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A college student in Delhi talks about the patterns of his language use:

Since Hindi is my mother tongue and I've learnt it at my home, I feel very comfortable in using it while talking to my parents. In school, I learnt English; therefore while talking to friends and sibling, I prefer English. Hindi is also my language with my friends and sibling. Some of my relatives hardly know any other language but Bhojpuri. I like this language as I've been using this since childhood. With my teachers and strangers, I feel comfortable in English. Also to sound formal I love using English.

Suggested Readings

Suranjana Barua
Tezpur University, Assam

Focus on the Language Classroom

By Dick Allwright and Kathleen M. Bailey,
Cambridge Language Teaching Library
Cambridge University Press, UK, First
Published: 1991, Tenth Printing: 2004, ISBN
0 521 26909 1 (Paperback)

Allwright and Bailey's *Focus on the Language Classroom* strives to answer the most fundamental question related to language teaching in tutored settings: what works in the classroom and why. In other words, the focus of this book is on *what actually happens* in the classroom rather than on the planning of language teaching. Given that classroom research is a dynamic area of investigation, the main issues addressed in this book have implications for various facets of classroom teaching including teaching, syllabus design, material development, testing and teacher education. Allwright and Bailey note in their Preface that "Being a good classroom teacher means being alive to what goes on in the classroom" (p xvi), and as such classroom research helps in gaining a better understanding of what good teachers and learners *instinctively* do as a matter of course. The book is divided into six major parts, with a total of eleven chapters. The first and second parts deal with the principles and procedures involved in classroom research. The core of the book, however, lies in Parts III-V which documents the findings that researchers have discovered ever since language classroom research began in the late 1960s. Part III of

the book deals with the treatment of ‘oral errors’ in language classrooms, Part IV considers the complexities of ‘classroom interaction’, and Part V examines ‘receptivity’ that summarizes the research on learners in terms of personal matters such as anxiety, competitiveness, motivation and self-esteem. For those who are working on classroom research, Part VI of this book will prove useful as it deals with the position that teachers may adopt to utilize classroom research in their own settings. Each chapter also has a *summary*, a *discussion starter*, *suggestions for further reading*, and a *mini project* section. Readers will especially find the section on *discussion starters* to be of great aid in relating the main points with their own experience. In addition, Appendix A-H on pages 202-223 also outlines a few systems and models of analysing classroom research.

A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory

By Penny Ur Cambridge Teacher Training
and Development Series Editors: Marion
Williams and Tony Wright Published by:
Press Syndicate of the
University of Cambridge First Published:
1996 First South Asian Printing: 2005
ISBN: 0-521-67137-X (Paperback)

The best thing about Penny Ur’s *A Course in Language Teaching* is its comprehensiveness. Divided into a total of seven parts, the course book comprises 22 modules including practice activities, testing, reading, lesson-planning, teaching regular as well as large heterogeneous classes, and many others, with each module bearing a careful outline of both theoretical and practical aspects. Each module also has separate units outlining the following: i) *input* (background information essentially forming a

summary of ideas that professionals, scholars and researchers have produced) ii) *experiential work* (tasks based on teaching/learning experiences, which may be based on lesson observation, classroom teaching, micro-teaching, peer-teaching and/or experiment) and iii) *tasks* which are aimed to provoke careful thinking about the issues and the formulation of personal theories with regard to language teaching. The different learning modes and defining concepts are lucidly explained in a short ‘Rationale’ section in the Introduction. The first two parts of the book comprise a total of seven units, which outline the *basics of the teaching process* and the *components of teaching language*. The *basics of the teaching process* in turn comprise *presentation*, *practicing* and *testing*, which correspond to the three strategies used by good learners trying to acquire a foreign language which are a) to perceive and understand new language, b) to learn it thoroughly and c) to check themselves. The *components of teaching language* comprise pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and topics/situations/notions/functions; the ‘what’. The rest of the book deals with practical aspects of teaching language, course contents, etc. Teachers trying to teach a language in heterogeneous settings may find Part III (‘Teaching the language: The how’) and Part VI (‘Learner differences’) particularly useful. Ur’s insights drawn from personal experience, and the citation of practical examples based on the ‘reflective model’ in teaching language make this book a very handy companion for language teachers and educators. The simple layout of the book with its effective illustration also makes it very user-friendly. This book also has a ‘Further Reading/Teachers’ Handbook’ section at the end of each module which most readers will find extremely useful.

Second Language Learning: Theoretical Foundations

By Michael Sharwood Smith, Applied
Studies and Language Study Series
General Editor: C.N Candlin, Longman
Group, UK Limited, First Published: 1994
ISBN: 0-582-218861 (Paperback)

Second Language Learning in the Applied Studies and Language Study series approaches second language acquisition as a complex psychological process involving human cognitive ability. The book provides a psychological analysis of learner language, and gives an idea of the field right from its inception to the 90s. Of the three parts in the book, the first provides a historical analysis pertaining to issues of second language; the third focuses on recent trends and implications for second language research while the interim section provides a discussion of the theoretical problems arising from various earlier approaches. For readers looking for a quick overview of concepts (second language, interlanguage, input and intake, metalanguage, acquisition, variability, modularity, strategy, transfer, processing, learning and development, LAD, etc.) and debates in modern second language research, the first three chapters in particular will be immensely useful. Chapter 3 in particular, with its useful illustrations of 'creative construction theory' provides solid foothold to the new researcher in issues of L1 and L2. Besides touching upon various research frameworks, the book also discusses, in Smith's own words, "the role of mother tongue influence, the contribution of conscious processes in learning, and the differences and similarities between second or foreign learner language and child language development" (Author's Preface, p. xix). The theoretical

applications and implications drawn out in chapters 7 and 8 would be of interest to scholars stepping into the area of second language learning. In all, this book is more useful now, nearly two decades after its first publication, as a basic introduction to core concepts and as a marker of 'what went before' in the field of applied linguistics as it is today.

Context and Culture in Language Teaching

By Claire Kramersch
Oxford University Press, First Published:
1993, ISBN: 0-19437187 5 (Paperback)

The basic premise of Kramersch's *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* provides a fresh perspective to the issue of language acquisition by taking the philosophy of conflict as its point of departure. It acknowledges the difficulties that *cultural contexts* play in second language teaching, given that culture is not an "expendable fifth skill tacked on" to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Instead, for Kramersch, culture always remains in the background, and manages to "unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least" (p.1). The book is divided into eight major sections dealing with, amongst others, education challenges, contexts, stories and discourses, teaching the literary text, authentic texts and contexts and 'teaching language along the cultural fault line'. Chapter 3 of the book analyses three case studies of teachers trying to get students to talk and interact as a way of acquiring linguistic forms. However, as the detailed description of each of the case studies and the problems that follow reveal, *context plays a very important role in the construction of meaning*. Kramersch's