



## *From the SPELT Desk*

(VOL. V NO.1, 1989)

Happy New Year!

1989 was a very eventful year for us! SPELT celebrated its fifth anniversary. Five years is relatively a small amount of time in the history of an organization but perhaps the first five years are the most significant as they determine the character of the organization and the direction it seeks for itself. We feel that by establishing a forum for English Language teachers in Pakistan, SPELT has fulfilled a long felt need. We have also established a high level of performance. We hope that in the nineties we will consolidate what we built up.

A number of events have highlighted this year. We celebrated SPELT's fifth anniversary by holding a symposium on "Language in Education" we were honored by the presence of Professor M.A.K Halliday and Professor Rukiya Hasan. We hope to bring out a volume on Language in English which will contain valuable views of local and foreign experts on this topic. Secondly, our newsletter which has entered its fifth year of publication was granted the requisite declaration by the Government of Sind. It will be the first ELT journal of its kind from Pakistan. It also gives us a copyright for the materials we publish. Besides, the contributions can be counted as "publications". We also entered the field of materials writing, since SPELT's first formal publication "English study skills for Pakistani Learners" is almost ready to go to press. This year we have also worked as a team of authors for the Sind Text Board, thus establishing a rapport with the government sector in education.

Thirdly, SPELT's Practical Teacher Training Course has been recognized by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), Cambridge University in UK. Hopefully, our first batch of trainees will get their internationally recognized certificates in 1990.

Another highlight of the year was the SPELT international seminar in October. It achieved new heights of success, bringing approximately four hundred colleagues from all over Pakistan and countries abroad to share experiences and views with each other. Our monthly academic sessions too this year drew a much larger number of teachers who braved the heat of summer, and turbulent city conditions to attend the two-hour workshop sessions which provide rich training experience.

Last, but not least, is the good news that SPELT held its first inter chapter meeting (during the international seminar) in which colleagues from other cities participated! There was a unanimous decision that there should be close contact between English teachers on a national level. We hope that in the 90's this dream will materialize. We hope that there will be not only a SPELT chapter in each city but also a SPELT unit in each educational institution--raising the level of consciousness and feeling of professionalism in the ELT community in Pakistan. We visualize SPELT chapters as independent working bodies coordinating with each other for ELT events and programs to promote networking.

In 1989 the SPELT chapter in Lahore was able to take firm roots; colleagues in Lahore have been holding their academic sessions regularly and are now planning a seminar in May. In Islamabad too, an initiative has been taken by some teachers to establish a SPELT chapter. We hope that the 90's will see the flowering of SPELT all over the country. We also hope that SPELT will move from strength to strength and continue to provide colleagues with the updated knowledge and expertise which are the hall marks of effective teaching. Meanwhile, happy SPELTing to all.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

(VOL. V NO.2, 1990)

Dear Colleagues

Having just come back after attending the 24<sup>th</sup> TESOL annual convention at San Francisco, USA. I am still in a kind of euphoria which was generated by being under one roof with over 7000 language teachers from the four corners of the world. The shared magnitude of the conference was staggering. The events were planned to cater to teachers in almost all kinds of language teaching contexts. There were world-renowned language luminaries as featured speakers. There were symposiums, colloquies, workshops, paper presentations, special interest sections, poster sessions, language video theatre, a swap shop where you can exchange your teaching materials with other teachers, discussion groups, TESOL affiliated events and a clearing house for jobs. The ELT book exhibition was so huge that one couldn't possibly browse through every stall and came away dreaming of all the books one couldn't buy! You could actually wake up breathing EFL / ELT and have breakfast with bell ringers, which gave you a chance to chat with subject specialists and ELT personalities, and if you hadn't had enough of ELT during the day you could share the evening with colleagues with similar interests and concerns. There were also special ice cream sessions, receptions for international affiliate participants and even a TESOL morning walk for fitness friends!

In addition, the TESOL convention was an occasion to meet old friends scattered around the globe as well as to make new friends. It somehow made one feel that language teaching is a very special profession, and no matter where the language teacher is, s/he shares, with her/his colleagues all over the world, a number of common concerns and problems. It was encouraging to voice personal solutions and find colleagues from diverse backgrounds receptive to them. It was this encouragement which 7000 teachers have carried back to different parts of the world.

A few words about TESOL itself which stands for teachers of English to speakers of other languages. TESOL is an internationally respected non-profit association of professional in English language education which was established in 1996 with its headquarters in Washington USA. It has over 60 affiliates within the United States as well as countries around the world. TESOL takes out a quarterly journal to keep its members informed with stimulating articles in contemporary research, analyses as well as methodology. It also brings out a news letter on classroom concerns, job openings and conference announcements. SPELT became a TESOL affiliate in 1989, thus joining the group of informed, professional teachers dedicated to improving the effectiveness of their teaching.

In 1990 SPELT has entered its second and very significant stage of development. With SPELT gaining national momentum more & more chapters of SPELT are being organized in different parts of the country. Hence, we feel we need to reiterate our objectives and the means for achieving them. It is the aim of SPELT to provide a professional forum for language teachers. Our means to achieving this goal are through self help and team work. Though SPELT is not in a position to offer scholarships to its members we aim to provide colleagues with opportunities to share their expertise in a number of ways--by acting as resource persons, contributing to newsletter, or by showing organizational skills in handling SPELT projects and administrative responsibilities. Though all of these require a spirit of dedication towards taking initiatives and putting in a lot of hard work, they help you grow both professionally and as individuals.

We only hope our network will grow wider and wider providing a professional forum to English language teachers all over Pakistan.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

(VOL. V NO.3, 1990)

In July this year SPELT enters the seventh year of its very exciting and fruitful existence. As we go along in our quest of professional excellence more and more colleagues join us in giving fresh ideas and opening new vistas of thought. While moving towards broader horizons, we have still kept in view the goals which we had set for ourselves, one of them being the setting up of a resource centre complete with updated ELT materials and audiovisual aids, with loan facilities for members. This has seemed to be the hardest of all our objectives because SPELT still does not have even office space to run its four projects which have grown larger and larger every year. However, now we have found a temporary place to house our ELT books, videos & cassettes.

Nasra School has graciously given us a few shelves in their school library. Nasra School is centrally located on garden road and the library will remain open from 9 am to 4 pm. This will enable most of our members to use this facility. We still need to work out the mechanics of operating our ELT library. Members wanting to use this facility will need a library card; rules and regulations for borrowing the books will also need to be ironed out. There are cartons of books donated by the British Council, OUP, PACC and USIS, materials from Australian multicultural language centre, RELS, Singapore, CIEFL, India and newsletters from IATEFL and TESOL branches which need to be cataloged and put in order. Members will be able to use these materials as soon as our dream of having an ELT resource centre seems to be within reach. But this really amounts to starting a new project. Any volunteer for help?

