
The English Classroom

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About '*The English Classroom*'

'*The English Classroom*' is a peer-reviewed bi-annual journal published with the intention of disseminating research studies and the findings to the wider ELT community. The current number of the journal includes 11 papers which are mostly research-based, experimental as well as theoretical, along with a book review.

In the first paper, **Dr Martha Karunakar** points out that comics and graphic novels (GNs) act as scaffolding for struggling, less able and less attentive students to enhance their reading ability. Her study makes use of comics and GNs to measure their impact on students' English language capabilities and shows evidence in terms of students' rich and varied use of vocabulary, their ability to construct sentences with minimal errors, accuracy in grammar usage, and correct use of subject-verb-object (SVO) sentence structure, reading speed and efficient comprehension.

The second paper by **Madhavi Voleti** and **Dr Y Somalatha** examines different ways in which digital storytelling and biographies of writers help in developing employability skills in students. They point out that conventional methods of teaching fail to equip students with the necessary global skills and argue for an ICT integrated method of teaching English.

This is followed by **Dr Deepa Mary Francis's** paper on the use of advertisements. She argues that advertisements from print sources, television channels, video materials, etc. are student-friendly resources and can be effectively used with Limited English Proficient (LEP) students to help them learn English language in a comprehensible manner.

In the following paper, **M V Iyuswariya Lakshmi** and **Dr P R Sujatha Priyadharsini** study the Teaching Pedagogy and Teachers' Perceptions Towards English Language Teaching in a few selected high schools in Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu. The study reveals that teaching was examination-

oriented and importance was given only to reading and writing skills. The reasons cited for not focusing on other areas are also discussed in the paper.

S Sangeetha Priya and **Dr R Nandhini** in their paper, elucidate the benefits of using affective teaching methodology vis-à-vis lecture-based method for the students whose linguistic level is comparatively lower than the others. They discuss the importance of creating informal situations, facilitating unconscious learning, designing theatre and media-related activities and using blended mode of teaching for second language acquisition.

This is followed by **D Annuncy Vinoliya's** paper on different types of emotional hurdles learners face while acquiring a new language and suggests some possible remedial measures that can be applied to overcome such hurdles.

In the following paper, **Dinesh K** and **Dr T Shrimathy Venkatalakshmi** make a case for adopting The Natural Approach to language teaching at the tertiary level. They are of the opinion that ESL teaching with a humanistic touch along with an element of intrinsic motivation will yield better results in the tertiary classrooms.

Hitesh C Bhakat, in his paper, shows how classroom observation helps in the professional growth of teachers by observing a colleague's class, analysing the classroom process and providing critical feedback on the class. He states that peer observation is a collaborative effort that helps teachers develop and refine their reflective practices.

G Veerappa presents a report on the Learning Enhancement Programme on 3 R's namely Reading, Writing and Arithmetic introduced in the Telangana state to improve the basic learning competencies of children studying in primary and high schools.

Kalyani B S N K and **R Megala** share interesting critical incidents from their classrooms. Kalyani and Megala completed their 30-day CELT at the Institute where teachers are helped in identifying, analysing critical incidents from their classrooms and are encouraged to take up exploratory studies.

The papers published here provide evidence for primary school teachers' abilities to examine classroom issues, go deep into such issues, reflect on them and carry out classroom-based research.

Taking examples from CBSE, Indian universities and Public Service Commissions in India, **Ravindra B Tasildar**, critically analyses the question papers of English language and literature. He examines the use of question words, sentences types and punctuation in the question papers and warns against committing any errors of grammar and punctuation while setting those papers.

Dr S Mohanraj introduces a new book titled *Technology in Language Pedagogy: Current Research, Practices and Limitations* by Abdul Al-Kadi in the book review section of this journal.

The articles are stringently vetted before publication in the journal. In this regard, our greatest thanks are due to the members of the Editorial Board, particularly, Prof S Mohanraj, Prof G Rajgopal and Prof Jacob Tharu who put a lot of time and energy into the reviewing of the papers and providing constructive feedback to the authors.

