

FORTELL

Newsletter

FORUM FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE

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INNOVATIONS

Delhi seems to be spearheading a quiet revolution in the teaching of English language and literature. And the change has begun at various levels. As a result of a bold initiative the Central Board of Secondary Education, Delhi has with the assistance of the Overseas Development Agency (ODA) and the British Council formulated a new syllabus for IX and X classes 'A' Stream English. New textbooks have been prepared and piloted and are ready for introduction. It is to be hoped that the NCERT which, we are told, is responsible for 'B' Stream English syllabus at those levels will follow suit.

The CBSE has now initiated the process of revising the syllabus and textbooks for English for XI and XII classes. A Working Group consisting of School teachers and specialists from all over the country and also from the CIEFL, NCERT, Delhi University, the British Council and, of course, the CBSE met at the Mother's International School New Delhi from 17th to 20th August, 1992 and chalked out an outline of its plan of action. Good luck to the CBSE and the Group !

At the University level, new syllabi and textbooks for B.A. (Pass) courses are already in use. The University Department of English has now begun the process of revising the Honours syllabus. So, things are definitely on the move.

But so much depends on the teachers in the classroom, upon their attitude and their willingness to meet the demands of the new syllabus. Good materials can only enable the motivated teachers to teach better.

The whole country will be watching how the teachers at different levels respond to the changes that were motivated by learner needs.

We have now been granted affiliation to the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL), for which we are very grateful.

FORTELL Programmes 1991-92 & 1992-93

1. A two-day seminar on Contemporary British Drama led by Mrs. Leonne Ormond, Reader in English, King's College, University of London was held at Jesus and Mary College, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi on 7-8 November, 1991 in collaboration with JMC and the British Council. Local Convener -- Dr. Taisha Abraham.

2. A talk on Revaluation of the study of English at the undergraduate level was given by Prof. S.K. Verma, Director, CIEFL, Hyderabad at Dyal Singh College on 10 February 1992. The talk was arranged in collaboration with Dyal Singh College (Morning and Evening). Local Conveners -- Dr. R. C. Garg and Mr. R.L. Madan.

3. A half-day discussion on the new undergraduate courses for English : Teaching and Testing was held at the School of Correspondence Courses, University of Delhi on 28 September, 1992. Local Convener: Ms. Seema Khanduja.

Workshop on Teaching English in Large Classes

Usha Anand

A four-day workshop on teaching English in large classes was organised by the British Council at the Ramjas School, R.K. Puram, New Delhi on 10-14 August, 1992. Prof. Hywel Coleman of Leeds University conducted the workshop for teachers of English from the Northern Zone.

Other members of FORTELL who attended the programme were:

1. R. C. Garg (Dyal Singh)
2. Shashi Khurana (Satyawati E).
3. Aparna Passi (Kulachi Hansraj School)
4. S. C. Sood (Dyal Singh E)

In the course of deliberations at the Workshop, it emerged that the size of a class could be turned to advantage.

As I left the workshop, the realisation was reinforced that the days of lectures and cane-wielding disciplinarian teachers had ended long long ago. It is the age of self-learning, and self-access where the teacher is only a facilitator.

I went to the workshop looking for a prescription for 'teaching' large classes of approximately a hundred students. Very early on in the discussions I realised that the key word was not 'teaching', it was 'learning'. Learner orientation and learner motivation are very strong factors in the classroom. Among the strategies put forth for tackling large classes, the most important was group activity. Dividing students into groups with a spokesman for each group was an effective way to draw out the reticent ones. Peer learning is easier and less stressful than following a teacher speaking from the podium. Of course, the general control of the class remains in the teacher's hands. But this gives him a chance to observe and interact with students as and when intervention is required. Group activity would be more relevant to teaching English in accordance with modern day needs where reading comprehension, writing skills and oral communication are equally important. Ex-

perience shows that inhibitions are best shed in the company of peers. Less self-conscious in a peer group, students learn fast and find even their mistakes being pointed out less painful. Simultaneously, the physical strain on a teacher is reduced, enabling him/her to respond with greater alertness and sympathy to the needs of students.