Our annual seminar is round the corner too. It's an event a lot of us look forward to. The theme of this year is "Evaluation / Adaption of Materials for Classroom Use". The prescribed course books are often identified as a major problem for teachers. They are either dull, drab, and unattractive, or written for settings and cultures other than ours. Under these circumstances, learning to adapt them to the needs of our learners seems to be one effective way of improving the present situation. A lot of our teachers are brimming with innovative techniques and ideas. We look forward to sharing their expertise and experiences during the seminar.

We also look forward to the annual seminar this year as a very special occasion in which we hope to schedule a formal inter chapter meeting of SPELT. SPELTers from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Multan & Karachi will get a chance to meet and discuss their professional concerns and the working of SPELT on a national level. This augurs well for ELT in Pakistan.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

(VOL. V NO.4, 1990)

This issue comes out on the occasion of the sixth annual seminar of SPELT. This Seminar is now seen as a major ELT event in Pakistan towards which interested colleagues look forward to attending annually. For those of us who are involved in the planning of SPELT's ELT events, it seems to come almost on the heels of the last one. We had hardly wound up last year's seminar affairs, when it was time to begin the planning for this seminar in 1990. It seemed harder to plan for it this time specifically as there are now other major SPELT activities which take up a lot of out planning time. For instance, the SPELT newsletter, which earlier was printed only once a year but is now printed four times a year. In the same way, the Practical Teacher Training Course has been affiliated to the Cambridge University RSA COTE course and we are already thinking of proposing to start the DOTE (Diploma of Teaching English) program. Another sphere of activity which has increased is the coordination with other chapters of SPELT which has started functioning with a fair amount of regularity in Islamabad, Lahore and Multan. It is thrilling to know that on the last Monday of every month colleagues in other parts of Pakistan are simultaneously holding Academic sessions in a desire to upgrade/share their expertise on a platform provided by SPELT.

All these developments have made it vital for SPELT to schedule an inter-chapter meeting during the seminar this year. SPELT has always followed the policy of sharing and of team work – not only sharing professional expertise but also sharing the work load in planning and preparation of the ELT events that take place under the auspices of SPELT. We hope that at the inter-chapter meeting, we will work out ways to streamline our work a little more than at present.

We can visualize three areas in which there is a distinct possibility of rotating responsibilities because of which members of each chapter get a chance to grow in leadership roles as well as in professional expertise. For instance, if the annual seminar could be hosted by a different chapter each year, a larger number of colleagues from all chapters would get a chance to be more actively involved in its management while also providing an opportunity to improve the general ELT awareness level of the participants from that particular region who attend the seminar. Besides, seminars are a wonderful forum for networking, for meeting, developing professionalism and for confidence building in one's own ability as a teacher. The second avenue is the Practical Teacher Training course. The course, having been conducted in Karachi for the past five years, has developed to match international standards. It can now be run successfully by any chapter which is willing to take up the responsibility for local planning and coordination. The other chapters can start this course with an advantage as the spade work has already been done. Also getting a moderator from England for the COTE program would definitely be more cost effective if s/he visited Pakistan to moderate more than one course run by different chapters of SPELT.

The third avenue is the newsletter which has now developed as a formal ELT publication specifically addressing the problems of teaching/learning of English in Pakistan and other developing countries. The other chapters of SPELT can share their responsibility of inviting articles, editing them and sending the final version for publication, and/or getting advertisements to meet the cost of publications. At a later date perhaps it would be feasible even to rotate the responsibility of printing and publishing the newsletter through different chapters.

These are happy times when we can think of activities on a national scale. My recent visit to Islamabad and Multan chapters to attend their academic sessions was a wonderful experience. It opened new vistas of hope. I am sure SPELT can extend its services to a lot more members and achieve much more by working on a national scale.

Onward SPELTers.....Best of Luck!

## *From the SPELT Desk*

(VOL. VI NO.1, 1991)

We enter the 90s with great hopes and aspirations. The decade will hopefully bring stability and consolidation to the professional forum that we have established through SPELT. Also we hope that the nationwide networking will bring colleagues from the four corners of the country together in sharing and thereby enriching their personal experiences with each other.

The year 1991 itself seems to be a promising one, with a number of exciting ELT events coming up on the horizon. The top most is the Specialists Conference on Large Classes which SPELT is organizing in coordination with Lancaster Leeds Large Class Language Learning Project and the English Language Unit, Aga Khan University Medical Centre in September. This is the first time a conference of this nature is being held. The aim of this conference is to gather and collate data on research done so far in the area of large classes. Around the world colleagues have recognized that large classes or “large class culture” is one of the major constraints in the effective teaching of English. In this conference, specialists from all over the world over will get a chance to share their research and decide what should be done in this important field in future. The organizers of Lancaster-Leeds Language Project will be responsible for monitoring abstracts/programme, whereas SPELT in coordination with ELU, AKUMC will look after the local arrangements. It is also hoped that when the proceedings of this conference are published, they will be a major contribution in this important area.

Another exciting aspect of this conference is that a number of large class specialists will stay back for the main SPELT seminar. So teachers in Pakistan will gain insights into their views and benefit from their expertise. For this reason, the SPELT Annual Seminar will also be a very special one this year.

The theme for this year’s SPELT Seminar is: “Innovative EFL teaching for 90’s” – a general umbrella theme under which all the skills and class room techniques/material can be dealt with. We have purposely kept the theme so general, so as to give more and more colleagues a chance to participate in the programme. SPELT has always been of the view that most teachers have a host of wonderful ideas and experiences which can be presented in newsletter articles as well as at our Seminars. Please do consider yourself seriously as a presenter and share with us your innovations in your classrooms.

This year, SPELT is participating more fully in the TESOL Convention being held in New York. TESOL is celebrating its twenty fifth anniversary, so this is a very auspicious occasion. SPELT colleagues in Pakistan are on the panel of a World Net Programme in which they will answer colleagues from New York asking questions about the ELT scene in Pakistan. Our country will also be represented in two colloquia, Taming Hydra: Teacher Training in developing countries in which SPELT’s Teacher Training course will be discussed and “Language Learning in Large classes” which will have a presentation on research done in large classes in Pakistan. In another programme Pakistan has been given a table to display its rich cultural heritage materials and SPELT publications used for language teaching. The reports of these events will be given in the next issue. So professional recognition and enrichment herald the new decade for SPELT.

Onward SPELTers!

Editors.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

(VOL. VI NO.2, 1991)

### **Sharing experiences of writing text books.**

The SPELT team has been recently involved with the textbook writing for government schools in Sind. It's lucky that the Sind Textbook Board has a very forward looking subject specialist in English, Mr. Masood Qureshi. He has been very supportive of the efforts the team made. Through him the team has been groomed into understanding the constraints under which the textbooks are written and printed in our country.

