Recent Trends in English Language Teaching

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Edited by
Prof. Julu Sen
Dr. Sumana Bandopadyay

School of Humanities
Netaji Subhas Open University

AKHAND PUBLISHING HOUSE
DELHI (INDIA)

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Recent Trends in English Language Teaching
Edited by Julu Sen & Sumana Bandopadhyay
(A UGC-DEB Fund Research Project Publication)

Published by:
The Director
School of Humanities
Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata
&



AKHAND PUBLISHING HOUSE
Publisher, Distributor, Exporter having an Online Bookstore

Head Office : L-9A, First Floor, Street No. 42,
Sadatpur Extension, Delhi-110090 (INDIA)
Phone No.: 9968628081, 9555149955 & 9013387535
E-mail : akhandpublishinghouse@gmail.com,
akhandpublishing@yahoo.com
Website : www.akhandbooks.com

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Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata

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Ist Edition 2019
ISBN 978-93-88998-45-1

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Printed in India

Published by The Director, SOH, NSOU & Jhapsu Yadav for Akhand Publishing House, Delhi.

Professor Subha Sankar Sarkar, Vice Chancellor
NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY
DD-26, Salt Lake, Sector-I, KOLKATA – 700 064
Website: www.wbnsou.ac.in

Foreword

The School of Humanities, had undertaken the task of this publication in English Language Teaching (ELT) since 2016 and the publication substantiates the research. From the Open and Distant Learning (ODL) perspective, the publication presents new ideas in Language Teaching and Learning contexts.

The research work collated in the volume speaks of our Second Language contexts and their prevalence in language learning scenario. The new ideas raised by the scholars will shape and strengthen our ELT program in ODL in days to come.

I am happy to present this publication titled ***'Recent Trends in English Language Teaching'*** under the aegis of the School of Humanities of the University. The publication has been edited by Dr Sumana Bandyopadhyay, Assistant Professor in ELT of NSOU.

It is noteworthy that the research interests of this kind are emerging amongst our researchers and teachers. Sincere thanks to Distance Education Bureau (DEB) of University Grants Commission (UGC) for the financial assistance in furthering such projects.

I wish the publication a great success.

4th April, 2019

Vice Chancellor
NSOU

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From The Desk of The School of Humanities....

The School of Humanities of NSOU aims to pursue programs of capacity building in ELT, through ODL. The vision of SoH is to foster a community, across institutional lines to disseminate and implement Language Teaching and encourage classroom research. An amalgamation of workshops and seminars and publications of such researches is the goal of academic pursuits of the discipline. Open and Distant Learning has been vastly effective in capturing various potentials of the discipline and catering to the developmental needs of our learners. It has also been successful in building robust mechanisms to monitor and control quality in language teaching. The volume will further the explorations of English Language Teaching in the context of Open and Distance Learning, where the learners will have to learn on their own. Today, English Language Teaching has been recognized worldwide as a pre-requisite for language teaching and professional development. At the same time, keeping in mind the substantial potentiality of ODL, classroom research conducted by language practitioners of the discipline can change this scenario and unfurl the profits of their learning.

In this title, a sincere attempt has been made to address the pedagogical issues related to English Language Teaching and the praxis of professional development of the domain. Apart from invited contributions, the papers incorporated in this volume have been selected from the presentations made at a workshop on Professional Development in English Language Teaching, organized by the School of Humanities of the Netaji Subhas Open University on 18th May, 2017.

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The workshop was sponsored by UGC-DEB, New Delhi. Meanwhile, our School has spent a very special time with Professor Julu Sen, after her return to Kolkata. She has contributed a lot to structure the book as per her vision till she breathed her last. Thus it became the last work of her editorship. She is remembered by all her students, colleagues and people who worked with her.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Dr Sumana Bandyopadhyay, the Organizing Secretary of the Workshop and also one of the Editors of the present volume with her teacher Professor Sen. I also thank all the contributors for their sincere efforts and kind co-operation.

Hope it would prove beneficial for teachers and research scholars from ELT and the educators from language and literature. I extend my sincere thanks to the University Grants Commission- Distance Education Bureau (UGC-DEB) for the financial assistance to the workshop and for the publication.