Classroom demonstrations by some of the participants enlivened the workshop. Fortunately, the class was very lively and bright, and very spontaneous in its reactions to even new teachers. This is a measure of the kind of confidence built into the personalities of sixteen year olds by Ramjas School whose students these were. I am sure this confidence is rooted in teacher-student interaction at the School.

Report on the Book Release Function for B.A. (Pass) II year books.

At a simple function held at the Seminar Room of the Arts Faculty, three textbooks for II year students of the B.A. (Pass) course were released by Prof. A.L. Nagar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor on 6th August, 1992. The function was presided over by Prof. Mythili Kaul, Head of the Department of English, Delhi University.

The following members of FORTELL have contributed to these books.

I. *Developing Language Skills II* (Delhi: Doaba House, 1992).

1. S. C. Sood, Co-ordinator
2. Naresh Jain
3. Gopal Krishan

II. *A Foundation English Course for Undergraduates Book II* (Delhi: Delhi University, 1992).

1. Tara Chadha
2. A. L. Khanna
3. K. Ojha
4. Kusum Virmani

IATEFL's ELT Journal celebrates 25th Anniversary.

If you have not yet seen January 1992 (Vol. 46/1) issue of the ELTJ do take a look, it has some interesting papers. There is Alan Maley's article on the ELT profession - he discusses what kind of professionals we are. One may not agree with him entirely but it does make us think. Then there is Penny Ur's 'Teacher Learning' where she discusses the divide between the theoretical and practical or the academic and the professional aspects of teacher training and suggests a possible alternative: "theory of action" and quotes J.Colderhead. "The relationship between theory and practice in teacher education is not one of implementation - theory being translated into practice - but a continuously interactive one." Another article of interest to members of the profession is: 'Making it Happen' by Denise Murray - it is about making ELT professionals work. Helping each other in pairs is the theme of Julian Edge's Cooperative Development.

For those interested in teaching listening skills there is the survey review of some recent materials. There is a lot more!

Forthcoming Programmes

The 27th International IATEFL Conference is scheduled to be held at Swansea, Wales on 4-7 April, 1993. Last date for receipt of proposals for paper/poster presentation is 20 November, 1992. For more details, contact the Secretary.

1. In collaboration with Ramlal Anand College, Benito Juarez Road, New Delhi a two-day programme on the Teaching of Poetry is proposed to be held at the College, in December, 1992. The programme will include presentations, actual demonstration before a class, recitations, poster presentations and discussion.

Those who are interested in participating in the programme should contact Gulshan R. Taneja, Ramlal Anand College. Tel. 2254607/ S.C. Sood, Dyal Singh (E) College. Tel. 5599522/Naresh Jain (SCC) Tel. 5500179. Those who are not willing to present papers in the main programme are welcome

to submit their analysis of poems etc. in the form of poster presentation.

2. Teacher Training through Distance Education, December, 1992

Prem Mathur (British Council) and the Secretary, FORTELL will coordinate.

Please send your proposals to either of them.

The Secretary has procured a copy of the Report of a national project team appointed by the Australian Government to develop proposals for a National Policy for the Application of Distance Learning to inservice teacher training in Australia. The document dated November 1991 is entitled: "Open Access for Teachers' Professional Development". Members are welcome to consult the report.

3. Teaching of Literature, December 1992.

Suggestions for other programmes are invited.

Shelley on Love

[Shelley's bicentenary was celebrated on 4 August, 1992]

N. P. Singh

Nathaniel Brown has made a penetrating study of Shelley in his seminal work *Sexuality and Feminism in Shelley* (Harvard University Press, 1979). He presents Shelley as a keen and perceptive student of sexual love. The notion that the starry-eyed poet considered love as a platonic ideal and the lovers as two angels holding hands and admiring each other from a distance is dispelled from a perusal of Brown's book. The writer is of the view that Shelley emerges before us neither as a voluptuary like Lord Byron nor as an ascetic like Saint Francis of Assisi. Following the ideals of the Greeks, he advocated the golden mean between unrestrained debauchery and vehement suppression of the life of instincts.

It is a fact that Shelley was a keen admirer of Greek life and literature. He, however, was not an uncritical admirer of the Greek way of life. He subjected Greek civilization and life to a ruthless scrutiny

FORTELL Family

Academic Update

Pankaj Bhan (Swami Shradhnand College, Delhi) has left for U.K. to do M.Sc. (Applied Linguistics) at the University of Edinburgh, under the British Technical Co-operation Training Programme (TCTP).