First of all, the textbooks are used both in the rural and urban areas. A precarious balance between making it too easy for the urban learners and too difficult for the rural lot has to be maintained. There is a wide gap between the two systems which is problematic for textbook writers.

The second consideration is the structural, "content heavy" syllabus which has to be implemented in the book. Keeping the learners' age group, imagining situations in which they would *use* the language, making meaningful exercises in the books are by no means perfect but they keep the Pakistani teaching/learning situation in view. A number of team members are school teachers who tried out the exercises in their classroom. So, although the books are not "field tested"--as they ideally should be--but some learner feedback has been taken.

The third consideration is the teacher who teaches these books to learners. In a number of cases, the teacher's own proficiency is pretty doubtful. Secondly, they have not been given adequate training to teach English as a foreign language. Thirdly, they are faced with, what can be termed as an "acquisition-poor environment" which includes, lack of resources, badly printed textbooks as well as an unmanageable number of students in the classroom.

Keeping the above constraints in view, the team felt that the inclusion of teachers' guidelines should be an integral part of the textbook. No ELT expert would deny the dire need for it, but the educational authorities required a lot of convincing arguments in its favour. In a country such as ours, where teacher-training programmes are scarce and ineffective, a good textbook, with teachers' guidelines seems to be the only silver lining on the darkened horizon of the educational scene. The very number of teachers who need to be trained is daunting and introducing English from Class 1 has aggravated the situation further. So our best hope is to reach the teachers through guidelines in the textbooks. The guidelines given in Book II and Book VI are really not sufficient but they can be termed as a step in the right direction. What is needed now is feedback from teachers so that the gaps might be filled. The other thing that the team is pressing for is the translation of the guidelines in the national and provincial languages so that the message can reach those teachers who are not so proficient in English.

The task of writing textbooks is time consuming , demanding and arduous. Yet this challenge is also a lot of fun and provides professional satisfaction and the fact that we are doing something for our country is a reward in itself. Economically, it is a low financed project. (A few rupees per page divided between a team of authors is money that can hardly be mentioned!). But the SPELT has a reputation for its missionary zeal and so we plod on! Through this column, we would also like to invite practicing teachers to come forward and join the authors' team for writing textbooks.

***A Few Words about the Printing of Textbooks.***

It was surprising to learn that the textbooks are often composed by two or three different printers/publishers simultaneously. Very often these printer/publisher's primary concern is making money. The illustrators employed by printers/publishers have no sensitivity towards educational concepts and they have no idea of the lay out or illustrations which would appeal to children of various age groups. The team ended up by giving suggestions about the layout and illustrations off and on.

This proved to be very frustrating as no rapport could be established, since there were so many printers and their illustrators to be dealt with. The team is now pressing for one master copy of the final manuscript along with illustrations that are approved by the authors. This could minimize the typos and discrepancies in the final production of the textbooks.

Meanwhile we hope colleagues interested in textbook writing will send us their names along with their biodata.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. VI NO.3, 1991)*

Felicitations to SPELT on its seventh anniversary! Every year we move from strength to strength and march forward with determination towards our goal to improve the teaching/learning standards of English in Pakistan. This year, at our International seminar we deliberate upon the theme “Innovative EFL teaching for the 90’s”. We do need to think and plan ahead for the decade, so as to get the maximum out of our resources and expertise. The key words then become planning, premeditation and conscious decisions about how we are going to teach and what we are going to teach. Therein lies the meaning of the term “innovation” which does not necessarily involve adopting new fangled ideas and jumping on a popular band wagon, but to find innovative ways of effective teaching under prevalent constraints.

Almost symbolically we begin our anniversary celebrations with a specialists’ conference on large classes, prior to the main seminar, in which approximately twenty one countries are participating. By bringing the world’s focus on large classes, we acknowledge the prime importance which should be given to language learning processes/conditions which prevail in the developing countries, where non-native learners and teachers are learning/teaching English as a foreign language. Large classes are very often indentified in these settings as a major problem. The Lancaster Leeds Language Learning in Large Classes Research Project (LLLLLCP) deserves full credit for having taken this important initiative to undertake a scientific enquiry into this phenomenon. With this specialists’ conference, LLLLLCP also celebrates its fifth anniversary. Our heartfelt facilitations to the Lancaster Leeds Team on their research findings, some of which have been published and can be made available to colleagues who have an interest in this issue.

We hope that the coming decade will bring other areas EFL language learning to the fore. Two of these which deserve special attention are; language learning processes in non-native settings and appropriate language learning materials for these learners. English is taught as a compulsory subject in most developing countries; what are the learning strategies of the learners who have no exposure to real world English and who are taught a fault mode of English by their tutors? We hope some kind of research can be initiated in this area.

Secondly, the language learning materials for non-native learners are highly inappropriate. Most often they are culturally biased and do not cater to/for the emotional/intellectual level of the non-native learners. One happy solution could be the formation of joint teams of the local and foreign experts working together to create materials which would be meaningful as well as relevant to the learners in non-native settings. Foreign experts and publishers need to become alive to this phenomenon; and the foreign training institutions need to overhaul their training programmes for TESOL/EFL, giving greater weightage to evaluating and adapting materials for language teaching. On the other hand, teachers in developing countries need to move towards self-reliance in creating relevant and meaningful instructional materials.

SPELT hopes that our team will be able to make a contribution in the research area and also create relevant instructional materials.

Meanwhile, happy SPELTing!

## *From the SPELT Desk*

(VOL. VI NO.4, 1991)

Each year in the December issue, we take stock of the situation and evaluate our performances to. Are we any closer to our goals and ideas?

Last year we planned to bring our newsletter in alignment to national calendar, so our issues now come out in March, June, September and December. The four issues have been taken out but these have been hard to come by. Although we raised the membership fee by Rs 50 in 1991 to support the newsletter, we still need some advertisement to break even because of the rising cost of publication and postage. Our primary concern is that the newsletter (as well as all the other SPELT projects) should be financially self supporting. In 1991 we have had to take from SPELT's seed money to subsidize the newsletter. Let us hope that 1992 will make up for this loss and that we will become self sufficient. The second reason for the delay in circulation/postage of newsletter has been to due to the shortage of human resources. We do have a number of dedicated SPELTers helping us, but as SPELT's area of work has also increased considerably, we are as usual shorthanded.

Trying to cope with the increased work load and streamlining SPELT's administration procedures has been one of the concerns that we have endeavored to deal with in 1991. When SPELT finally manages to find a location for it's office, we shall perhaps also employ a full time administrative office to provide support to our overworked coordinators and their committees.