We are also indebted to all the authors for their valuable contributions without which we would not be able to bring out this edition of the journal.

Your comments and suggestions for improving the quality of the journal are always welcome.

Editor
(Dr Ravinarayan Chakrakodi)

Editor-in-Chief
(S Jayakumara)

Using Comics and Graphic Novels as Tools to Enhance Language Learning

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Abstract

Children read comics and graphic novels for entertainment and leisure. Reading such texts is an effective tool for language learning. Considering the strong impact of comics and graphic novels on young learners, researchers and academicians have now recognised the importance of including such texts in the language curriculum.

This paper aims to establish free and voluntary reading (FVR) using comics and graphic novels as an effective tool for English language learning. An argument is made that the interplay of pictures and text provides a scaffolding to help readers understand the narrative. This not only supports students' increased comprehension but also creates better intake of vocabulary and effective development of grammar. In a broader sense, it also helps establish greater awareness of the self and the ability to relate to the world.

Keywords

Comics, Graphic novels, free voluntary reading, English language learning

Enhancing Language and Life Skills Using Digital Story Telling with Special Focus on Writers' Biographies

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Abstract

This empirical study explores the ways in which life skills can be enhanced by maneuvering and relating biographies of writers and the themes of the content to real-life situations using digital storytelling. The study emanated from the challenge faced by the teacher-researcher to propel students' active participation in the regular oral presentation sessions. Though non-cognitive skills are essential in achieving and sustaining one's career goals, it still remains an unexplored area in the educational policies. The multiple technological inputs integrated into the development of a digital story in this study included images, audio-video clippings and related notes. Mixed methodology - i.e. questionnaires, interviews and observational diary entries – is used to understand the student attitude towards the use of blended teaching.

Keywords

Digital storytelling, Life skills, Presentation skills, multiple inputs, biographies.

Advertisement Aided Language Teaching to LEP Students

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Abstract

Proficiency in English has become the dire need of the hour as it has become a lingua franca in numerous domains across the globe. A look into the entry behaviour of the engineering students in Tamil Nadu reveals that the first generation learners, the students from schools where Tamil (L1) is the medium of instruction and the students from English medium schools at rural pockets struggle a lot to imbibe the content of the study materials and also to express their thoughts in English. Advertisements are prospective sociolinguistic materials, which have the possibility of opening up a wider spectrum of words that are used in social contexts. Advertisement, with its unique language in terms of usage, is one of the ideal sources that can be efficiently tapped to teach English to Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. This paper analyses the effectiveness of using advertisements to help the LEP students gain clarity in using words suitable to the context and in sentence formation.

Key words

Advertisements, LEP students, Sociolinguistics, ESL/EFL classes

A Study on Teaching Pedagogy and Teachers' Perceptions towards English Language Teaching

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Abstract

In India, English education has prevailed since the colonial times. But it is in the post-independent era, English language education gained more prominence and was also given the status of link language. Today, English has become synonymous with social and economic success. Krishnaswamy and Sriraman said "English has become necessary for mobility and social and economic success in the world today." The prevailing scenario is that, English language proficiency has become mandatory to attain success in any field. This created a necessity to focus more on imparting English language education to students. In India, English is taught as a second language throughout the school level for twelve years and at the tertiary level for one or two years based on the chosen field of study. In this implementation, teachers play a very vital role to make language education effective. This paper attempts to explore the implementation of language education at high school level and also endeavors to study the perceptions of school teachers towards English language teaching in schools.

Key words

English teacher, Pedagogy, Rote Learning, Proficiency, Language skills

Affective Teaching to Enhance English Language Skills of Slow Learners

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Abstract

The research paper tries to look at the existing problem of the second language learners. It tries to explain that there are various types of learners and so using the traditional pedagogy for all the students will surely create apathy in the minds of the learners. As the minds of the learners long for invention, discovery, and adventure, focusing on second language learning seems to be a herculean task for them. So, there seems to be a need for an alternative teaching that is learner-centered or learning-centered and this is possible only through affective and unconscious teaching. The primary motive of affective teaching is to teach a concept indirectly, effortlessly through off and online methodology. A mixed methodology which consists of both qualitative and quantitative teaching methods has been used in this study.

