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Book Reviews

Teaching English for Specific Purposes: An Evolving Experience by R. K. Singh, Book Enclave, Jaipur, 2005, pp. xii+289, Rs. 725/-. ISBN 81-8152-118-8

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English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a learner-centered approach to teaching English as a foreign/second language. It fulfils the needs of adult learners who need to learn a foreign/second language for use in their specific fields, such as science, technology, medicine, leisure, and academic learning.

ESP, which emerged as an approach to English language teaching in the 1960s, has become well known in the ELT circle, especially because English has acquired the status of an international *lingua franca*, and linguists have moved towards a situation-based notion of language. The initial studies on "special" languages were basically on register, which developed in a Firthian environment. Following in Halliday's footsteps (Halliday 1978), British linguists who identified "special registers" considered it sufficient for teaching purposes to distinguish them from "common" language. However, as discovered later, register differences do not apply to the lexical level only, but also concern morphosyntactic choices and textual and pragmatic organization (Swales 1990; Gotti 1991; Bhatia 1993). The social situation of each of the subdivisions of ESP exerts a strong influence on the linguistic strategies that are to be adopted. Therefore contextual and functional needs direct linguistic choices such as lexical density, the complexity and the length of clause structure, the degree of formality, the management of information, etc.

Teaching English for Specific Purposes: *An Evolving Experience* is a handy reference material for ELT practitioner. R. K. Singh has edited some of his own articles published in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. This volume is significant as a *historical* document, as it reflects the gradual development in the field of ELT, especially ESP, from 1970s to 1990s in

India and other parts of the globe. It provides conceptual clarities and practical possibilities of ESP approach to tertiary level English language teaching in professional institutions.

The book starts with an overview of the status of English in India and in the broad Indian Educational Curriculum, particularly in technical institutions. Other articles in the book discuss ELT theory and practice, development of ELT in India, Communicative Language Teaching, ESP theory and practice, possibilities of technical English, problems and prospects of ESP in India, needs analysis, teaching language skills to science and technology students, and possibilities of using literary texts in ESP classroom. The book, with its blend of theory and practice from the viewpoint of a practicing teacher in the classroom, is full of insight for teachers of English to be meaningful in their class.

The articles are arranged in two sections: Research Essays and Review Essays. The research essays, 18 in number, help the readers understand the development of ELT, especially ESP/EST, in India. The review essays, 22 in number, familiarize them with the contents, logic, and criticism of several important textbooks and reference books published in the West. These provide us with the Indian teachers' perspective, voicing viewpoints that are generally not available in books elsewhere.

The opening article in the first section informs about the role and status of English in India and in Indian Educational Curriculum. In the beginning of the independent India, the policy makers adopted three language formula – English, Hindi and Regional Language/Mother Tongue – in Educational Curriculum, as English plays the role of national and international *lingua franca*, library language, medium of instruction in private schools and higher education, language of science and technology, language of trade and commerce, etc.

The second article pleads for teaching English in a better way by adopting a more practical attitude, flexible teaching approach, adopting a need based teaching programme and pursuing "such teaching activities from which pupils know they are learning something useful." The author advises: "…the question we should be asking ourselves is not just what to teach but more important what to teach to whom and why." The article 'Teaching for Communicative Competence or Performance' emphasizes the productive skills development and integration of skills, supporting eclectic approach to teaching English.

The articles 'The Needs/Ends Framework of ESP', 'ESP: Communication Constraints', and 'ESP: A Sociolinguistic Consideration' discuss the different aspects of ESP. The author states, that "an effective management of ESP teaching requires a proper understanding of students' language needs which means that one needs to know what and how they require to communicate with each other, at which level, and whether in speech or in writing…;" "….one also needs to consider the local circumstances that have a distinct bearing on the success or failure of the language teaching…."

In the article, 'ESP in India: Developments in 1984-1985', the author describes the development of ESP in India in one year, which is also reflective of the developments in 1980s when different projects were carried out in different parts of the country. The article then enlightens us about the search for suitable approaches and methods of teaching English in Indian scenario. Some of the memorable projects include the Communicative Teaching Project, Bangalore; The TTTI Project, Calcutta; and The ISM Project, Dhanbad. The ISM project was basically a needs analysis project, on the basis of which new syllabi were designed for the students of B. Tech. and M. Sc. Tech.

Throughout the first section, the author tries to search and establish the ESP approach to teaching English in the Second Language context, especially to the students of science and technology. The section ends with the exploration of possibilities to use ESP techniques for teaching literature.