Another landmark for this year is that the dates of the Annual General Meeting and Elections were shifted and brought it forward by three months to September. The new office bearers will start working from January 1992, so this has given the SPELT committees a three month "cushion" period in which the new/old office bearers will work in close coordination to ensure a smooth transition. What is more, the General Body was largely attended, as it was held in between the seminar programme. It was lovely to see so many of our members at the general body meeting. The enthusiastic feedback was catching and has been a morale booster for our working committee. It will give us strength to continue striving in 1992!

On the national level SPELT continues to grow. The Islamabad, Lahore, Multan chapters have been working regularly. Lahore & Multan celebrated their anniversaries by holding a two day conference each. Lahore has offered to host the international conference in 1993, which will give the Karachi Chapter a break. We hope that in the coming years, the involvement of SPELT chapters in other projects like the newsletter, or training courses will also increase.

On the international scene there have been two "firsts" for us. Congratulations to the workshop committee and the RSA Trainees for a 100% pass result in the RSA COTE exams. This was our first batch, and we did go through a lot of teething troubles, but all is well that ends well!

Our other first was the three day international specialist conference on "Recent research in large classes". This was the first time that a vital problem facing the third world countries was given an in depth focus 'on a home ground' so to say. It was significant that the researchers either belonged to the third world countries or had some genuine experience of large classes. Congratulations to all SPELT workers and all those who made this historical event possible. I would specially like to thank everybody as it was because of the sustained teamwork and efficient enthusiasm of the SPELTers that the specialist conference and the Annual International Seminar both were such thundering successes. Bravo!

I would specially like to thank everybody personally as the first outgoing programme coordinator of SPELT for the cooperation and help which has been given to me unsparingly throughout these seven years that I have worked for SPELT. Your treatment and support has made SPELT a vibrant professional forum nationally and internationally. I am handing over charge to a very bright and efficient SPELTer – Niamat Anverali – My best wishes to her and the working committee for 1992. This change democratizes SPELT and brings SPELT to be of age.

***From the SPELT Desk***

First the good news – you will have two issues of the SPELT Newsletter in close succession. No, we have not increased the number of publications per year; we have finally been able to bring out the March and June issues and with all that you look forward to and much more. The bad news is that due to the indisposition of the coordinator, the Newsletter could not be brought out on schedule. We, at the SPELT desk are sorry for the long and inexcusable delay. Inexcusable because a publication of international standing should not be prey to human frailties. Continuous queries from members have further consolidated our belief that the SPELT Newsletter is playing an active role in the ELT front in Pakistan.

To bring you up to date with the SPELT scenario, we have taken yet another step forward in our commitment and contribution to teacher development. Side by side with our ongoing teacher training programmes, the PTTC and the COTE, the workshop committee has launched its programme of quarterly short courses. The areas selected for this year include listening and speaking skills in January, Communicative Grammar Teaching in April, Teaching Writing Skills in August and Teaching of Vocabulary in November of this year. The first two 9-hour courses were conducted in coordination with British Council and the USIS respectively. Both courses were oversubscribed and highly appreciated by the participants for their practical and imaginative approach.

The seminar machinery remained in low gear in the first quarter but gathered momentum in the next. Notices for the seminar were sent out on schedule and abstracts and papers are now coming in. It is encouraging and noteworthy that SPELT members' contribution to the seminar is an indication of the success of this organization as a professional body.

SPELT chapters at Lahore, Multan and Islamabad continue to increase their membership and activities. However, their presence in the Newsletter, other than reports of their activities, is conspicuous by their absence. We should like to know of the experimentation and innovation they have undertaken in their classes.

In the end an appeal for volunteers is being sent out again – let's work together and keep on introducing new blood to keep SPELT flourishing as it has done in the past.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

(VOL. VII NO.3, 1992)

In July 1992 SPELT completed eight years of its purposeful existence. As always its anniversary puts us in a reflective mood, to ponder about the year that has gone by. It brings us back the memories of yesteryears when the very first academic session on 14 July 1984, Talat Rafi read her paper on “The errors of the Pakistani learners”, and there were just five SPELTers as her audience. Nevertheless, they came out of the session feeling jubilant and enriched, because they had discovered what a pleasure it was to meet likeminded people and to share their ideas. That we feel is the prime value of SPELT. It has taught us to focus on our own teaching / learning context. It has drawn likeminded people together, not just in Karachi, but in other parts of Pakistan. Even in far off place like Liah and Bhakkar \_ although it may be a while before there is a SPELT chapter there, there are colleagues who are members of SPELT, and thus a part of the sharing of our experiences. Internationally, SPELT’s liaison with other language teaching organizations like TESOL, IATEFL, JALT, ELTC Bangalore, BELTA, RELC (to name a few) and individuals from many parts of the world, makes us a part of wider ELT community, giving us strength from togetherness.

This year a number of teachers came from the UK on a study tour of Pakistan to learn more about our teaching/learning contexts and perspectives. Sharing with these colleagues who come from teaching environments which are considered “more privileged”, gave us a wider understanding of ELT issues. It has also given us a realization that SPELT has much to offer to our foreign colleagues, through our publications and programmes. Thus SPELT has reached another dimension of sharing this year.

Looking inwards, 1992 was a crucial year for SPELT, especially as a number of our dedicated volunteers were out of the country on sabbatical. So for the working committee there were a few problems--and a number of “firsts”! But we have kept our heads high and kept the SPELT flag flying, bringing home the fact that SPELT is an institution. It’s working committee and membership feel a sense of ownership towards it, and as such we are firmer in our views that the pioneering work which was started eight years ago must continue at all costs. But we do need your support so those of you who can spare a little time, please do come forward and volunteer help.

We would like to congratulate Khurshid Ghulam Mohammed and her workshop committee for adding another feather in their cap by introducing short courses this year. Hopefully this will give those colleagues a chance for professional development who are unable to do the year long PTTC/RSA courses.

Lastly, we would like to apologize for the delay in taking out our Newsletters this year. This was caused by a number of reasons which include financial constraints as well as personal problems. However, we have at least tried to keep afloat by making an effort to take out all the four issues--though close on each other’s heels! The final one is on the anvil! Strangely enough, we never get any comments or feedback about the Newsletter, but it seems its “absence” has been felt. This will surely be a motivating factor for the Newsletter committee!

## *From the SPELT desk*

(Vol.VIII. NO. 1, 1993)

This is the first issue of the newsletter for the year 1993. This year, our primary goal for the Newsletter is to get it back on track, as it were and bring out the third issue on the occasion of the Annual Seminar in October. And secondly, from now on, to stick to the publication dates as closely as possible.

Bringing out a newsletter is a slow and complicated process. We would like to share this process with you to give you an idea of what is involved. First of all articles for the regular columns have to be selected and even commissioned, after the theme for the newsletter has been decided. For the regular columns too, we are always on the lookout for practical ideas and catch colleagues who recount an interesting classroom experience even in a social gathering! So, the very first step, in which we look for articles, is not a very easy one. It takes an endless amount of cajoling and persuading to get the printing materials in hand.