Kamal Bhasin (ARSD College, Delhi) registered for Ph.D. on "Dialectics of Selfhood of Women in Modern American Drama: A Study of Selective Plays of O'Neill, Williams, Miller and Albee".

Veena Bhasin (Summerville School, Noida) went to England for training in ELT under TCTP programme of the Overseas Development Administration, U.K.

Tara Chadha (S.P.M. College, Delhi) has completed her M.Phil in Comparative Literature from the Department of Modern Indian Languages, University of Delhi.

Vikram Chopra (ARSD College, Delhi) is editing an anthology of criticism on Shakespeare entitled *Shakespeare: Varied Perspectives*. He is the Secretary, Shakespeare Society of India, Co-ordinating Editor for India for the *Shakespeare Data Bank*, Illinois and a member of the International Committee, World Shakespeare Bibliography. He is also preparing an annotated bibliography of Shakespeare scholarship in India (Books, Articles, Reviews, etc.). Details of Indian publications on Shakespeare could be sent to him at C-2/117, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058. Telephone No. 5553181.

R. W. Desai "Kafka and His 'Great Witness : Jonathan Swift", *Journal of the Kafka Society of America* (Vol 13) [1991].

.....Paper read in Vancouver (1991) at the the International Milton Conference. "'Thus measuring things in Heaven by things on earth': The Human Norm in *Paradise Lost*".

.....Was asked to "lead" a 3-day seminar on *Hamlet* at the Ammerdown Centre in Bath (U.K.) [1991].

..... Editor of *Hamlet Studies* of which Vol. 14 (1992) has just been published.

Madhu Gurtu (S.P.M. College, Delhi) has published her Ph.D. dissertation under the title *Anaphoric Relation in Hindi and English* (Delhi, Munshi Ram Manoharlal, 1992).

Naresh Jain (SCC) has published his Ph.D. dissertation under the title *Love in Modern American Drama* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1991). He is also editing an anthology of papers on *Women in Indo-Anglian Novels: Tradition and Modernity*.

A. L. Khanna, Co-auth. "Evaluating the Readability of school textbooks: An Indian Study". *Journal of Reading* (1991) 35.4:282-88; "Language in Education: The Case of India", *International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics* (1992) 20.2 : 133-42.

...Taught at York ESOL Easter School, York (U.K.). March 30 - April 2, 1992: presented a paper in Socio-linguistic Symposium, University of Reading, Reading. April 2 - 4, 1992; participated in Vernacular literacy workshop of the International Group for the Study of Language Standardisation and the Vernacularisation Literacy at Sevres (France), April 10 - 13, 1992.

...Co-editing a series in Applied Linguistics; the first two books : *Second Language Acquisition: Socio-cultural and Linguistic Aspects of English in India* and *ELT in India: From Curriculum Design to Evaluation* are likely to be released soon.

Geeta Kumar (S.P.M. College, Delhi) has completed her M.Phil in Comparative Literature from the Department of Modern Indian Languages, University of Delhi.

Prem Mathur (British Council, New Delhi) read his own Hindi translation of Shelley's poems at India International Centre on 4th August 1992 at a function to commemorate the 200th birth anniversary of the poet. Also made a presentation on Curriculum and Materials Design at CBSE Seminar on New Curriculum for +2 English at Mother's International School, August 1992.

Aparna Passi (Kulachi Hansraj School, Delhi) tried out some methods of handling large clas-

in his comparatively unknown essay *A Discourse on the Manners of the Ancient Greeks Relative to the Subject of Love*. This work was not published in its entirety till 1931. Mary Shelley deleted the latter half of the essay in which an attempt was made by Shelley to compare and contrast the Greek attitude to women and sex with the then current English attitude. His love and admiration for the Greek way of life did not prevent Shelley from pinpointing two cardinal shortcomings of the Greeks, the institution of slavery and the social inferiority of women. Towards the end of the essay Shelley drew attention to the great paradox of Greek civilization - "Among the ancient Greeks the male sex, one half of the human race, received the highest cultivation and refinement; whilst the other, so far as intellect is concerned, were educated as slaves, and were raised but few degrees in all that related to moral or intellectual excellence above the condition of savages."¹ This great paradox of Greek civilization led to the degradation of women - and to that of men as well. Man-woman relationship in ancient Greece was devoid of the emotional tie and fulfilment that marked man-woman relationship in nineteenth century Europe. Even among the Romans, the woman had a much higher position than among the Greeks. It is no wonder that among the Greeks, emotional tie and fulfilment was sought in man-man relationship. Women were marginalized among the Greeks and, by and large, ceased to play a role that could help them to realize fully their moral and intellectual potential.