Key words

Unconscious learning, affective, complex personalities, learner-centered.

Emotion as a Hurdle to the Rural Students in Second Language Acquisition

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Abstract

“Learning a language is like becoming another person”. The process of learning and acquiring is always carved from the cognitive as well as behaviouristic aspects. Learning a native language differs from the learning of a second language and attaining proficiency in a second language is not an easy task. Learners of second language encounter multiple levels of understanding the task which is always combined with some kind of impediments. The most prominent obstacle that the L2 learners face is the expression of emotion. This emotion is generated from the psychological perception of the learner towards the new language. This paper has a focus on the rural students as the L2 learners and elucidates their problems in learning English. The paper highlights the chaotic stage of the L2 learners i.e. a stage between learning and proficiency. The prevailing emotional hurdles namely social, psychological and biological factors are focused in this paper. The paper also suggests some remedial measures that would definitely enrich the students in language acquisition.

Key words

emotions; L2 Learning; proficiency, sociological and biological factors.

ESL Teacher Competence: A Ubiquitous Factor in ESL Teaching at the Tertiary Level

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Abstract

The focus of the research paper is to have a look into English Language Teaching and Teacher Competency at tertiary level. Student's feedback is used as the data to arrive at certain conclusions to prioritize different approaches of teaching and scoop out what best constitutes for ESL teaching at the tertiary level. The idea here is to simplify teaching by adopting the Naturalistic approach in combination with Intrinsic-motivation to supplement already existing Humanistic approach. Referrals are drawn from personal teaching experiences and from quotes from the specialists to prove a point or so.

Key Words

Teacher competence Naturalistic approach Humanistic approach Intrinsic motivation

Peer Observation and Professional Growth: Some Reflections

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Abstract

Peer observation is one of the best ways of continuous professional development. It enables individuals to gain insight, without being away from work, observing own colleagues as part of their diurnal activities. It provides hands-on-experience of translating theory of education into classroom practices leading to reflective teaching. Peer observation and sharing experiences also provides a platform for in-house discussions and critical thinking. This paper is based on insights gained in practical observation of classroom teaching and it explores the possibility of the process as a tool for professional growth.

Key words

Peer observation, reflective practices, critical appraisal, classroom communication.

Learning Enhancement Programme - Implementation of Three Rs - an Observation

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Abstract

Education is very important in one's life. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) - 2005 emphasized on quality education for the all round development of children. Telangana government is implementing Learning Enhancement Programme or Remedial Teaching on Three Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) to improve the basic competencies of the children. The programme is aimed for 60 instructional periods. At the beginning of the programme, pre-test/baseline test will be conducted. During the transactional period, students will be assessed weekly. According to their progress, remedial teaching will take place. At the end of 60 days, post-test/end test will be conducted to check the achievement. Each student performance will be recorded.

Key Words

3 Rs, Learning Enhancement Programme, Remedial Teaching, Competencies, Curriculum, Learning Outcomes, Strategies, Education, Implementation.

A Critical Incident from my Classroom: Giving and Correcting Home Tasks

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Introduction

I am Kalyani B S N K. I have been teaching English for the past fifteen years. The two schools where I worked previously had three teachers to teach English. So I had enough time to correct the transcriptions and other homework of students. I did many experiments in enabling the children to write and compose in simple English. Most of the writing was done through homework.

Five months ago, I moved to a school which is situated in an interior village 58 kms away from my hometown. The distance hardly allows me to take extra classes after or before the school hours. Here the strength of the students is 256 where there is only a single English teacher's post. There are 73 students in English medium and 183 in Telugu medium. The lower sections i.e. 6th and 7th are run in a combined manner (6 A+B, 7 A+B) whereas 8th, 9th and 10th are run separately. I have 7 periods a day to teach. So it is a hard task for me to pay proper attention to the correction of their homework.

