EDITORIAL

It has become customary to describe what is involved in the different domains of language learning and teaching as 'complex'. Essentially the field of ELT has been moving towards more complexity perspectives since a least the mid seventies, indicating a growing sensitivity towards what is involved in English language teaching. Researchers' approach to the complexity of learning and teaching cannot be covered by one single, unified theory. There are many interrelated approaches across a vast range of teaching and learning situations, each of which can have a slightly differing foci.

In the past, often for empirical ease and in line with certain prevailing concepts of validity, research studies have been designed to simplify and 'reduce' the complexity of language learning contexts and teaching processes. To do this, fragments of the larger picture of language classrooms and learnings and teaching process have tended to be examined in relative isolation. The aim of such studies has typically been to generate more generalizable insights to a wider range of settings. However, there has also been an ever increasing awareness in research of the inherent 'messiness' of real-world learners, teachers and classrooms by taking a more holistic view of processes and contexts.

In the past theories of language teaching appear to have presented language learners as relatively inert socially. In the behaviorist view, the learner was seen as passive both cognitively and socially, since learning was not seen to be the result of mental work, and did not start with any social initiative by the learner. In more cognitivist views, while learners were depicted as cognitively active in making sense of linguistic rules, they were still implied to be socially passive, since their learning was less the result of collaboration with others, than of working things out independently. Moreover, such approaches presumed a simple relationship between language and learning. Learning, a new language was seen merely as the 'object' of learning, the end goal in itself: the focus was on whether the new language was learnt, rather than what learning a new language in turn might lead to.

However, the realization of the complexity of the teaching-learning situation in ELT has produced a paradigm shift towards a more socially oriented explanation of language teaching and learning, a view of language as a living organism which is continuously evolving taking different forms by a variety of users in a variety of contexts. That is to say 'language users' are seen to have a certain degree of freedom in the choices they make with regard to the grammar, lexis, length of utterance/sentences as well as content. Human beings also strive to maximize the efficiency of their communication by using common language elements that will facilitate communication in the most efficient way. There is accommodation to the language of 'others' in terms of accent, lexis, grammar shared content and other features that are instrumental in the process of effective communication.

What all this means is that since one of the functions of language is for communication, then its rule-governed structures (form) must be related to meaning if rules are to perform communicative functions and purposes in given contexts of use. To understand language and how it is learned, we need to understand how language form, meaning and content are inter-related as well as how the learner comes to understand this 'complexity' in order to use the language appropriately and effectively.

The articles in this issue of The New English Teacher exemplify of what is involved in the complexity of the English language classroom. These articles can only represent 'fragments' of language situations in different contexts, as the classroom can involve many interrelated approaches across a vast range of teaching and learning situations.

Stainton, interestingly reflects on the Thai classroom from the 'stakeholders' point of view involving the Thai students and foreign TEFL teachers. Huang Oanh Vu discusses group learning among ELT practicum students. While, Khanawong looks at reading questions in textbooks and how they relate to national tests in Thailand. Illustrating the complexity of what can be found in the teacher/ learner situation, Kampittayakul describes the use of translanguaging to promote Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC) in one-to-one English tutorial sessions. Another approach to language teaching and learning is Swatevacharkul study of 'Self-Directed learning'

among MBA students. A very different approach is the use of poetry to enhance learners' communication skills by Srisermbhok. Suksiripakonchai further extends the range of what is involved in the teacher/learner classroom by looking at the teaching of translation with a focus on the multilingual aspect of communication in the world today. Other articles describe and discuss writing in a Thai High School following the 'genre' theory (Sutinwong), Assessment of the comprehensibility of writing in an Indonesian context (Djiwandono), communication strategies of engineering students in a private university in Bangkok (Jindathai) and finally a view from Iran of Iranian EFL teachers and their experience and the 'richness' of their talk (Doqaruni). What these different perspectives on teaching and learning illustrate is not just the complexity of the language classroom but also of the central role ascribed to teachers as 'doers' and 'thinkers' making principled pragmatic decisions as appropriate to their unique needs and settings.

The book review outlines *The Routledge Handbook of English Language Teaching* which provides under one cover the latest views and reflections from scholars in the field of what is involved in English Language teaching.

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