Book Review

Mohanraj. S and S Bandopadhyay. (Eds). (2021). *Design of ELT–A Collection of Papers.* Kolkata: NSOU. ISBN 9789382112815 Price: Rs 350/- (pp xviii +180)

Design of ELT is a collection of articles on English language teaching (ELT) written by some experienced ELT practitioners and researchers. The book attempts to cover a wide range of themes in ELT such as open and distant learning, intercultural competence, multi-dimensional nature of online communication and task-based and process approaches to teaching skills. As the title of the book suggests it is mainly about the 'design' aspects of ELT which inform the teachers of English about the processes that affect the practice of teaching English at various levels.

This book is divided into four sections—The Beginnings, Some Theoretical Inputs, Practical Tasks, and the Epilogue—and each section has three or four papers. The schematic structure of the book is such that any ELT practitioner can navigate through sections without having to read them in a linear order. However, the book organizes the contents in the theory to practice order so that the teachers get familiar with a few theoretical concepts before they explore the practicum. This organization is strategic that it allows any novice trainee to gain some knowledge before they 'design' their activities. In what follows, I attempt to review the contents section wise while sharing my observations.

Section I, 'The Beginnings,' consists of three papers which focus on English language education in general. This foundation section attempts to contextualise ELT in India by discussing a few policies and practices in the history of language education in the school and the higher education. The first paper, a case study by Late Prof. Julu Sen, draws on her professional experiences to sensitize language teachers about the aspects of culture in heterogenous classrooms. Although it does not draw extensively on theoretical models, it covers some crucial aspects that concern every teacher. The second paper (Durbadal Datta) attempts to compare diachronically some education policies to trace the history of English language teaching in the post-independence India. It provides a panoramic view of how ELT in India has emerged since 1940s, mainly in schools. Particularly, the discussion on the experiments conducted and policies implemented in Bengal are quite insightful. The last paper in this section (Nilanjan Ghosh) discusses the role of learning materials and counselling for students enrolled in open and distance education programmes. Ghosh systematically outlines the development of open distant learning (ODL) programmes in India. Further, he talks about the different types of materials—print, audio, multi-media—for language learning. Additionally, the discussion on the open learning programmes is insightful. It is an informative read for anyone interested in the domain of ODL and *e*-learning.

The second section titled as, 'Some Theoretical Inputs,' has four papers that shed light on some key aspects of language analysis. The papers deal with the theory of discourse analysis in distinct areas of ELT. The first paper (Sumana Bandyopadhyay) discusses the multi-dimensionality of academic and administrative discourses in online communication. This data-driven paper explains the nine key functions of the sub-genre of face-to-face communication and computer-mediated communication. Bandyopadhyay astutely establishes a base for spoken discourse in online communication to put forth a model of speech

categories. The second paper (Basudeb Chakraborti) outlines the reasons for language variation through regional, diachronic, synchronic, social, and register variations. Chakraborti concludes the paper with an anecdote which focuses on the concept of mutual intelligibility and how all varieties of a language are supposed to be considered equal. The third paper (Swati Basu) convincingly argues to establish a deeper understanding of how structures of language can be used powerfully and aesthetically in different contexts. Basu presents several examples to establish a relationship from language, its functions and the external variables affecting it. A complex yet an interesting read, this paper is rather multi-disciplinary. The fourth and the final paper in this section (Jay Sankar Basu) discusses the concept of 'collocations.' Basu defines, exemplifies, and classifies the concept of collocation to signify its importance in written and spoken discourse. A well-researched paper with several well-illustrated samples, this paper also talks about error analysis, one of the trending areas in ELT. A perceptive read for teachers of English to understand the dynamics of collocations with respect to grammar taught in the classroom as well as for researchers working on lexico-grammmatical aspects of language in error analysis.

Section III the 'Practical Tasks,' gives importance to the design and application of the materials used in the classroom. Writing, grammar, and general classroom tasks are at the centre of this section. The first paper (Rajat Ghosh) provides a framework integrating lexis and grammar aspects of language concerning with accuracy. Ghosh presents a list of innovative tasks involving vocabulary word lists to put forth the argument that grammar can be taught through lexis. Following a similar path of work done on functional approaches (Halliday, 2004), the author has presented creative ways of teaching grammar. The second paper (Saibal Chatterjee) reinforces the idea of process approach to teaching writing due to its well-established efficacy in the language classroom. Chatterjee differentiates between product and process writing, gives the outline of the latter, and delineates its advantages while also focusing on its pedagogical implications. The final paper (Chintalapalli Vijayakumar) is a little different from the preceding two papers and could have been a part of section II. It focuses on dynamics of a 'task' in Task-based language teaching/learning (TBLT/L) and doesn't stick to one aspect of language rather centers more on establishing the significant relationship between tasks and their learning objectives. By providing the readers with an example of a reading task, Vijayakumar argues how difficult it can be to implement a task 'successfully' due to its complex nature and the numerous variables affecting it. This paper can be usefully utilised by English language teachers as they would not only resonate with the ideas presented but understand the concept of task implementation better.

The concluding section of this book is in the form of an epilogue that includes the keynote address by one of the editors, S Mohanraj. He summarises all the previous sections, keeping the theme of the book intact. Divided into six parts, the first five parts establish a need for a comprehensive curriculum, eclectic classroom teaching approaches and robust evaluation strategies surrounding the teaching of grammar and vocabulary. The final section summarizes the above while establishing connections between Applied Linguistics and other allied fields such as Psychology and Sociology.

To conclude, this book can be considered a significant contribution to ELT in the Indian context. More research on ELT in Indian context is needed and this collection of papers written by Indian ELT practitioners/researchers demonstrates and encourages it. Many novice ELT teachers can resonate with this book as it is a melange of the current trends, issues, and

developments explained in a simple yet refreshing way. An outline to various new aspects of English language teaching and learning, the contents of this book certainly left me with a plethora of questions in my mind, thus, driving me forward to learn more about certain trends in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT).

References:

Halliday, M.A.K., 2004. An Introduction to Functional Grammar, third ed. (revised by Matthiessen, C.M.I.M.), Arnold, London.