

**50 Years of English Studies
at
The EFL University**

An Essay in Understanding

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The English and Foreign Languages University
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Preface

This essay is not a history of English studies at the CIE/CIEFL, a small English language institute which, in less than 50 calendar years, has moved many miles forward, taken on and, in good measure, successfully completed, a large number of noteworthy national and professional tasks, won many accolades and, well before celebrating its Golden Anniversary, grown into a full fledged Central University with a new mandate and a fresh vision. I did not attempt that. Nor, if I had, would it have been possible for me to put together a fully documented record of even the main events and achievements, successes and failures, in its 50 years. That was and is a task for the future which, in my judgment, will call for considerable research, preferably by a team of scholars at the year-old EFL University with access to many more primary sources than I was able to seek support in.

This essay in understanding is by an alumnus of this University who, by some quirk of fate, found himself working as a member of its teaching staff for almost a quarter century. In it I have tried to express what stood out in my mind as having gone into the making of this centre of excellence in language –but especially English-language –education. Large parts of what it contains are therefore based on a subjective recall of what I grasped as student and teacher in this institution. Inevitably, they are products of not just objective observation but also subjective perception of events and individuals at work.

However, that is not all or most of what this essay comprises. The essay is full of borrowings not all of which have been acknowledged. A few that have been acknowledged came from

one or more colleagues or coworkers who, having authored them or put them together from sources best known to them, should have the copyright on them. In most cases I have mentioned their names but, having made changes to each to suit the purpose as judged by me, I do not wish to hold any of them responsible for their shortcomings which are entirely mine.

Other borrowings are not so easy to acknowledge. Products of shared understanding or experience, they came from my association with men and women only a few of whom are here to agree or disagree with what I have written with their inspiration or help. I remember with gratitude the teachers who, 50 years ago, introduced me to the world of ELT; so too the twenty odd fellow participants who shared the joys and excitements of learning at the CIE's very first training course.

Colleagues in the department I belonged to have been a source of immense support and I owe each of them a lot. So too a number of other teachers who gave their best to English studies at the Institute. The Ramesh Mohan Library staff have, from its very start, been extremely responsive to my demands on them. I thank them all. My special debt is to friends and colleagues who have invested much time and thoughtful effort in making this essay worthy of publication. Led by Amritavalli they are, Malathy Krishnan who read the first draft with care and Jayaseelan, Sriraman and Shruti, and also Sandhya, Sharath Babu and Srinath who helped produce the camera-ready copy for press.

I am aware that when one owes so much to so many, it is unfair to single out individuals for special mention. However, since heavier debts have to be paid, I must name individuals whose help has made large contributions to me as author of this essay.

Two fellow teachers who travelled with me a long distance at the Institute are K. N. Devidas whose life and work has been an inspiration to me and the late A.E. Subramanian whose kindnesses I recall with gratitude. My wife, Champa, has travelled even longer with me and stood by me even on occasions when her own interests demanded a different course of action. I dedicate this essay to her.

M.L.T.