Brown has made a study of Shelley's major poems and other works in the light of his commitment to the emancipation of women from the shackles of the decadent values in a patriarchal social order. Shelley attacked male possessiveness in sexual love and regarded it as a negation of free love based on the consent of the male and the female. Free love was only possible when it was a privilege both of the male and the female. Shelley found a double standard operating in society as far as the ideal of a monogamous marriage was concerned. While the male was permitted to defy monogamy, the female was bound relentlessly to the norm of monogamy. It was because of the hypocrisy of the society in nineteenth century

England that Shelley attacked monogamy so vehemently in *Epipsychidion*:

I never was attached to
that great sect,
Whose doctrine is, that each
one should select
One out of the crowd, a
mistress or a friend,
And all the rest, though fair
and wise commend
To cold oblivion, though it
is the code
Of modern morals, and the
beaten road
Which these poor slaves with
weary steps tread ...

(149-155)

Shelley was so antagonistic to gender stereotypes, the male as the master and the conquer and the female as the passive object of the conquest, that he kept on groping towards the feminist ideal of *androgyny and unisex*. Both the male and female had to shed their inherited sex roles and become and grow into a more or less common specimen of humanity. It is true that feminists today lay stress on the difference between the male and the female but in Shelley's world the stress was on equality based on similarity and kinship at the physical, mental and spiritual level. The social function of *androgyny* in Shelley's time was to reduce, if not to dissolve completely, the male and the female stereotypes and to reconstruct man-woman relationship on the basis of equality, fraternity and kinship.

It is no wonder that two of the most memorable fighters against tyranny and injustice in Shelley's works are Prometheus and Beatrice. Prometheus, the male, and the female, Beatrice. He didn't believe like Milton that man was made for rebellion and woman made for obedience and subjection.

* * *

Note:

1. *Shelley*, edited by A.S.B. Glover, The Nonesuch Press, London, 1951, p. 1023.

Dr. N. P. Singh is Reader, Rajdhani College, University of Delhi. He is editing an anthology of criticism on Shelley during the 1980's.

ses through group activity in VIIIth and IX classes (Course A).

Vijay K. Sharma (Ramlal Anand College (E) Delhi) has gone to the United States under the Fullbright Fellowship programme to collect materials for his Ph.D. on John Cheever. He will also be attending the British Council course on Contemporary Literature.

Vijay P. Sharma (SCC) has published his dissertation under the title *Stylistics of Figurative Language* (Delhi: Publication Division, Delhi University, 1990).

... "Indian English Today", in *English in India*. New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 1991.

... Has compiled *Collins Gem English-Hindi Dictionary*, Rupa and Harper - Collins, Delhi. (In press).

S. C. Sood (Dyal Singh (E) College, Delhi) has been awarded Ph.D. for his dissertation on *Effect of Discourse Awareness on Reading Ability*. Made a presentation at the British Council programme on teaching large classes led by Mr. H. Coleman at Ramjas Sr. Sec. School, R. K. Puram, New Delhi. Special invitee to the meeting of the Committee of Courses, CBSE for classes XI and XII Syllabus Revision.

Gulshan R. Taneja (Ramlal Anand College, Delhi) is the founder-Editor of the literary journal *In-Between*. The first issue came out in March 1992.

...Co-ed. *The Novels of Salman Rushdie* (Prestige, 1992); *Literature East and West: Essays presented to R.K. Dasgupta* (in print).

S.K. Verma, Director CIEFL, Hyderabad, is now Vice-Chancellor CIEFL.

PLEASE SEND INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES FOR INCLUSION IN THIS COLUMN.