The next step is feeding the materials into the computer. They are then run through a spell-check program. Here, too we run into problems. The computer is programmed for American spellings but we use British English. So the editorial committee makes an effort to weed out mis-spellings and textual discrepancies.

In the third stage, the newsletter is composed for printing. At this point, the headings, sub-headings and the general format is looked at and proof read once more, by at least two members of the committee. The spell-check program is not compatible with the page maker on our computer, so changes made at this stage have to be looked at individually and therefore, major changes in the content are avoided at this point.

Now comes the first laser print--something very similar in looks to the finished product. A number of formatting errors, typos and omissions are corrected at this stage of proof reading. Generally the committee sits together to review the materials and consults each other before an okay is given for the final draft.

Finally, after corrections the laser print is ready for the press. Once again, the committee reviews the material. At this stage the committee is armed with Blanco and a fine black pen to handle minor cosmetic changes. It also has a glue stick and a pair of scissors to cut and paste mast-heads, SPELT logo and other visual materials which bring the manuscript to its final shape. A dummy is now prepared, giving page numbers and the position of advertisements etc. The printing process is another story!

Throughout this process the committee proof-reads the materials at least four times. (Sometimes even more!) We make a very conscience effort to bring out an error-free newsletter. You can imagine our chagrin and dismay when we still spot some typos or omissions when the cold print is out. Strangely, that's the first thing that jumps out and catches our eye and dampens our spirits! Perhaps that is what jumps out at you also!

Simultaneously, as soon as we begin collecting articles for an issue, the struggle for getting advertisements begins. Out of Spelt's four projects, the newsletter is the only one which faces financial difficulties- and goes in the red at times. Getting advertisements is a tough job in these hard times and running after the payment of bills is tougher still! Ideally, there should be a committee responsible for this aspect of the production, so that, the editorial committee can devote its full concentration on the content of the newsletter and make it an error-free publication. Again, any volunteers?

## *From the SPELT desk*

(Vol. VIII. NO. 2, 1993)

This time of the year is very exciting for us, because we now enter the tenth year of SPELT's purposeful existence. Ten years ago we were not even sure that an organization of this kind will work in Pakistan. Teachers are held in such disrepute generally since the popular view is that the teachers are not motivated and interested in their profession. The dedicated work done by SPELTers' proves otherwise. It has shown that teachers may lack direction and expertise, but it equally shows that they are willing to learn. This gives us hope for future and augurs well for education in Pakistan. Developing professional ethics and skills to accept the present materialistic, unsupportive educational environment is a challenge. But we feel this challenge has been accepted by SPELTers, which is bound to have its effects on the general standards of education in Pakistan. It is a slow process, but slowly and surely it is taking place.

This is also the time for us to ask ourselves some questions. We sent you an opinion poll and eagerly await response from all members. Your feedback and opinions are extremely valuable for us and would provide us not only moral support but also an indication of the future directions SPELT must forge for itself.

We also need to evaluate our four projects – The Academic Sessions, The training courses, The Annual Seminar & the Newsletter, we need to look at the financial and human resources involved in these projects. Should they be continued as they are? What changes can and should be made to get closer to the needs of the practicing teacher? How can this be done? What kind of coordination and infrastructure is required, now that the different chapters in the country have taken routes? These issues need to be decided on the national level, between coordinators who have been working in the their respective cities so far. This could open up vistas for reaching out to more colleagues in far off places.

Already we have demands from places like Azad Kashmir and Abbotabad to organize academic sessions for teachers there. Fortunately, SPELT is a non-hierarchical organization where innovations and changes are very acceptable. But they must come from within. It is a great sign that colleagues in different parts of Pakistan feel the need for holding academic sessions. It should not be difficult to organize because it is based on the principle of colleagues sharing their expertise with each other. So all that is really needed is some like minded people can think and present to each other their experiences / thoughts and problems. This brings about group thinking and sharing which is a really worthwhile and enriching experience.

Our goal this year is to increase SPELT membership, and we would like all members to help in our membership drive. If you have any bright ideas about running a membership campaign, please do let us know.

We hope to involve all of you in a number of exciting events, we plan for this year.

## *From the SPELT desk*

## *From the SPELT desk*

(Vol. VIII. NO. 4, 1993)

1993 has drawn to a close. The highlight of this year is the expansion which SPELT has undergone. Two new chapters – one in Abbotabad and the other in Hyderabad – have been formed. And the third one is in the offing in Mirpur, Azad Kashmir. There are several enquiries from different parts of the country, wanting to know how teachers can become active participants of SPELT. Sounds exciting, doesn't it? It does but at the same time it means more work for those who are at the administrative end of SPELT activities. It required more planning, more streamlining and more networking within different chapters. Tricky questions regarding status, privileges, responsibilities of different chapters need to be worked out carefully, so that no one feels "exploited" or neglected.

A number of these issues were discussed at the inter-chapter meeting held in Lahore During the International Seminar in October. Although, we had two inter-chapter meetings during previous seminars, this meeting can be termed as a historic one, because for the first time all the chapters were formally represented at the meeting. It took us a while to update ourselves with each others' activities and concerns. Acquainting ourselves with each other was a necessary step, before we could begin discussing issues of status, responsibilities and the expectations which we have of each other. Although lots of things need to be worked, we already see the brisker exchange of information between chapters, and though the next conference is still months away, all of us are already thinking in terms of the agenda for the next inter chapter meeting.

The expansion of SPELT is also reflected in the fact that for 1993, Lahore was declared to be the main conference city, so the main events were held there. Twenty participants from Karachi read papers at the conference there, (such is the zeal of Karachities for SPELT!!) and there were papers from all the other chapters too, thus making the conference a truly nationally represented event. Kudos to the Lahore Chapter for organizing such a wonderful conference. They are the proud torch bearers of SPELT on a national level.

Another sign of expansion was the novel idea of the chain seminars, in which the resource person travelled to five major cities of Pakistan to share their expertise. This was an innovative way of reaching out to members who would be otherwise unable to benefit from the rich resources gathered at the seminar. Those who travelled on the "road show" in Pakistan are at a "high" with the warmth of hospitality and richness of professional growth, which they encountered everywhere.

Think of joining the SPELT road show in 1994..... plans are already afoot!