March 2019

Prof. Manan K Mandal
Director
School of Humanities, NSOU

Editorial

Rapid development in ELT research during the last few decades calls for more attention towards the interdisciplinary aspects. Keeping the same spirit in mind, the purpose of this volume is to produce an introduction to the relevant research work in theoretical perspectives and practice. It also incorporates classroom suggestions, resources for teachers and information that is useful for a classroom teacher's every day performance and professional development.

The volume includes four sections: ELT Theoretical Perceptions, ELT and Classroom Application, ELT and Literature and ELT and Action Research. Papers included in different sections have been selected through a rigorous process of review. The research papers were mostly presented in the workshop, organized by the School of Humanities. The papers were by scholars of reputed institutes who are working in the field of ELT, for alleviating the challenges of Language Teaching. These papers are the main cognitive discourse of this edited volume.

The first section, ELT and theoretical perceptions, explores ideas, initiatives and innovative practices of English Language Teaching. The scholars have used ELT as a tool to implement different applications inherent in language learning. These are Task Based Language Teaching, strategic management of classroom medium, input rich communicational tasks in ESL settings, evaluation of an ODL course and new approaches in language teaching. A feature of papers is to invite the readers to apply the ideas in their work in the context of discovering good teaching in the classrooms.

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The second section, ELT and Classroom application, addresses some of the fundamental questions asked by teachers of second language. What strategies can teachers adopt in dealing with errors? What are the key factors in the building process of student performance? What are the technological innovations that are transforming traditional classroom practices? Though answers to these questions are suggested, readers should reflect on the discussions in these papers to direct their own moves in their classroom.

The third section, ELT and Literature, use a simple framework for looking at contexts where literature can be used in language teaching and learner autonomy in literature teaching. The need for integration is the goal for practice in interrelated aspects. These articles provide suggestions and discuss how literature has influenced methodology and methods in language learning. Strategies on Target Language and Source Language Use in the Classroom – A Sociolinguistic Study, and Towards Autonomy are the revised versions of papers earlier presented in the International Seminar on Context and Culture in Our Language Classroom, organized by the American Library, Kolkata, 2015.

The fourth section, ELT and Action Research, is a collection of Post Graduate Diploma in English Language Teaching (PGDELT) project papers completed with my supervision, those which were taken up for research in the academic session 2017-2018. With the intention of finding out how they teach and how well their students learn, the authors had made a systematic enquiry on classroom practice.

I do not expect the readers to accept every view uncritically, although these are thoughtful examination of our actions in the classroom and a contemplation of the reasons. Classroom based research produce varying and conflicting findings. Instead of focusing on the results, the readers are expected to look for foundation for drawing ideas to experiment within the classrooms. Teachers need to be articulate on the learning which are of greatest concern and look for knowledge which can inform them. The aim of the

book is to reflect on the ideas and build a critical perspective on these aspects.

Although designed primarily as a reference book for the ODL learner, I feel that this volume will be a guide for those who are teaching ESL/EFL but not into ELT and for those who were in ELT some years ago. It is primarily for teachers who work with adolescent and adult learners and want to discover more ideas in language teaching. The volume lists a glossary of the relevant terms and an index at the end.

My counselors, students, and friends have been of indispensable assistance in preparation of the volume. I am extremely grateful to Professor Subha Shankar Sarkar, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Netaji Subhas Open University, for his overall guidance, valuable suggestions and continuous support for this publication. I am especially indebted to the Director, School of Humanities, for his many suggestions, and contribution in the publication of the volume. I also thank Akhand Publishing House, Delhi, who have helped in shaping the volume.

I thank Professor Julu Sen for her critical comments and encouragement in the publication of the volume.

Finally, I hope that the readers will enjoy every topic of the volume, which discusses the daily challenges we as teachers face in the classroom. The inspiration from the readers will encourage better publications in future.