The second section of the book focuses on some review articles that were published in different journals in India and abroad in 1980s and 1990s. This section gives a broad view of activities, which were going on in ELT world those days. The reader will find this section very useful as it gives a sufficient account of classroom text and reference and research materials published in that period. The review essays also educate one about various aspects of language learning in EFL, ESL and ESP contexts. The last five essays concentrate on cross cultural communication, cultural context in business communication, teaching translation & interpreting, and translation & power. Each review is assessed thoroughly and tells us what is practically useful in the classroom situation.

R. K. Singh's reflections and comments offer a valuable reference and motivation to applied language teachers, ELT researchers, curriculum planners, teacher-educators, academic administrators, and linguists.

On the whole the volume covers a good range of research and review from the point of view of a practicing teacher. ELT practitioners will find this book very useful for their appreciation of classroom teaching realities and research.

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Studies in English Language Vol. 7: Collected Works of M.A.K. Halliday edited by Jonathanm J. Webster, Continuum, London, 2005.

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Studies in English Language, is a collection of M. A. K. Halliday's twelve articles published in different journals from 1963 to 1998 with a fresh introduction. The book is seventh in number from the series of collected works of Halliday. Each article deals with English grammar, intonation and teaching/learning etc and is a scholarly illustration and explanation of Halliday's systemic functional perspective on language. While a part of the book may be understood by a general reader interested in the nature and function of language, the fuller understanding of all chapters requires the readers to be initiated into language studies. The ideas of Halliday enunciated in the book can be understood both as continuation of functionalist tradition of Malinowsky and J. R. Firth and a departure from the dominant linguistic empire of Transformational Generative model of Chomsky challenged by Hymes.

Although written on different occasions and on different aspects of language, the articles go together in the form of book in two ways: one, all these articles relate to the description of English language, its grammar, intonation and teaching/learning; two, the perspective on and approach to the description is functional and "that is grounded in how

we actually use language to construe reality and enact social relationships."

The editor has organized the twelve articles into four parts on the basis of theme and has appended a brief introduction to each part. The first part, 'Theoretical Foundations' consists of five chapters. The first three chapters, originally planned as three parts of one paper, were published in three issues of the *Journal of Linguistics*.

The first chapter, 'Notes on Transitivity and Theme in English, Part-I', first published in 1967 describes "transitivity" as the organizing principle of clause: "Transitivity is the name given to a network of systems…concerned with the type of process expressed in the clause, with the participants in this process, animate and inanimate, and with various attributes and circumstances of the process and the participants (P.7). Halliday describes the process as both action (doing and perception) and ascription (being and description and attribution). Further there are a variety of participant roles that the objects engage with the process: these roles are actor, goal, benefactive, and range etc. Halliday uses the term transitivity as the general label for the set of options related to the linguistic expression of extra linguistic experience in the outer world or as the phenomenon of feelings.

The second chapter, 'Notes on Transitivity and Theme in English, Part-2' deals with another range of grammatical options associated with the clause, for which theme is the cover term. Following the Prague school notion of "waves of information", Halliday treats the clause as a wave of information and uses the term "theme" for "information structure of the clause." From this point of view, the status of the elements is not as participants in extra linguistic processes but as components of a message (55). Theme is concerned with "the relation of what is being said to what has gone before in the discourse and its internal organization into an act of communication" (56). A set of options in the grammar of English clause available to the speakers of English to organize the act of communication as a component of a discourse is called "theme" in the general sense. Thus Halliday uses the term theme as a general name as well as the name for a particular role in the distribution of information in the clause as message. Elsewhere Halliday (1994: 38) characterizes theme as "the point of departure within the theme system, Halliday recognizes six sets of options: (1) information (2) thematization (3) identification (4) predication (5) substitution (6) reference.

"Information structure" is mapped on to the constituent structure as specified in terms of sentences, clauses and so forth and is realized

phonologically by "tonality", the distribution of the text into tone groups: one information unit is realized as one tone group. The information systems assign to the discourse a structure independent of sentence structure. Thus its point of origin is the information unit and is specified with Given-New structure.

A related but distinct set of options is thematization, whose point of origin is the clause. It assigns to the clause a structure in terms of the functions "Theme" and "Rheme". Clarifying the issue, Halliday says – "a text in spoken English is structured simultaneously on two dimensions of Given-New and Theme-Rheme, the former determining its organization into discourse units and the status of each such units as a component in the discourse, the latter starting from its organization in sentence structure and framing each clause into the form of a message about one of its constituents" (84). In the clause, another option related to thematization is "identification" "whereby any clause may be organized into a *cleft sentence* with equative form, and in a number of possible arrangements" (84). It assigns to the clause a structure in terms of two functions of "identifier" and "identified". There are three other systems assigning partial structures within the clause and providing options within the same area. These systems are "predication", "substitution" and "reference". This chapter is an elaborate discussion on the organization of the information as a discourse and the description of grammatical options available to the speakers of English for doing that.