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. IX NO.1, 1994)*

This is the first issue of 1994, which has been delayed due to unavoidable circumstances, and shortage of resources. However, the Newsletter Committee is struggling hard to swim back to the surface. Hopefully, we shall come atop by the time our annual conference takes place in October. The conference is expected to be a grand affair and Karachi is rightly the conference city this year because SPELT originated here ten years ago. To those who have toiled for SPELT's success since then, it has been a long uphill journey because ELT was almost an unknown field ten years ago. At the first seminar, committees were made and group reports were presented, because there were very few local experts who could make individual presentations. But the ELT movement has been gaining momentum and our novel chain conference in seven major cities of Pakistan promises to be a widely attended event with presenters from all over the country as well as from Australia, America, Britain, Japan & many neighboring countries. So SPELTers should make an extra effort to attend the conference in the city nearest to them.

The year has begun with other exciting events, in one of which a seven member team from different chapters of SPELT was chosen by USIS for a visit to the US to study the working of professional organizations as well as to acquaint themselves with language programs in US institutions. The tour culminated in the group attending the 28<sup>th</sup> TESOL convention in Baltimore, Maryland. More kudos to SPELT because Zakia Sarwer was chosen as the co chair of TESOL's English as a foreign language interest section (EFL-IS) at the conference. This is a great honor given to a SPELT office bearer. She is the first non-native, non US based person to hold this office. We put Pakistan on the ELT map of the world when we became TESOL and IATEFL affiliates five years ago. With Zakia as the co chair of the EFL-IS, we can be sure that EFL issues and concerns will be represented competently at the international level.

Now more than ever it becomes important that SPELT consolidates its roots as an institution by upholding democratic traditions and inculcating professionalism within its folds. So far, a unified image of SPELT has been projected because teamwork has been our hallmark in all professional ventures. On the organizational level, an endeavor has been made to encourage all those who are interested in working together and developing academic expertise and sharing the administrative work load, because it has been felt that democratizing administrative procedures is as important as developing professional know how. Hence each year the working committee has tried to bring in new members through open elections, so as to get a fresh outlook and an objective insight into SPELT's working. In most chapters, leadership has changed hands and there are new program coordinators – including myself – in the working committee. As fresh entrants to the working of SPELT, we look for guidance from SPELT's more experienced members. However, the new working committee, which took charge in January'1994, has a vision of widening SPELT's horizons by building its national structure on sound and stable lines. While doing so, we must not forget to recognize the services of those who have worked hard to bring SPELT to its present status. Therefore, we have to chalk out a precariously balanced path, which reveres the old, yet gives freedom to the new--not an easy task, but since we have a sincerity of purpose, we hope we will be successful.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. IX NO.2, 1994)*

In June each year we begin our two year long courses – practical teacher training course (PTTC) which began in 1986 and certificate course for overseas teachers of English COTE which began three years later in 1989 and is certified by Cambridge University in UK. Besides these two courses there are the four short term courses, the academic sessions, and special courses which SPELT organizes every year to update the professional expertise of teachers in Karachi.

This intensive training program is a handful to manage, considering SPELT's limited administrative resources. Also, it has also been pointed out to us that this is an "unusual" function for a professional language association to take up. Generally, language associations organize a conference, take out a journal and at the most, run a few summer schools. But we must remember that SPELT has sprung up as an indigenous organization responding to the needs felt by teachers of English in Pakistan. The first and foremost of these was to share with each other their experiences as teachers and to move towards self development on a self help basis. It was recognized that the government has neither the will nor resources to fulfill these needs. So what should English teachers do? The obvious solution was to help themselves, and work towards their own development. Although we had started taking out the newsletter and organizing an annual conference in 1985, a substantial training course was launched in 1986 because the teachers who met at the first conference strongly identified this need. Thus SPELT has the distinction of perhaps being the only one language teachers association in the world to be running two full fledged certificated courses. The distinction that PTTC has is that it is a two tier program. The rationale behind it is that training is seen as a part of continuous "development", so the time between the two tiers gives participants a chance to grow and absorb the comparatively newer concepts and also to get support from peers and tutors to develop and find their own potential.

With the passage of time, we have been able to identify other advantages of running the year-long courses. A year's constant contact with the dedicated SPELT team has brought forward more such individuals who can be taken on board. We feel proud to say that more than half of the present working committee in Karachi consists of the PTTC / COTE trainees, who have learned the value of professionalism – having caught the contagious virus of SPELTing !

The other advantage is, of course, widening the network of teacher's trainers, and resource persons – especially at the school level. At present number of our trainees serve as trainers for government and private institutions. Indeed, leading schools like Habib Girls School, and Nasra School have over-hauled their whole educational programme after their staff completed PTTC/COTE training.

Another contribution of the course has been to build up expertise at the school level. Since our educational policies follow a top-down approach, the updating and training of school teachers has lagged behind. We have over five hundred GOP/ODA trained English teachers at the tertiary level but hardly any at the school level. It is common knowledge that a firm educational base is extremely essential. This can only be built if the knowledge and skill base of school teachers is upgraded. So SPELT's year-long courses have fulfilled a genuine need by filling up this vacuum since approximately over two hundred and fifty school teachers have been trained in ELT.

Last but not the least, PTTC/COTE trainees are now presenting papers at national and international conferences, thus gaining laurels for Pakistan.

SPELT will complete ten years of its purposeful existence on July 17, 1994. We feel the training courses have given it strength and sustenance to travel on the eventful ELT road. Well done, workshop committee and the SPELT team on board!

The SPELT working committee extends its facilitation to all members on SPELT's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Many happy returns and happy SPELTing!

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. IX NO.3, 1994)*

SPELT completed ten years of its journey in July this year. We feel that this is an appropriate time to pause and take an objective look at our achievements (and dreams!) and work out some future directions for ourselves.

SPELT began its journey in 1984 in Karachi and looking back I can remember the first SPELT meeting with only a handful of enthusiasts who had gathered together to achieve a common aim i.e., the setting up of a professional organization of teachers for improving the effectiveness of the teaching/learning of English in Pakistan as well as for the professional development of practising teachers.

Since then, I am proud to say that we have not looked back. Now in 1994, SPELT can boast of a membership of approximately a 1000 members from places as far flung as Badin, Mardan, Abbotabad and Goth Macchi. Moreover, seven chapters of SPELT have been established in different cities of Pakistan. Basically this means that now SPELT can reach a greater number of teachers working at the grass-root level in even the remote areas of Pakistan. In fact, this phenomenal growth of SPELT has now necessitated a major change in the organizational structure of SPELT to enhance its working and improve coordination and networking between different chapters.

Recently an inter chapter meeting of SPELT representatives from all its chapters was held in Islamabad to deliberate over the formation of a national coordinating committee to serve as a link between all chapters. A number of proposals about the structure and functions of the SPELT national coordinating committee (NCC) were put forward by different chapters and discussed in detailed in this meeting. It is hoped that the recommendations will be finalized in a follow up meeting to be held in Karachi before the annual conference in October 1994. After this, the proposed amendments in the constitution necessary for setting up the national Coordinating committee will be presented for approval to the SPELT general body.