March 2019

Sumana Bandyopadhyay
Assistant Professor
English Language Teaching
School of Humanities, NSOU

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List of Contributors

1. **Anirban Halder,** English Teacher, Pandua Sashi Bhusan Saha High School (H S), Hooghly.
2. **Arpita Mukherjee,** Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities, Bengal College of Engineering, Durgapur.
3. **Ashesava Mazumdar,** Department of Basic Science and Humanities, Future Institute of Technology, Kolkata.
4. **Bhaskar Koley,** Guest Lecturer, Sri Gopal Banerjee College, Bagati, Hooghly.
5. **Debraj Dutta,** English Teacher, Scottish Church Collegiate School, Kolkata.
6. **Dhanajoy Karmaka,** Assistant Teacher in English, Raghunathpur M.M. High School, Raghunathpur.
7. **Durbadal Dutta,** English Teacher, Jamsherpur B N School, Bagchi, Jamsherpur, Nadia.
8. **Kakoli Sen Banerjee,** Associate Professor, Department of English, P N Das college, Barrackpur.
9. **Dr. Sadhan K Dey,** Associate Professor & HOD, Department of Engineering Science and Management, RCC Institute of Information Technology, Kolkata.
10. **Dr Sharmistha Chatterjee Sriwastav,** Associate Professor, Department of English, Aliah University, Kolkata.
11. **Saibal Chatterjee,** Assistant Professor, NSHM College of Management and Technology, Kolkata.

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12. **Sanjit K Nayak,** Lecturer, Panchmura Mahavidyalaya, Bankura.
13. **Satabdi Das,** PGDELT 2017-2018
14. **Swati Basu,** Assistant Professor, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Institute of Management Science, Salt Lake, Kolkata.
15. **Suman Sadhu,** Assistant Teacher in English, Karidhya Jadu Roy Memorial and Public Institution, Suri, Birbhum.
16. **Soma Mandi,** Assistant Teacher in English, Jamunabala Balika Vidyalaya, Howrah.

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Section-1
ELT and Theoretical Persceptions

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1

The Pedagogy of Speaking: An Eclectic Approach

Saibal Chatterjee

Abstract

One of the key factors in second language learning and acquisition is motivation which is found to be quite low among the advanced learners. Audio-visual materials by way of creating an impact on the learners' affective domain can generate interest and raise their motivation level significantly; and, a pedagogic utilization of the audio-visual resources as input following the notions of Halliday's functional approach to language usage and the principles of task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach can be highly effective in the development of speaking skill and its sub-skills. The paper attempts to provide an approach for the teachers of English at the advanced level to facilitate language learning and acquisition in order to develop speaking proficiency of the learners. The proposed approach is essentially eclectic in nature as it incorporates and synthesizes various principles, procedures, tasks and techniques of the functional and task-based language teaching methods and approaches with audio-visual materials working as the basic teaching-learning resource.

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Key words: Affective domain, audio-visual materials, functional approach, TBLT, eclecticism

Introduction

Speech proficiency in English is undoubtedly a global need and is required in every sphere of an individual's life – social, academic and above all at the professional level as per the present day industry requirements. However, the real scenario portrays a very poor picture with most advanced learners and professionals showing poor performance in speech skills at all levels. Concerns regarding poor communication skills and employability skills have been repeatedly voiced from all corners but with little effect. English classes at colleges & universities continue to record poor attendance and even among the students attending the classes, indications of disinterest and inattention are apparent. The scenario stands equally true for other institutes which have been solely focusing on communicative English courses. The mid-course dropout rate is found to be quite high with the root cause being the attitude of the learners towards learning English and lack of interest. Hence, it is indeed a big challenge for the second language teachers at these institutions to generate interest among the students in developing the speaking skill in English. Thus, attempts need to be made by the teachers through various methods, materials, tasks, techniques and strategy so as to raise the interest level of the learners in attending the communicative English classes willingly and retain their interest level all through as they proceed with the classroom procedures.