FORTELL announces awards for the best papers on the teaching of English Language and Literature

Members of FORTELL and other teachers of English (whether at school or college or university) are invited to submit original papers on the following topics:

1. Approaches to English language and literature teaching.
2. Innovative materials, methods for teaching English language and/or literature.
3. Practical problems faced in teaching English language and/or literature.

Handsome prizes will be awarded for the best papers. For details contact the Secretary, FORTELL latest by 30th November, 1992.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG) FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

Prem Mathur has volunteered to be the Coordinator of the SIG on Teacher Education.

If you are interested in joining the group, contact him at 3711401 (off.) or 7248150 (Res.).

If you are interested in forming a SIG in other areas of interest and at other places, do send your proposals to the Secretary.

'N' for Narasimhaiah

V.D. Singh

Few teachers write autobiographies. For, like that of an artist, a poet, a diplomat or a politician, the life of a teacher is usually considered to be eventful. In any case the events in his career are as momentous or as fateful as wars that affect in a visible way the lives of millions. Or at least, in humility the teacher thinks so. His thoughts do not influence thousands of his students, but not traumatically as political events do. The teacher is very modest about his achievements for he believes

that 'knowledge gives humility' (*Vidya dadati Vinayam*).

This sense of humility no doubt comes across quite noticeably through C. D. Narasimhaiah's (CDN) autobiography*. Accounts of his success and achievements are inevitably tempered with this feeling. It is probably because of this that in the title of the book, the initial 'N' for Narasimhaiah is made to stand for NOBODY.

The book is an autobiography of a Telugu-speaking teacher of English, who was born in a backward class family of a village on the Bangalore-Mysore highway, was married in 1940 at the age of 19, when he was a student in the B.A. (Hons) class, became a Professor of English at Mysore University at the young age of 29, and at 35 the youngest Principal of the University's century-old college.

This 'Nobody' was educated at Cambridge and Princeton, was a visiting teacher at Yale, Leeds and the universities in Australia, made more than 50 visits abroad yet preferred to teach and settle down in Mysore. He has great love for the city, which he considers to be the Cambridge of the university cities of India.

The subjects that prominently emerge in this autobiography are Mysore, Cambridge, F. R. Leavis, the language vs. literature controversy, Mysore University politics, the publication of the *Literary Criterion*, the shaping of *Dhvanyaloka*, and family ties. If of these the four most important words were to be chosen, they would be : Mysore; Leavis; Cambridge; teaching.

CDN has lived in Mysore (present population 70 lakhs/700 thousand) for half a century. It is an 'Elysian place' and nothing would succeed in luring him to any other place for a longish stay, not even the offer of stay in Delhi, made by the late Mrs. Indira Gandhi, to write Jawaharlal Nehru's biography. The literary person who has influenced CDN most is of course Dr. Leavis. CDN has written many pages praising the greatness of the man and the scholar.

A major part of a teacher's autobiography would naturally contain detailed accounts of his

academic endeavours, achievements and at times, failures. CDN has had all these. He tells us how he has struggled to keep alive the journal, *The Literary Criterion* which was founded in 1952 and has continued publication for forty years despite odds like the lack of finance, lack of secretarial assistance and disparagement.

Apart from the uninterrupted publication of the *Literary Criterion* another achievement of CDN's has been the setting up of a centre for advanced study, *Dhvanyaloka* - the Literary Criterion Centre for English Studies and Indigenous Arts, Mysore. The Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton inspired CDN to set up a similar thing in Mysore. He recounts what difficulties he had to face to convert his dream into reality.

CDN tells us how he stood for high academic standards and took measures to free the study of English literature at the graduate level from such ills as rote learning. He pioneered the study of American literature and later, of Commonwealth literature in Indian universities.

As a young professor CDN was very enthusiastic that Mysore University undergraduates be made to read extensively as part of their General English course. In the 1950s he introduced the '12-book scheme' for general reading of good English prose. But like many innovative measures it did not succeed mainly because of the discouragement from several quarters causing much anguish to the Professor.

