A Bibliographical Approach to English Language Teaching

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Introduction

Writing up a specialized bibliography is not always easy, especially if it concerns the teaching of English—a varied and multidisciplinary field. To determine the guidelines of this task has implied many decisions and problems, difficult to make and solve. Taking into consideration the fact that, for obvious reasons, our selection has undergone several limitations, we think it proper to inform the reader about the main reasons that have guided our choice of the books shown in the following pages. In this way, he or she will understand why familiar books do not appear, while others, completely unknown to him or her, do.

First, the vast number of books published in English Language Teaching every year makes its compilation impossible. It is also unnecessary because an important percentage of the books advertised in catalogues are simple variations on the same topic. The reason they are published lies in the increasing importance given to the teaching of English as a Second Language over the past years. This constantly growing demand has forced the publishers to work overtime to quench this academic thirst. Few of these books, however, are truly innovative or offer the teacher and researcher a new perspective to be applied to his or her daily work. On the lines of these words, we have tried to include in this bibliographical selection two sets of texts. On the one hand, we have chosen books which are opening new ways in the understanding of the processes that govern the linguistic-communicative competence in English and which help to provide the necessary techniques to achieve this objective. On the other hand, we have not forgotten to mention those others that have been a landmark in the development of language teaching skills.

Secondly, the theoretical and methodological aspects covered and studied in this field are so heterogeneous that we resolved to divide our selection into four different sections. These refer to fundamental teaching points, the scientific and theoretic proposals maintained, various practical approaches in the classroom by means of student-oriented activities and a list of specialized periodicals and journals.

Finally, in accordance with what has been pointed out in the two previous paragraphs, we have refrained from writing a recommended bibliography, although we cannot escape the fact that every selection implies a certain degree of subjectivity. We
have also tried to offer the reader a comprehensive and, at the same time, diverse selection of texts that try to summarize the huge scope of manuals devoted to the teaching of the English language. The reader himself will have to establish their pertinence and suitability to his or her line of research through academic scrutiny. That is, however, no obstacle to our firm belief that an important number of the books and texts included in this bibliography possess a high level of quality, originality and scientific rigour. They constitute, in our opinion, essential references to the present and to the past of the teaching of English and pioneering examples of this discipline’s future in the coming years. The selection shown in the following pages has been organized in accordance with the classified patterns that follow:

a. In a first group or section, we include those theoretical books that become the basis of the more practical and functional lay-out of classroom teaching. This first selection ranges over books that develop both generic matters about teaching and teacher training, and the treatment of learning as a linguistic, psychological and sociological (bilingualism) mechanism.

b. The second section shows books centred on the teacher’s performance in the classroom. We have chosen those texts that present useful techniques and activities in order to improve the student’s knowledge of the language. They are books on the structure of English (phonetics, grammar and vocabulary) and its communicative skills (understanding, speaking, reading, writing, functions and other cultural and pragmatic uses). This section also contains books devoted to testing the progress and analyze the results derived from the teacher-student interaction in the classroom.

c. The third section presents texts related to the teaching of English for Specific Purposes (E.S.P), along with books that pose the present technological breakthroughs in this field. They tell the reader about future prospects in the use of electronic tools such as videos, computers, interactive systems, etc. Finally, other manuals concern interesting therapeutical and clinical subjects especially centred on handicapped students with psycho-motoric deficiencies (deaf, dumb, aphasic, etc.).

d. The fourth and last section offers a list of journals and periodicals specializing in the study of the aspects dealt with in (a), (b) and (c).

1. The Theory in the Teaching of English


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2. The Practice in the Teaching of English


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3. Specificity and Technology in the Teaching of English

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4. Specialized Journals in the Teaching of English

English Today. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
Forum (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education). Rosslyn, Virginia.
Language Teaching. Cambridge. Cambridge UP.
Language Testing. London: Edward Arnold.
Language Testing Update. Lancaster: IELE, University of Lancaster.
Reading in a Foreign Language. Oxford: College of St. Mark and St. John, Plymouth.
Tesol Quarterly. Washington: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Organization.