It was also agreed, during the meeting, that each chapter will aim to take out its own newsletter to give wider coverage to “local events” and to increase the amount of networking amongst the teachers of that chapter. At the same time, SPELT would bring out a journal--The SPELT Journal--which would be the first ELT journal in Pakistan. This will contain refereed articles and focus on both general and specific issues in ELT in the context of the teaching / learning of English in Pakistan.

Despite the suggested changes in its organizational structure to improve the effectiveness of its work SPELT continues its commitment to improve the teaching / learning of English in Pakistan – whether it is through participation in the curriculum development activities, through writing of textbooks or through holding training and development programs for the teachers. We hope that with the continued support of its members SPELT will maintain its tradition of “sharing and caring” in the future also.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. IX NO.4, 1994)*

1994 saw SPELT complete ten eventful years. These ten years have brought the realization of our aims of establishing a forceful professional forum of ELT—which has made a significant impact on the educational service in Pakistan.

SPELT, over the years, has strived for excellence through interaction among practitioners and researchers from diverse linguistic, cultural and educational systems which is vital for progress and development in language education.

Throughout this decade, SPELT's workshops, seminars, academic sessions & its newsletter have all greatly contributed in bridging the gap between theory and practice in ELT and translating of ideas into classroom practice.

SPELT celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> year by holding a highly successful international conference at the Aga Khan University in October which brought together nearly five hundred participants from all over the world.

In SPELT's chain conference in Hyderabad, Multan, Peshawar, Abbotabad, Islamabad & Lahore this year, we achieved new heights of success. Nearly fifteen hundred participants benefited from the excellent presentations made by the local and foreign ELT experts. On the occasion of the conference, a souvenir was published highlighting ten years of SPELT's work, and this will be available to SPELT members for a small charge.

Throughout this year the SPELT chapters have been working together to streamline SPELT's working at the national level. The national coordinating committee was formed this year, which is a step forward in SPELT's expansion. The national coordinating committee will coordinate SPELT's work at the national level and ensure the autonomous working of its chapters.

In the coming year, besides looking at the academic issues, SPELT would also like to advocate "peace education" in educational institutions. This is a new concept which is an essential need of our times. There is a dire need to raise the awareness in teachers, educators and learners of bringing "peace inside and outside the classroom". In 1995 we hope to do some programs to highlight the concept. If you have any bright ideas on this subject, please do write to us.

By the time you read this the new year will have begun so, let me wish you a productive peaceful and professionally rewarding year. Onwards SPELTers!

## *From the SPELT Desk*

(VOL. X NO.1, 1995)

SPELT Newsletter begins its tenth volume with this number. It has been a long and arduous journey from the four page cyclostyled sheets to the present volume. In this number, we have both local as well as foreign colleagues contributing to enrich its content. The SPELT newsletter is now cherished and appreciated by many colleagues around the world. But ironically enough, we still continue to survive only from hand to mouth – from one issue to the next! We are, at times, behind schedule in taking out our issues. The reason for this delay is two-fold. We are still very short handed and then we also lack material and office back-up support. However, the struggle for survival continues. We share this problem with our readers in the hope that some of you may come forward to help out!

The other project which will complete its ten years is the Practical Teacher Training Course to be run from June 1995 – June 1996. The off-shoot of this course is also RSA COTE (Certificate of Overseas Teachers of English) run by SPELT in collaboration with the Cambridge University, UK. These Courses provide teachers an opportunity to gain professional knowledge and update their methodological know-how. These courses are excellent for those

\*who wish to begin their career as teachers

\*are already teaching, but have no formal training

\*have been teaching for several years, and would like to update their professional know-how.

In the first decade of its existence, SPELT has trained hundreds of school teachers who are now working as master trainers and policy makers in their institutions, introducing new and challenging ways of teaching and learning English. By doing this, SPELT is filling in a vacuum in the field of ELT where teacher training is the need of the hour.

Simultaneously, SPELT has greatly consolidated its position as an ELT training institution. In March this year, we have begun a four-week course for Government School teachers. The project is sponsored by the British Council and will continue till December 1996. SPELT has always maintained that the training of teachers in the public sector is of utmost importance. With the beginning of this project, SPELT has moved nearer to its goal in the struggle to improve the teaching/learning environment of English in Pakistan. Another such project is in the offing at the Directorate of College Education, Karachi in which college level teachers are scheduled to be given a preliminary workshop in the modern techniques of language teaching. In this workshop potential trainees for an intensive course in June 1996 will be identified. This project has been initiated by SPELTers, and will fulfill a dire need of training teachers at the college level. This workshop has also been sponsored by The British Council.

Training initiatives such as these need to be taken all over the country, specially as English is being introduced from the primary level in Pakistan. We need teachers who can teach English effectively

inspite of limited resources and time. SPELT therefore continues to keep teacher training as the highest priority in the coming decade.

We would like to felicitate SPELTers from all chapters of SPELT who were sponsored by the USIS on a four week study-tour to visit and review different ELT programs in universities in America. They also got an opportunity to attend the 29<sup>th</sup> TESOL convention at Long Beach California. Kudos to the three colleagues from Karachi who made their way to the TESOL conference, using their own resources--such is their love for professional development! Our participation in TESOL has increased over the years. And with Zakia Sarwar as the EFL-IS Associate Chair we can now proudly boast of being actively involved in planning the 30<sup>th</sup> TESOL convention to be held in Chicago from 26-30 March 1996. Would you like to go?

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. X NO.2, 1995)*

One of our coordinators visited the Regional English Language Centre (RELC) in Singapore recently and was pleasantly surprised to see all the volumes of the SPELT Newsletter adorning a corner of the RELC library shelves. The librarian said that teachers in RELC enjoyed reading them, and found a number of articles handy for immediate classroom use.

That, in fact, is the main strength of our Newsletter. It is meant to be a companion for practising the EFL teachers. The practical orientation of our publication makes it teacher friendly and we aim to provide support to teachers in their daily classroom activities, making their teaching/learning efforts more satisfying.

Teachers' response and encouragement keeps us going, though the SPELT editorial committee has been constantly running into trouble due to a shortage of human resources. Getting people to write articles and reports is difficult enough, but getting advertisements to run it as an independent project is harder still--specially with the disturbed conditions in Karachi, philanthropic advertising has really been minimized. Due to these reasons, the Newsletters have been getting delayed, but hopefully, we'll "surface" with all the three issues before the conference – so that we can keep our track record of four issues a year intact!

However, due human and financial constraints, we find it difficult to keep up our track record. Also, the conditions in the city do not help much. Frequent closures and power cuts take their toll too. The latest complication was a robbery in the office where our laser-printer is gone--which took away a week of our precious time! Since all the teachers working in the SPELT team are full-time professionals in some institution or the other, therefore if the chain of tight scheduling is broken, everything gets disturbed and inevitably our projects are further delayed!