In the third chapter, 'Notes on Transitivity and Theme in English, Part-3', the concepts of "transitivity" and "theme" are revisited. Recapituling "transitivity" as the grammar of experiential component of meaning and "theme" as the grammar of discoursal or informational component i.e. (intra) textual meaning, Halliday recognizes the third component of meaning which he calls interpersonal meaning. This component is realized through a set of grammatical options called mood: The way these options cluster together, "provides a syntactic basis for the concept of language functions, and suggests how the diversity of functions recognizable at the semantic level may be organized in the course of realization."

The fourth chapter, 'Options and functions in the English clause', is concerned with the logical component i.e. how simple clauses combine to form a clause complex. Borrowing from Vachek, Danes, Poldauf and Buhler, Halliday suggests four generalized components in the organization of the grammar of a language: (a) extralinguistic experience (b) logical structure (c) speech function and (d) discourse

organization. In this chapter, Halliday discuses the interactive relation of all the components of meaning. "Structural in the clause in transitivity, mood and theme. But no one of these sets of options by itself fully specifies the clause structure; each one determines a different set of structural functions (155).

In the fifth chapter, 'Functional Diversity in Language as seen from a consideration of Modality and Mood in English', Halliday explains how language is used for various purposes and how the meaning potential distinguishes his position on functions from Karl Buhler, Malinowsky and others by showing how the notion of "function" is intrinsic to language rather than extrinsic to language. In other words, the language structure and its functions are not separate entities; the functions of a language are in its lexico-grammar. He further clarifies that the functions of language are not different 'levels' in the traditional linguistic sense of the term.

Part two, 'Special Topics' comprises two chapters. These two chapters were originally published as articles in 1980 and 1985 respectively. The chapter six, 'On Being Teaching' is about the problem of gap in the non-finite system of English pointed out by Quirk et. al. (1972). Citing examples based on his observation over a period of time, Halliday argues that the gap is being filled, at least in the active voice and in the casual conversation. He concludes: "It is in spontaneous conversation that we can explore the frontiers of the system and observe the foreshadowing of some coming linguistic change. In particular, we can observe… how new forms are created by the conflicting demands of interacting semantic systems" (212).

In the chapter seventh, 'It's a Fixed Word order Language in English', Halliday questions the generally claimed fact of the fixed word order in English. He analyses an example of the sentence, "it's a fixed word order language is English", from a dialectical variant used in Leeds to discuss the issue of "fixed" or "free" word order. He argues that the focus should not be on the difference between the so-called "fixed" and "free" word orders. Halliday is interested in the functional distinctions caused by word order variation: "how word order variation in a language relates to other features of the language in questions". (229).

Part three, 'Intonation and Grammar' consists of three chapters dealing with intonation and grammar of English. Halliday tries to explain how the meaning of choice of tone relates to other grammatical choices.

In the chapter eight, 'The Tone of English', an article published in 1963, Halliday states that at the primary degree of delicacy, the British

standard English involves continuous selection from a set of five tones, constituting a phonological system of English. Analysing intonation as a complex of phonological systems, tonality tonicity and tone, Halliday sets up the hierarchical relation of phonological units: tone group, foot and syllable. Tonality, Tonicity and tone being interdependent with rhythm, constitute "intonation".

The chapter nine is a step ahead "to establish the sets of contrasts as grammatical systems, referable to and in mutual definition with other grammatical systems set up for the total description of the language" (264). Here, Halliday explains the interaction between phonological and grammatical resources. He explains "the grammatical systems that are expounded by intonation."

The chapter ten, 'English, Intonation as a Resource for Discourse', is an exploration into the role of intonation in carrying forward the discourse, expressing both textual meanings and interpersonal meanings. The interpersonal meanings are realized by the choice of tone. For example, the choice between "falling tone" and "rising tone" expresses some form of "telling" versus "asking", sharing with the mood system (declarative, interrogative etc.) the realization of speech function; while within this, the continuously graded contrast of wide fall versus narrow fall expresses the force of the telling, that of "strong" versus "weak" and so on". In the creation of discourse (textual meanings), intonation has "a phoric function, that of creating cohesion with what has, gone before (anaphoric) or with what is still to come (cataphoric)" (287). This chapter summarizes the textual functions of English intonation under three headings:

1. tonicity: location of tonic prominence
2. tone: choice of pitch contour
3. tone sequences (288).

