

# Editorial

*In this number of the journal, you will find five articles, one of them fairly long, on a variety of topics and issues that are relevant to the teaching and learning of English. All the contributors have tried their best to highlight the issues and offer ways of addressing those issues as well. You will also find the regular feature on speaking activity, this time showing how to exploit reports of bizarre events that one has experienced or read about for promoting authentic speaking in class. There is also a surprise inclusion on grammar songs, one you will all enjoy reading.*

*The first article is on 'alternative assessment' by Sengupta. The author has tried to establish why we need to go in for alternative assessment and explore the various possibilities of carrying out such assessment, which, in his view, would ensure that the knowledge acquired by students is not merely reproduced from rote learning but applied, synthesized and evaluated. In this context, Sengupta emphasizes the need to move away from 'assessment of learning' towards 'assessment for learning'; that is, using assessment as a tool for learning.*

*In the second article, the author, Madhavi, bemoans the lack of employability skills including communication skills in English and other soft skills among the majority of engineering graduates. They are thus not 'industry ready'. The author, therefore, emphasizes the need for developing in students of engineering communication skills in English as well as soft skills in an integrative way by encouraging collaborative learning among the students from their first year of study onwards so that they might get good job placements when they graduate.*

*The next article by Sangita Das explores the use of authentic texts for teaching grammar and vocabulary. She also demonstrates how grammar and vocabulary exercises may be set on user manuals for electronic gadgets by taking the user guide for a mobile phone as an example. She argues that texts such as user manuals are excellent language resources as the content is familiar and interesting to most students.*

*Here comes the surprise element. There are two rhyming songs – one on grammar and the other on parts of speech – both written by a scientist, and not by an English teacher or an English textbook writer. It seems that the mother and teacher in Krithika Gokulnath created these and a few other wonderful compositions while attempting to teach English grammar to her child. How true the saying 'Necessity is the mother of invention' is! I'm sure those who read the editorial first or go through the table of contents would straightaway read and appreciate those songs.*

*In the next article, Madhu Singh highlights the problems and challenges faced by students from rural and semi-urban areas as well as their English language teachers. Problems such as mother-tongue interference, lack of adequate infrastructure and teaching-learning tools and resources and the students' social milieu may be daunting, but the author argues that the teacher must try to find ways of overcoming these challenges and making their students acquire language skills. Many solutions are also suggested – for example, adopting a dialogic approach, encouraging and empowering the learners, giving them more time to respond, and contextualizing the content and style of the learning materials.*

*The last article by Harikrishna Rao on the role of error analysis in developing an effective pedagogy for ESL teaching is a fairly long theoretical article on the subject of error analysis. The author reviews extensive work done in this area and tries to highlight the key findings of research studies that may have a bearing on ESL pedagogy.*

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Editor