

Editorial

Welcome to this issue of our journal – we are sure you have been looking forward to getting your copy and reading the articles. You will find four short articles and two longer ones, both of which deal with technology-based teaching and learning. Of course, you have the regular feature ‘Speaking Activity’ (see page 48). We would also like you to look at the first announcement about our next annual conference to be held in June-July 2016 in Hyderabad. The theme and sub-themes (provisional) have been listed with a view to enabling you to prepare yourself with a well planned paper and presentation. We hope to see you and your friends at the conference. We would appeal to you to renew your membership if it has already expired or is due to expire soon. We would also appeal to you to enroll your friends and institutions as long-term members of ELTAI to make us serve you better.

The first article by Komali Prakash discusses the essential role of English phonetics, both segmental and suprasegmental features, in teaching English to ESL learners. An awareness of these features, it is argued, is necessary for making the learners get and appreciate the rhythm of the English language. She asserts “with confidence that RP is more a means to an end than an end in itself.” In the next article, Binu Zachariah discusses some of the essential, theoretical aspects of reading as a skill and relates these to learners’ motivation to read as well as their attitudes towards reading, both in their mother tongue and in English. Towards the end of the article, the author suggests that learners may be appropriately guided to read at their reading ability levels if only the language teacher “can somehow manage to break free from the constraints of the syllabus and the curriculum.” We hope teachers of English manage to do this.

Next comes the first of the two longer papers mentioned earlier. In this paper, Jayaron Jose and Mohammed Jafre Zainol Abidin argue for the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in teaching EFL writing. They report their findings of a research study carried out with EFL learners in the Sultanate of Oman using ICT tools such as online forum discussions (OFDs) and blogging to find out their effect on the Omani learners’ writing output. They report a favourable attitude towards electronic writing and its positive effect on their EFL writing.

The paper that follows is by Xavier Pradheep Singh and it is a kind of state-of-the-art article surveying the history of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and presenting an overview of its current status. In his paper, Xavier has attempted to trace the various trends in CALL over six decades with a view to helping language ESL/EFL teachers to improve their classroom practices and support their learners in their learning of English. Three phases or stages in the history of CALL have been identified and discussed, i.e. Structural CALL, Communicative CALL and Integrative CALL.

The first of the two remaining articles is by Melissa Helen and she raises a very relevant and critical issue, namely the wide range of English proficiency among school leavers and graduates in India and the absence of a standardized proficiency test at the national level comparable to TOEFL and IELTS. This is the need of the hour, she argues strongly, and rightly so, although at least some ELT experts, if not many, might question the soundness of such a proposal. The last article by Srilatha discusses an experiment conducted for teaching vocabulary, particularly synonyms, antonyms and one-word substitutes, through pair and group work activities and reports positive learning outcomes.

Wishing you a professionally satisfying reading experience,

P. N. Ramani, Editor