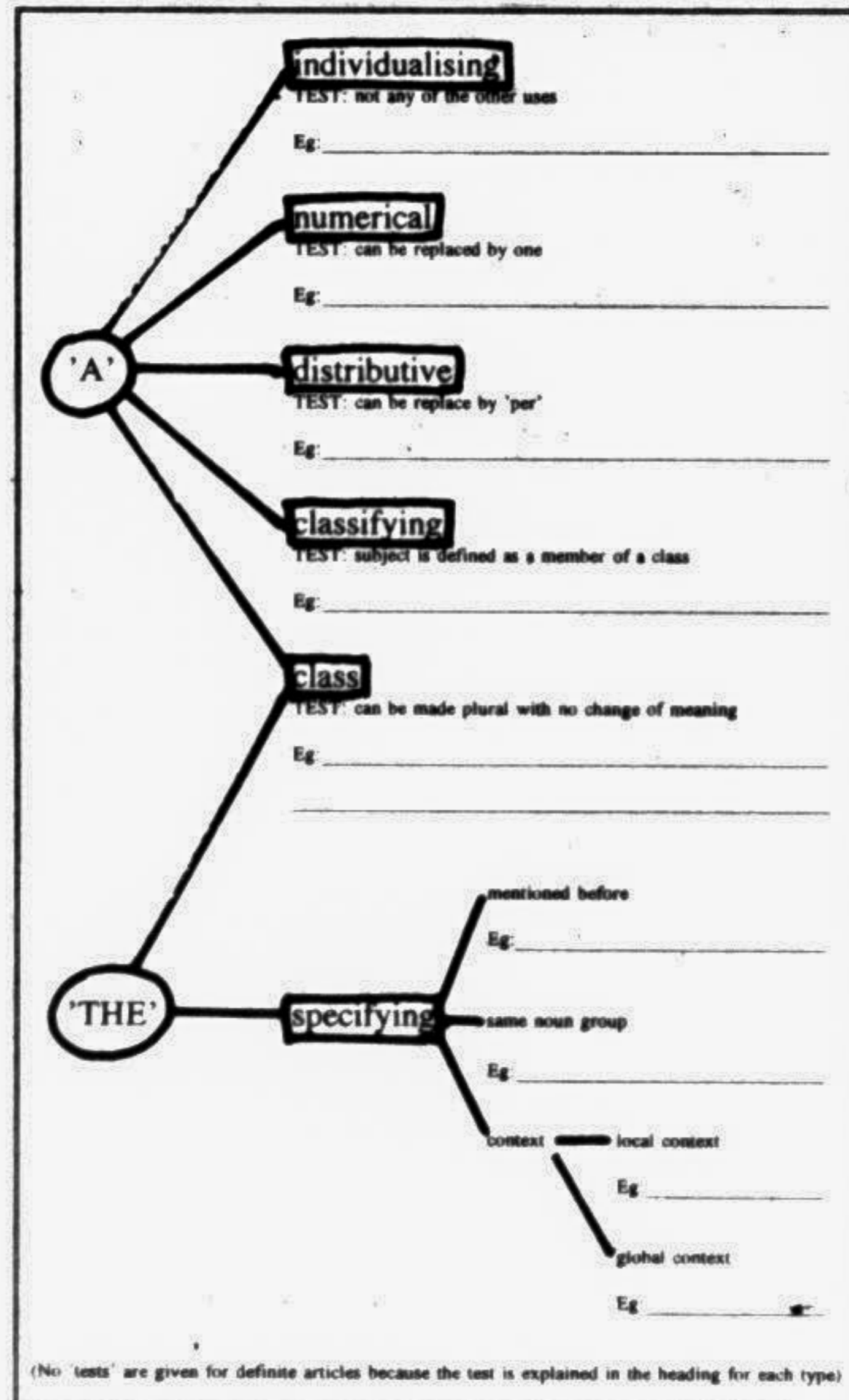
2. It is the manager who has to carry the can.
a/ The manager is responsible for paying staff.
b/ The manager is responsible for bringing water.
c/ The manager is responsible for all mistakes.

3. The teacher sent him off with a flea in his ear.
a/ The teacher gave him a telling off.
b/ The teacher told him to go to the doctor.
c/ The teacher asked him to look at the insects.

4. He's making money hand over fist.
a/ He's earning money through illegal dealings.
b/ He's earning money by boxing for prizes.
c/ He's earning money in large amounts.
5. She must have got out of bed on the wrong side this morning.
a/ She's had tempered and sensitive today.
b/ She's very sleepy and tired today.
c/ She's quite happy and jolly today.

The English Article System

Below is a summary of the points covered in the last two weeks. Try to give an example of each of the uses of the articles. If you've kept the earlier pieces, you should have no problem. If you haven't you'll have to rely on memory or common sense:



(sometimes called 'zero article') and do not usually have a plural form. Some examples:

- Abstractions - beauty, pride, love,...
- Diseases - cholera, AIDS, malnutrition,...
- 'Group' words - equipment, furniture, medicine,...
- Liquids - water, milk, petrol,...
- Materials - wood, cotton, silk,...
- Sports - football, volleyball, badminton,...
- Subjects of study - biology, history, English,...

2. Most nouns do NOT have an article in front of them ('uncountables' and plurals in general statements).
3. A singular, countable noun MUST have a determiner of some sort (eg: a, the, his, her, this, that, my,....)
4. 'A' is not used in front of a plural or uncountable noun, or where there is another determiner.
5. 'A' is not used in front of a proper noun.
6. Do not use specifying 'the' if the noun is not special or specific in any way.
7. Do not use 'the' with another determiner.
8. Do not use 'the' in front of proper nouns unless it is specified by global context (eg 'the Koran', 'the Queen', 'the Sundarbans').

Some general guidelines for using articles:

1. Some groups of nouns are considered 'uncountable' in English. These normally occur without an article