A Critical Incident from my Classroom: Handling Gifted Students in English Classrooms

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Introduction

Teachers usually give importance to students who are not interested in learning and who secure low marks in the classroom. But it is our duty to pay attention to gifted students who bloom with nice fragrance. With that odour they may spread their wings to fly high. Ignoring such students in the classroom may nullify their progress. We teachers are like doctors providing treatment to different people in the same classroom. From this research, we come to know the expectations, interest, attitude and the behavioural changes of the gifted students.

Trends in Question Papers in English Language and Literature

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Abstract

Everyone knows how important a question paper is to a candidate (student appearing for a written examination). This article examines with some sample questions in English of the question papers from 1863 to 2017 by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Indian universities and Public Service Commissions in India. The first part of this article briefly considers the nature of a question paper. The article also deals with the practice of specifying different set of instructions for the candidates in the question papers across India. Reflecting on the current practices of paper setting, the study considers the use of question words (frequent and rare), sentence types and punctuation marks in the question papers. It is observed that the errors of grammar and punctuation are alarming. The availability of question papers on the websites of Indian educational institutes reflects the image of Indian education system globally.

Key words

Question papers, Paper setters, Question words, Errors, Indian Universities.

Book Review

Al-Kadi, Abdul (2017). *Technology in Language Pedagogy: Current Research, Practices and Limitations*. Beau-Basin. Lambert Academic Publishing.

ISBN: 978-620-2-00855-6 (pp xv + 140) [Paperback, Price not mentioned.]

This is a book that has been written by a practising teacher who has penned his own experience of using technology for language teaching very succinctly in the form of a book. This is a welcome addition to the ever increasing stock of reading materials on our shelves.

It is a slim volume with no more than 140 pages but is comprehensive in its coverage of topics. In introducing the book let me briefly summarize how the book is organized and provide a brief summary of each chapter.

The book has three parts as evident from the title: Current Research, Practices and Challenges and Perspectives. Let us look at each of these divisions in some detail.

- I. **Current Research:** Here the author has largely depended on the research available to posit the theories that help us in substantiating the need for using technology in language pedagogy. This section has three chapters namely the Theoretical Background, Development of CALL and Linguistic Issues. In the first chapter the author briefly discusses the availability of technology to present day children and their familiarity with the use of gadgets. (Digital natives) From here he proceeds to show how technology has been integrated with language learning using a variety of instruments such as tape recorders, radio, television and also the mobile phone. However, in today's world which



is overwrought with technology, there are still a few people who oppose its presence and swear by the conventional knowledge that existed till yesterday. The author tries to help one overcome some of the dogmas and beliefs being spread to offshoot the progress of technology. The chapter ends with a brief discussion on Net linguistics and Textese. Textese is a recent development and provides substantial information of texting which is a prevalent practice in the present day. (David Crystal has made substantial contribution in this area).

The second chapter focuses specifically on CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning). While tracing the history and development of CALL, the author introduces a new acronym TELL (Technology Enabled Language Learning). He traces the history starting from the Behavioural contributions to developing teaching machines to the invention of computers which were later harnessed to language teaching. He looks at CALL in its four versions such as Behavioural CALL (which was largely available when the systems worked on DOS environment), Communicative CALL (which was a progress from DOS to Windows) Integrative CALL (which ushered in Blended Learning strategies) to Intelligent CALL (use of Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing). The discussion of each of these variants is brief, but significant.

The last chapter in this section has a focus on Linguistic Issues. Here the author reiterates the fact that best form of language learning is by exposing the learners to language. However, when the quantity and quality of exposure to language in the classroom become scant, recourse can be taken to technology. Technology apart from providing good exposure also facilitates objective evaluation, and often this can be self-evaluation.

- II. The second part of the book deals with the challenges and the author says that many of these challenges are seen in the form of ICT and its uses by the teachers. This section also has three chapters – Current Status of ELT, Modern Learning Trends and ICT Application in L₂ Contexts. Let us take a brief look at each of these chapters.