The Audio-Visual Input

F.W. Noel rightly says, "Good instruction is the foundation of any educational programme. Audio-visual training aids are a component part of that foundation." Even in recent ELT trends, the use of a creative platform

for English language teaching and learning which is equipped with audio-visual aids is gaining popularity as they prove to be effective in successful language acquisition. "Visual aids enhance the effectiveness of teaching learning process in a classroom" (Joshi 1995, Vissa 1994). Some of the audio-visual materials which could be easily and effectively used in a language classroom for developing speaking skills include:

- Films & documentaries
- Video clips (of news, events, interviews, discussions, meetings, speeches, sporting events, etc.)
- Songs
- Audio CDs with pre-recorded texts
- Pictures and images (real life stills of people, places, objects, actions, etc.)
- Realia (newspapers, brochures, maps, etc.)

According to researches, audio-visual resources are appealing and effective in that they:

i) Bring the real world into the classroom;

ii) Provide direct sense experience to students;

iii) Generate interest, inspiration and thereby retain attention;

iv) Contextualise learning and create a natural language learning atmosphere;

v) Provide exposure to authentic language use;

vi) Facilitate comprehension and retention of linguistic input;

vii) Help in connecting with the learners by working on their affective faculty and evoking emotive responses.

One of the greatest strengths of audio-visual materials, specifically the audio-video materials, is that they communicate with viewers on the emotional, as well as the cognitive level. Regarding the cognitive impact of the audio-visual materials, it is noteworthy

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that non-native speakers of a language heavily rely on audio-visual clues to support their understanding of the context and the content in the target language; and, recent researches on visuals and words have shown that memory for visual tends to be better than memory for words (Clark and Lyons 2004). Again, Arthur 1999, has further claimed that audio-visual aids can provide students with realistic models to imitate for role-play and can even increase awareness of other cultures which is of immense importance in effective cross-cultural communication.

However, audio-visual materials should be very judiciously chosen so that they cater to both the purposes that of generating and retaining interest of learners and also developing the target language skill(s) and sub-skills. In this regard, the teacher or the course co-ordinator or the syllabus designer whosoever is responsible for selection of audio-visual materials should essentially consider the last of the aforesaid features i.e. *connecting with the learners by working on their affective faculty and evoking emotive responses*. The content and theme of the materials are extremely important and should be such that they carry an 'appealing and connecting' factor.

One of the most appreciated materials widely applied to language learning and teaching is, of course, video. While, a study by Canning-Wilson 2000, reveals that the students like learning language through the use of video, Hemei 1997, states that the video is well-liked by both students and teachers. Again for ESL students, videos and films demonstrate communicative language within a language environment and cultural context Wood 1995. Further, as Ahlfeldt 2009, states, an important goal of video implementation is to have students witness a speech aimed at a more diverse audience and with more real-world relevance rather

than public speaking in a classroom environment aimed often at a rather narrow audience.

However, one needs to be careful about the selection of the video materials, specifically movies. Films and videos that are too obscure for students to understand should be avoided. Rather, as Wang 2015, observes, movies and soap operas that reflect everyday life and culture of different periods and regions of English speaking countries are very good learning materials. Again, video materials that tell stories of historic figures and events are very informative, while musicals and animations could also be very exciting and relaxing choices. Thus, films on motivation (*e.g. 127 Hours, Everest*), war and humanity (*e.g. Saving Private Ryan*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*), celebrating leadership (*e.g. Apollo 13, Braveheart*), science fiction (*e.g. Martian, ET, Species*), biographies (*e.g. Gandhi, Lion*), social drama (*e.g. City of Joy*, *Slumdog Millionaire*), comedies (*e.g.* Mr. Bean's Holiday) are few of many such genres and themes. In this regard, Katchen 1996, observes that carefully chosen films can be a useful and extremely motivational teaching tool for both practicing listening skills and stimulating speaking and writing.

Even for stills and video clips plenty of similar such resources are easily available at hand; the audio-video clips and images that keep doing the rounds on What's App, Facebook and other social networking sites and the YouTube can be immensely resourceful in this regard. Hence, instead of sending these items to the recycle bin teachers may consider if these items could indeed be recycled as effective teaching learning materials. Similarly, for songs, classics like *100 miles*, *Blowing in the Wind*, *Heal the World*, *Mizo Boy*, *From a Distance*, etc. are useful resources as audio input. Such audio-video materials appeal to the affective faculty of the learners, create an easy connection between the learners and the