In the 1960s, CDN was disturbed by the measures taken to improve the teaching of English (language) and raise the level of students' proficiency in it. In the wake of this the teaching of English literature which had degenerated into high flown lectures consisting of secondhand critical opinions doled out for rote learning, inevitably came in for criticism. A certain level of proficiency in the language was seen to be a prerequisite for a genuine response to a literary text. However, this kind of viewpoint was taken to be a threat to the 'high' values of literary studies. This led to some kind of a confrontation-like situation between the advocates of literature and the language

* Narasimhaiah, C.D. *N for Nobody : Autobiography of an English Teacher*, B.R. Publishing House Corp., Delhi, 1991.

teachers. This naturally led to much misunderstanding.

CDN runs down the advocates of language teaching, who say that without a minimum level of proficiency in English, students faced with the study of literary texts would resort to unsound educational practices, such as memorization of set answers and that reading of literature for aesthetic pleasure becomes a burdensome responsibility for such students who lack the basics of the language. In response to such arguments CDN seems to be holding up his own example, thereby implying that given a high degree of motivation even a village boy can learn English easily and there was no need for language-based teaching of English. He makes fun of language teachers who in the 1960s, following the reigning paradigm of the day, talked of graded vocabulary and structures. He says "Nehru didn't use graded vocabulary" (p. 160), but he ignores the fact that language teachers often find the writings of Nehru unsuitable (difficult?) for teaching.

He is also critical of the work that the Central Institute of English (now CIEFL) did in the early years (1960s) of its existence. Not satisfied with the textbooks that the colleges used in those days, CIE had experimented with some new ideas and produced two textbooks for teaching English to (what was then called) Pre-University classes. Later the Institute realized that the experiment was not a success. It then produced *Language through Literature* textbooks, which met with wide approval and their structure served as a prototype for most college level textbooks produced since then. However, the pages of the former are held out for criticism in an address written in 1966, without even a mention of the latter, although CDN had been associated with the work of the Institute for many years during the 1970s and the 1980s.

A sad part of one's professional life often is the machinations and intrigues that a clash of interests, envy and ego generate. CDN too had to face this towards the end of his university career. The happenings being recent, CDN makes oblique references to the personalities in Mysore University, which makes the reading for an outsider rather difficult. However, a full chapter (No. 13) devoted to it is not without its

uses: it gives one an idea of the politicking that goes on in the universities at the cost of teaching.

The saddest experience of CDN's life has been the passing away of his younger son Sanjay in the prime of his youth. References to Sanjay and to the deep attachment between father and son are very moving. The autobiography ends with the chapter on the problems of human relationships.

CDN calls the book an "autobiographical grumbling". But it rises much above the level of a mere account of the happenings of one's life. It is written in a fluent style and though CDN is fond of intricately complex sentences, the book has little obscurity. The book provides insightful glimpses of English studies in India in the post-1947 period. The viewpoint is of course CDN's own, yet many university teachers will find echoes of their own experiences in his life story.

V.D. Singh is Professor of English at the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad.

Sylvia Chalker: *English Grammar Word by Word*, Nelson (first published in 1990).

After a certain stage in second or foreign language learning, the learner and the language user begin to look for guidance for what is traditionally known as usage. The urgency or pressure of communication makes it difficult, nay impossible to go to the basic grammar book and when one does, answers to the real communication problems are not there. Accessing 'Reference Grammar' is also out of the question as it requires a level of knowledge and degree of sophistication that even teachers sometimes do not have. Even easier grammars such as Collin's *Cobuild English Grammar* require looking at a number of entries before one can get a clear picture, yet it is very useful for teachers and highly motivated learners who have the time but the average learner would look for something for quick reference or easy access. But then in the sixties came dictionaries such as the *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary* (ALD) which not only gave meanings of words but also what sentence types ("Structural Patterns") the words could be used in and how. This practice followed what is

known as the structural approach to language teaching. Such dictionaries did not quite deliver the goods either because the learner was not trained to exploit the grammatical information in the dictionaries or because the information provided was formal and did not quite satisfy the language users' need to 'express' their thoughts or feelings correctly and appropriately.

Sylvia Chalker's book *English Grammar Word by Word* would be welcomed by teachers and advanced learners alike for (it being a distillation of many years of experience of teaching and deep knowledge of grammar), it provides a word by word (in alphabetical order) grammatical description of English usage. Thus, one can access the grammatical dimensions directly by looking up the word and not having to go through whole sections of a grammar book before getting an idea of correctness or wrongness of usage.