In the fourth chapter (first in this section) on current status of ELT, the author does not go into the history of teaching methods, but conveniently starts with the onset of CLT and moves to the need for using Technology. He briefly discusses trends such as Blended Learning and introduces the theories put forth by Vadivelu on Post-method Pedagogy. However, this discussion is not very elaborate as Vadivelu does not specifically deal with technology in his proposal.

From here the author proceeds to discuss the modern learning trends in the next chapter. He makes a significant departure by mentioning how mobile phones can be used for language learning. With the introduction of 'smart phones', computers have become redundant to a certain extent. However, mobile phones have their unique features and when harnessed properly can become excellent facilitators to language learning. The move today is towards making the learner 'autonomous' and the technology has a significant role in achieving this goal.

The last chapter in this section deals with ICT Applications in ELT. Among all the chapters in the book, this is a little disappointing and does not provide several details that are anticipated by an intelligent reader. The chapter largely discusses the formal and informal integration of ICT. A lot of emphasis is given on the local contexts in the use of ICT. This is significant because the societal acceptance is more important than simply thrusting ICT on unwilling learners.

- III. The last section of the book is on Challenges and Perspectives and has two chapters. The first of the two chapters discusses the challenges while the last chapter of the book provides some good suggestions for further research in the area. Some of the challenges mentioned are fairly familiar to all the practising teachers and researchers. These largely deal with lack of familiarity and proficiency, lack of proper training, resistance to accept change, availability of hardware and suitable software, prohibitive costs of buying hardware in certain parts of the world etc. Though these are largely true, with proper training and passage of time, these hurdles can be overcome. More pressing challenges are academic in nature. Resistance, which can

be seen as unwillingness on the part of the teachers to accept new technology needs to be overcome with proper orientation and training. However, such training programmes are not available universally, especially in the larger rural areas of the third world and in several parts of the developing nations as well. Add to this there is the fear of developing certain undesirable linguistic habits among our learners with the use of technology. Some of these can be over-dependence on the system, not becoming aware of the spelling and rules governing the structure of a sentence etc. These aspects need a living teacher intervention many a time and technology has ample potential to wean the learner away from a real teacher. (Read Asimov's story – 'The fun they had.')

The book concludes with a few suggestions for further research and deals with aspects such as the real need to close the gap between teacher and learner literacy. (Here the reference is to 'digital literacy' where our learners are digital natives and we the teachers are digital aliens.) The author also discusses how the equipment can be made accessible to a larger percentage of learners by optimizing their utility either in shifts or outsourcing or by creating centralized facilities in local counties or school districts. A lot of emphasis needs to be paid to the teacher preparation and helping the teachers to understand and appreciate the learner needs in the changing world. This can be seen as a paradigm shift in the existing pedagogic practices, and such a shift is on its way to be welcomed by the practitioners at large.

The book ends with an impressive bibliography which is useful to all the teachers. The book could have provided URL for certain websites which can be accessed both by learners and teachers alike. The book is worth being possessed as a good introduction to ICT.

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Instructions to the Contributors

We at the English Classroom appreciate your contributing the articles for publication in our journal. We are thankful to you for sustaining us and we would like your continued support in this endeavour. We want to take a few minutes of your time to help us edit your papers and print them such that there is some uniformity in terms of format and the style of writing. Here are some of the suggestions for your consideration.

1. The title: The title of the article you write should be attractive. Please make sure that it is not very long. Restrict your title to eight or ten words at best. The title of your article should not read like the title of your thesis. Look at the following examples to help you grasp this point:

- a. Teaching and Testing of Writing Skills at the Undergraduate Courses in Mysore University, an Exploratory Study.

This is the title of a thesis and has 17 (Seventeen) words in it. Though this is explicit and acceptable as a title for a dissertation, an article under this title will not be attractive. Perhaps this can be rewritten as: 'Teaching Writing at the Undergraduate Level' (Six words). This in essence captures the focus of the article and that should suffice.

