Ruchi Kaushik and A.L. Khanna (Eds.), (2022). *Critical Issues in ELT.* **Aakar Books. Hardbound. 359 pp. ISBN: 9789350027721, Rs. 1095**

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Critical Issues in ELT, edited by Ruchi Kaushik and A.L. Khanna, published by Aakar Books, Delhi, is a timely document that addresses some of the most pressing issues in the field of English language teaching (ELT). The editors have attempted to compile the most relevant and required knowledge in the field of ELT with the aim of bringing about meaningful changes at the grassroots level of English language teaching in India. In the introductory section, the editors point out the importance of the book in the wake of English becoming a global language. They postulate that though English helps empower the historically oppressed people, the practice of ELT has been hegemonic and often neglects the context and culture of the learners. The editors posit that the learners' language must be viewed as a resource rather than a burden and call for decentring of teaching English in colonized countries by affirming the multilingual identity of the learners. They vouch for viewing native languages as meaning-making resources and for making language learning equitable for everyone. In this direction, editors have compiled the research articles authored by expert researchers in the field.

The first section on multilingualism throws light on how multilingualism and translanguaging must be viewed as a path towards holistic language learning. In Chapter 1, the author presents how multilingualism aids in the grammatical and semantic innovation of learners. The chapter also describes how multilingualism in language teaching aids learning through socio-psychological motivation. Chapter 2 demonstrates the need for asserting multilingual identities in the context of learning English. It demystifies the prevalent myths about English learning. Specifically, the prevailing assumption that English is superior to Indian languages is challenged unequivocally. The authors also assert that only when such a colonial mindset is reversed, can the learners learn the language without fear. Chapter 3 calls for a change in the monolingual attitude of language teachers. It recommends that the teachers understand the philosophy of multilingual teaching and adapt their teaching strategies in accordance with the understanding.

Section two consists of four research articles on critical pedagogy. In Chapter 4, the author explains the core aim of critical pedagogy, which is to uncover and dismantle the hegemony and agendas of the powerful decision-makers and to ensure equality in language education. The chapter discusses the postulations of important thinkers in critical pedagogy like Freire, Giroux, and Hooks. It explains the effort that India has made to address the hegemony and disparity in education. It highlights the contrasting needs and purposes of the English language and how a unified or centralized approach to English language education cannot be equitable. Chapter 5 highlights how discourse-oriented pedagogy, as a decentralized model of critical pedagogy, targets how the language is learned naturally (as against the learning of language facts like vocabulary, structures, and usage). It also demonstrates how teaching can be transformed into a 'thinking activity' by providing space for flexibility, creativity, and cooperation. Chapter 6 highlights the effectiveness of stories in making literacy development a liberating experience. It also demonstrates how storytelling and critical response stories can be used as a tool to question social stigmas and nurture the virtues of justice and equality in society. Chapter 7 explains how English language teaching can be made inclusive and experiential through an experiment involving a multilingual approach to teaching Wordsworth's "Daffodils."

The third section on continuous professional development (CPD) begins with the introductory chapter (Chapter 8) which explains the importance of CPD and discusses the significant obstacles to CPD. Chapter 9 illustrates how learner feedback can be utilized as a tool for teacher learning with the help of a study that elicits feedback on syllabus, materials, tasks, and assessments. It concludes that the teaching philosophy of teachers can be aligned with learner expectations and goals through dynamic feedback of the learners, leading to professional development. Chapter 10 explores the possibility of reflection on one's teaching through the technology-driven reflective mechanism. Chapter 11 attempts to answer one of the common challenges for teachers— monitoring the progress of a large number of learners, especially in writing. It studies the effectiveness of peer mentoring as a two-way exchange of ideas and learning between a peer and a peer mentor in a bilingual learning set up. Language is acquired as a part of this exchange between peers in an anxiety-free situation. The chapter also

opens up the opportunity for the professional development of teachers through critical reflection on the process.