I looked up **would** because overuse of **would** is a common feature of Indian and Singaporean Englishes (of English and Singlish). Moreover, **would** is used as a past tense marker and also as a marker of politeness in making requests. I got the following relevant information on pages 431-433:

1. **Would** has present, past and future meanings.

2. **Would** is a more polite alternative to **will** in requests (e. g. 'Would you wait for a moment, please?').

3. **Would** is used for making a guess/deduction/ hypothesis/or expressing a condition. Example: 'That wouldn't be Paul telephoning - he'd be away now surely'.

(We are also told that 'd is a short form of **would**.)

4. **Would** refers to a past habit. Example: 'When we were children, we would often walk to school ...' (The author suggests "compare **used to**").

5. And further that **would** can also mean willingness /intention/ insistence in the past e.g.

They wouldn't hear of me getting a taxi.

The above example illustrates another feature of the book - the examples given are authentic utterances,

not concocted examples. Some readers would I am sure argue that this would make it more difficult to students to access the meaning of examples but wait - Sylvia Chalker gives meaning in brackets, e.g. in this case : (refused to let me get a taxi)

6. **Would** is used for the future-in-the-past, that is looking from some past time to what was then the future, e.g.

It was a long cold winter, but eventually the spring would come.

There are of course many more shades of meaning and many more examples given there. For example, there are four meanings under the use of **would** for indicating the past (time) and there are as many as ten illustrations.

Just to get a better idea of the book let's look at another entry - chosen at random. Another common Indian problem is with the use of **tell vs say**. Very interestingly the very first thing the book says is "compare **say**". But I will quote a chunk to let you be the judge of the usefulness of such a book.

tell, told, told: verb

- Compare **say**

(IO+) Object

Tell + O + that clause

O + wh clause

O + about/of ...

1. **Tell** usually needs a personal indirect object as well as a direct object:

He told us his news that he was getting married.

[NOT * he told his news ...]

The main exceptions to these rules are some special expressions with **tell**+ object:

Examples:

That child is eight, and she still can't tell the time (i.e. read the clock).

Surely you can't tell the difference between butter and margarine

People tell jokes/ various kinds of stories/lies/truth ...

This is followed by more examples of use in direct and reported speech and in the passive. Some interesting and useful examples:

1. Tell can be used in quoting direct speech but **tell** should come after the quoted words e.g. 'I am very tired', I told them.

But not: I told them, 'I'm very tired'.

2. Tell is used for commands e.g. '... but she told me to stop talking about it and not to worry.'

3. Tell of is more formal than tell e.g.

He told his audience of his experiences in the Sahara.

Tell us about your holiday/new job/...

Turning to say I found one entry 'say or tell?' which gives usage and illustrations, for example:

Tell is the usual word for reporting commands: He told them to go away.

And then we get this interesting piece of information:

Say is sometimes used in informal speech: Example: He said to go away.

"But some people find this odd," says the author - we English speakers certainly do!

I also referred to the entry, ask since tell vs. ask is also a common teaching point in schools and colleges. Here is the relevant entry:

Ask (+object) + to - infinitive is used to report requests:

He asked us to help (He said, "Please help me.")

We asked to see the room. (or, "We asked if we could see the room").

Compare **tell** for commands.

To sum up I find the book to contain useful, practical and relevant information - both for students and over-burdened teachers.

Prem Mathur

The New Executive Committee

The following have been elected members of the FORTELL Executive Committee for 1992-94:

President :

Prof. S. K. Verma, Vice-Chancellor, CIEFL, Hyderabad

Vice-President

Dr. S. C. Sood, Reader, Dyal Singh (E) College, Lodi Road, New Delhi

Secretary

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Journals:

1. ELT Documents 103
2. ELT Documents 104
3. Problems and Prospects of our Education
4. International Journal of the Sociology of Language 51.
5. -do- 49.
6. JEFL 2, July, 1988.
7. Language & Litt. 1987. Sorrento Conference.
8. Literature & Language 1987, Sorrento Conference.
9. Identifying English Lg needs for Technical Education.

Books:

1. *Awareness of Language: An Introduction*
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4. *The context of Lg. Teaching*
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