Advertisement Aided Language Teaching to LEP Students at Engineering Colleges in Tamil Nadu. (13 words) In this many words are redundant in the title. We may prune it and rewrite it as 'Using Advertisements for Language Teaching' (5 Words). Make sure which are the operational terms in your title and retain them and do away with supplementary words such as 'students' 'Engineering' 'Undergraduate' 'Mysore University' 'Tamil Nadu' etc. You may bring references to these in your main article when you either describe your experiment or provide an analysis of your data.

Kindly provide your title in bold fonts and let it be centrally aligned. The font size should be 14 and not 12 in which you print your article. You may choose Times New Roman font. This is reader friendly. We will reiterate this once again.

2. Your name and Affiliation: Kindly enter your name without any honorifics and degrees that you possess. Enter your name, the name of the Institution where you are working at present and the address for correspondence with your email id. Please do not provide your telephone number.

3. Presentation of the article: The article to be presented should be sent in soft format. The article should be neatly typewritten (computer generated) using the following specifications.

- Font : Times New Roman
Size : 14 **bold face** for *title* and 12 for the *main body*.
Line space : 1.5 (not less than this)
Margins : 1" (one inch) on all sides
Footnotes : Please do not include foot notes
End notes : Kindly provide numbers in the main text and provide notes at the end of the article if needed.
References : a. Please alphabetize all the entries
b. Use APA format (This is available on your system under References)
c. Provide all references including those of articles, books and websites.

The format to be followed for referencing is given below:

Book by an author

Prabhu, N. S. (1987). *Second Language Pedagogy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chapter in an edited book

Hamp-Lyons, L. (2006). 'Feedback in portfolio-based writing courses.' In K. Hyland and F. Hyland (Eds.) *Feedback in Second Language Writing: Contexts and Issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 140-161.

Article in a journal

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). TESOL Methods: Changing Tracks, Challenging Trends. *TESOL Quarterly*. 40(1): 59-81.

Internet source

Richards, J. C. (2005). Communicative Language Teaching Today. Retrieved from www.cambridge.com.mx/site/EXTRAS/jack-CD.pdf dated 23 November 2008.

References in the text: Author's last name, year and page number (if necessary e.g. (Chakrakodi 2015:54)

- d. If you are in doubt about citing references, you may look up a style manual

4. Length of the article: Restrict the length of your article to a maximum of 3000 words. (Roughly ten to eleven pages of typing using the specifications suggested above. A few words more should not really matter, but the length should not far exceed the prescribed limit.) Though we love to see your full length articles, our anxiety is to provide space for more contributors. If for some reason, you cannot restrict your write up to the specified length, try and send it for publication in two installments. In case you cannot do this, kindly permit us to take this liberty.
5. You are welcome to send a book review or an introduction to a good book you have read recently. When you send these entries, the specifications suggested remain unaltered. Kindly provide all the bibliographic details of the book under review including the ISBN (International Standard Book Number), the number of pages and the price where available. Provide your name and affiliation at the end of the review and not at the beginning. We encourage you to contribute reviews and introductions, as we strongly feel that this is one way in which we can help our readers become familiar with the more recent publications and facilitate their research.
6. Language: Though American English is gaining popularity across the world, we are a little conservative in our outlook. We appreciate your using British spellings and also stick to the norms as laid down by English Grammar (Quirk et.al.). Though we would like to take care of this, it is a time consuming process, and occasionally demands rewriting some of your sentences. You may not like this to happen, for we consider your article as your baby.

These few suggestions are being offered in good faith to help us improve the standard of the journal which enjoys a good reputation in the academic circles. Kindly share this with your friends who might want to have their articles published with us.

We hope to receive your contributions in abundance. That would be the best gift you can make us.

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The English Classroom

Bi-annual Journal

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Volume 20, Number 1, June 2018

The Regional Institute of English, South India, Bengaluru has been publishing 'The English Classroom', a bi-annual journal (*ISSN 2250 - 2831*) for more than 20 years now. We have published scholarly articles on a range of topics in English Language Education over the years.

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