The part four, 'Analysis' contains two chapters: The chapter eleven, 'The Teacher Taught the student English: An Essay in Applied Linguistics', is the description of more than perspectives on language teaching/learning processes as well as of the grammar of ideational meanings. The discussion hinges upon the interpretation of the process type of taught and the roles of the participants. For example, the process "taught" may be interpreted in five different ways and the participants "the teacher", "the student" and "English" may be assigned different roles. Thus the act of teaching may be a material action of "giving" something to someone i.e. English is a commodity, handed over by the

teacher to the student where student is only a passive recipient. Interpreted differently, the process of teaching is material action performed on the student. Although the student is an essential participant, his role is passive. In another way, the process of teaching is an enabling (causative) action to learn. "This view of language learning suggests programming and mechanization: the use of a full battery of audio-visual and other aids." The student is the actor in the process; he is doing the work. The teacher comes in as a helper, an enabler; and in this context he brings with him all the modern techniques and facilities that are available for the purpose" (301). The fourth perspective on language teaching is again student centered. But in this approach, teacher's role, as a helper, "is to supply the required knowledge in doses of suitable size and strength" (302). The fifth description of language teaching focuses on the learner's ability to speak: "a language is treated as potential… to learn a language is to acquire it; and the process of teaching a language is one of helping the student to build it up for himself. The language potential, however, is… a "meaning potential". To know a language i.e. "to have mastered the ability to mean" (303-304). Halliday favours the last interpretation of language teaching and learning because in this approach, "the teacher attempts to structure the language learning, within the limits of the teaching conditions and the resources available, in ways which impose certain demands on the student's abilities…" (305). Yet the cautions that "really effective language teaching is not tied methodologically to anyone interpretation of the teaching process or of learning process." (305).

In the introduction freshly written to this volume is an interesting account of the making of a linguist who is theorizing and at once disclaiming the attempts to theorize. The title of the introduction 'Towards an Applicable Description of the Grammar of Language', promises more than a usual introduction.

The introduction is the narrative of a linguist's journey through his career as well as his academic research that blossomed into a spotlight to show the direction to the fellow men. It is divided into three parts: the first part is the account of his academic voyage as a language teacher qua linguist: "I had hoped to start off my career by working in East and Southeast Asian Languages, with specialization in Chinese dialects. At that time… there were hardly any academic posts – in linguistics in British universities; but …I enjoyed language teaching and that was still close enough to my intended field of research…" (p.xii).

The second and the third parts of the introduction detail about the developments in what we today know as *Systemic Functional Theory* of

Language. At the end of the first section, Halliday explicitly declares: "In the remaining sections of this chapter, I shall abandon my personal history, and instead try to rearticulate the particular problems which forced me… to construct my own mapping or projection, of the *design* and traffic of low of language" (p. xv; emphasis added).

The second section is the narrative of the linguist's encounters with stumbling blocks in the actual description of language use. Since the existing theoretical systems could not provide solutions, Halliday built on the non-mainstream ideas and insights to solve his academic problems; but he did it the way that it could turn into a coherent system (theory) for future use. The second section, therefore, is a very interesting written visual of a linguist actually grappling with the problems so as to find solutions. Interestingly each of the subsections has a heading "The problem of …" So, the second section comprises the problem of the clause, the system, units, rank and the rank scale, structure, types of structure, taxis, the relation between system and structure, delicacy, probability, metafunction, context of situation, dimensions of structure, types of structure, complex systems, complementarity, intonation, dimensionality, stratification. Each of these is a component of the background to the work by Halliday a linguist. All the articles, as claimed by Halliday, were written not primarily to theorize but to meet needs of some specific task. Halliday's quest was "descriptive" and not "theoretical" (xxix). Halliday's questions "why the text means what it does, and if possible, why and in what ways it is (or is not) effective" could not be answered within the mainstream theoretical perspective of Transformational-Generative Grammar. He justifies his ways: "So I stayed with the system and structure model that I had, extending it as new problems came up demanding to be addressed" (xxx). So his disclaimer about his concern with theory is ironically actually his tryst with the theory. He argues against a dominant theory by pointing out its inability to provide solutions while build on some thing peripheral to develop a full-fledged theoretical system that can provide solutions to the same problems.