Section 4, which deals with materials development, begins with the chapter titled "Training Teachers to be Materials Writers." The chapter vouches for teachers to become material writers. The author reflects on the writer training provided by them to the materials developers in the local/national contexts and concludes that materials writing aids not only in meeting the objectives but also in the professional development of the teacher. The next chapter (Chapter 13) explains the vitality of materials development in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and underlines the vitality of needs analysis, which analyses the gap between the current competencies of learners and targeted competency within the localized context. The chapter demonstrates how customized ESP materials serve as a tool for enriching the learning experience. Chapter 14 highlights the inevitability of translanguaging in promoting language learning. It also suggests how integrating realia and authentic tasks with translanguaging will make teaching wholesome.

Section 5, which discusses the assessment and evaluation in ELT, begins with the chapter (Chapter 15) on formative assessment. It critically examines the gap between the vision of formative assessment within the continuous and comprehensive evaluation and teacher attitudes and practices. Chapter 16 throws light on the pros and cons of peer feedback as a tool for assessment for learning. The study presented as a part of this chapter demonstrated how peer feedback could help where teacher feedback is not feasible. Chapter 17 analyses the effectiveness of feedback in the ESL writing assessment. It calls for considering writing as a socially constructed process that can be scaffolded through feedback rather than as an end product. It also guides the readers in terms of providing systematic feedback for writing. Chapter 18 presses for learner portfolios as an effective approach for assessing the writing ability in a second language. The study presented in the chapter involves participants of a teacher development programme. The aim of the programme was to enhance the writing of the teachers through a process-oriented approach to building a portfolio of their writing. The study claims the achievement of a marked improvement in teachers' writing abilities and showed the growth trajectories of the teachers in writing.

Section 6 includes chapters on the use of technology in teaching and learning. Chapter 19 explores the origin and use of technology in teaching and learning. It indicates the importance of digital education as a tool to innovative and inclusive education. The chapter also highlights how English as a global language and as the most common language in the web world has influenced English language teaching in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. However, despite several benefits of digital learning, the authors highlight the need for learning restricted to information available online instead of cooperative learning in the physical space. They vouch for blended learning by making the best use of digital and real-time practical learning. Chapter 20 portrays literacy as a deictic skill that does not stop with learning to read and write but continues throughout the lifetime learning of technology tools, vital soft skills, and ethics. The author presents three tasks through which learners enhance their digital literacy and language learning. The chapter illustrates how face-to-face interaction can be augmented with web 2.0 tools to enable collaboration and personalization and to enhance the productivity and effectiveness of language learning and digital literacy. In Chapter 21, the authors make a case for Design Based Research (DBR) in second language learning. They applied the DBR approach to design contextually relevant teaching-learning materials using technology in iterations. Chapter 22 describes the usage of Google Classroom as a practical learning management system. It explores how the Google Classroom can be used even by independent teachers with limited technical knowledge in a blended mode to enhance the teaching and learning experience.

The book's final section contains a couple of chapters on inclusive education. Chapter 23 introduces the term inclusive education, which stands for social justice and equality in education. The author also emphasizes the empowerment of learners by making learners feel confident about learning and vouches for a universal design of learning which ensures learning through interesting activities delivered through multiple modes. Finally, the authors recommend that language teachers must view inclusive education as a philosophy rather than as a programme and must be conscious and avoid using prejudiced, stereotypes or discriminatory phrases or tones. The final chapter (Chapter 24) provides a reflective account of the author's experience with the disability of her son who was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Through this chapter, the author provides her personal

understanding of the need for a philosophy of inclusion and vouches for the classroom set up being inclusive of persons with disabilities.

In summary, the book forms an important resource for ELT teachers to refresh their teaching philosophy and practice. Its most important takeaways include insights into how language is learnt more effectively in the cultural context of learners and not in a monolingual classroom planned with a colonial mindset, importance of inclusive classrooms, the need for continuous professional development and reflective practice among teachers, developing customized, contextual, and authentic materials, assessment and evaluation techniques through feedback and the usage of learner portfolio to understand the process and progress of writing, how technology aids in inclusion and effectiveness of learning and practices that enhance inclusion in education.

The goals set by the editors have been attained successfully and the discussions of the book will be of potential use to bring about the much-needed changes in the grassroots level in ELT. An aspect of the book that is worth mentioning is the way the chapters are compiled and arranged logically. This makes the book a lucid and coherent discussion on the critical issues of the field. Overall, this book compiles the essential insights required for the changing needs of language teaching in the Indian context and is suitable for language teachers who want to refresh their understanding of teaching philosophy and practice.

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