However, both the Editorial Committee and the SPELT working committee would like to thank our members for their patience and their encouragement. Their constant enquiries about when the newsletter will be out help us to struggle and somehow come up to their expectations. We do wish though, we had more volunteers to work with us!

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. X NO.3, 1995)*

The September issue will come out to greet the participants of the Eleventh International Conference, and to celebrate SPELT's eleven years of existence. We started with one conference in Karachi, but now the novel concept of chain conferences has taken root--which stems from our spirit of sharing. If resource persons come up to Karachi, with a little negotiation, they are happy to travel to other cities, to meet other SPELTers. We began the chain conference in 1992, and in 1994, we had over a dozen experts from all over the world forming a caravan, to travel to seven conference sites around Pakistan!

This year, the format is a little different. We do recognize that an annual conference gives a great boost to emerging chapters. It attracts a lot of new members, and it enhances professional development. But a lot of chapters are not yet in a position to provide hospitality to an unlimited number of people. So it was agreed upon to hold simultaneous workshop conferences in all cities, except Lahore – where SPELT's concluding conference will take place from October 26 – 28 1995. As there are simultaneous intensive workshop conferences all over Pakistan, on October 23 – 24 1995, a presenter will only be able to attend a maximum of three conferences – Karachi, one more city for workshops plus Lahore. This is a new format we are trying out. Let's hope it meets with success. A point of advantage in having intensive workshops in cities where chapters are just emerging, is that they will get exposure to in-depth ELT training, which will help them consolidate themselves, on the professional forum of SPELT. Moreover, chapters, besides developing their professional capacity, also need to develop their administrative and operational capacity. This can only happen if they learn to generate their own funds and stand on their own two feet. Organizing conferences and workshops is a wonderful way of gaining expertise in all these areas.

We wish the best of luck to all the conference organizers of all the chapters in the different cities! It is hard work and love's labor through and through. We hope the experience will not only be professionally rewarding but will also carry SPELT to a higher level of distinction.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. X NO.4, 1995)*

This is a very special issue for us in SPELT especially as our newsletter has completed ten years of its publication in 1995. The newsletter began humbly on four cyclostyled sheets of paper, when we held our first SPELT conference in 1985 and with this issue the tenth volume is in your hands. Not only has it survived ten years of vigorous uphill struggle to become a quality journal used for the dissemination of ELT information around the world, but it also serves as a companion to our classroom practitioners in Pakistan who use the materials printed in it for their day-to-day teaching.

Like all other projects, the newsletter runs on a shoe string budget. Besides maintaining the academic quality of the journal, the committee has to look up to SPELT's friends and well wishers for advertisements to support its cost of production. We are proud to say that the newsletter committee has kept the SPELT banner flying high – and the editors cajoling has turned many of us into authors!

The newsletter committee is to be congratulated for their perseverance and success – not one issue in ten years has been missed. We hope that with the passage of time, the newsletter will gain greater circulation, and professional excellence.

With this issue of the newsletter we say good bye to 1995 – indeed an eventful year for SPELT. Besides the 11<sup>th</sup> international conference in Karachi and follow-up conference/workshops throughout the country we achieved another feather in our cap by holding a conference in Karachi on the “investigation and management of large classes” which was attended by over two hundred school and college teachers – mostly from government schools and colleges. We recognize that unless we take our colleagues from the government sector with us, no qualitative change in the educational setup is possible, as 95% of our institutions are in the government sector. In the past one year, SPELT has made a great break through and has coordinated and conducted a number of workshops only for government schools and colleges. The response has been extremely positive, and in the years to come, we hope this coordination will improve. We also hope that by sharing our resources and by pooling our expertise, we will bring the talented and dedicated government school and college teachers to the fore-front of a movement for excellence which SPELT started a decade ago. Ameen.

So onward SPELTers, to yet another year of professionalism and success.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

(VOL. XI NO.1, 1996)

1995 was an eventful year for SPELT, as we completed ten years of the SPELT Newsletter. In these ten years our newsletter has gained a wide acclaim from colleagues, nationally and internationally. As if to celebrate our decade, TESOL's Director of Field Services, Terry O'Donnell has invited Zakia Sarwar to a presentation on March 27 at the Affiliate Editor's Workshop in Chicago at the 1996 TESOL convention. She faxed the following message to our Editor "You do a great job of getting lots of information out to SPELT members.....I wonder if you will have time to present something to the other editors. We have had a non-US editor there to represent the needs of the editors outside the US--who often deal with different concerns--so it would be wonderful if you could participate."

So once again, SPELT is internationally acknowledged especially as Zakia Sarwar will be first non-US based editor to make a presentation at the TESOL Affiliate Editor's Workshop. In this achievement of hers is our success, and we are proud of the accolades being gathered for the SPELT Newsletter.

As we enter 1996, we must remember that this year the SPELT Practical Teacher Training Course (PTTC) will complete its ten years of arduous journey of professionalism. We have trained over five hundred teachers through the PTTC, who are now master trainers and agents of change in their institutions. We are contemplating a conference on Teacher Development/Action Research to celebrate this occasion in a befitting manner. If our readers have any bright ideas of what else can be done to commemorate SPELT's decade on teacher education, please do let us know.

Some more good news, SPELT in coordination with the British Council has just completed a series of workshops for the government school teachers of District Central (Male). Mr. Anwar Zai lauding the services of SPELT, has invited SPELT to run similar workshops in other districts of Karachi. What is more, he has promised that atleast one English teacher from each government school will be asked to become a member of SPELT. Firmly believing in teacher development he has also promised that those government teachers who have just completed the course will be facilitated to do the PTTC.

This augurs well for ELT in Pakistan. If the government recognizes the value of ELT training, and is willing to cooperate with SPELT, our school teachers from government schools will soon be exposed to modern ELT methodology. We in SPELT welcome our colleagues from the government sector with open arms. Together we will march towards a better tomorrow! Ameen.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. XI NO.2, 1996)*

1996 is an eventful year for SPELT, full of cheerful news, happy events and with a marked difference in both progress and prosperity. How do you feel after reading these words? For the first time in the last twelve years, SPELT has been able to get itself recognized by Trust of Voluntary Organization (TVO) headquarters in Islamabad . Now with the help of TVO, SPELT has acquired a new office SPELT House! How does that sound? Isn't it great, having your own office, with SPELT's own library, a photostat machine & of course a kitchen for you to make tea according to your own taste? A proper working office is there to help you anytime of the day! But at the same time it means more work for those who are at the administrative end of SPELT. We welcome the resource coordinator Shahida Haroon and the office Assistant Nadeem Ahmed who work at the SPELT house. Both of them are busy in maintaining the office, welcoming the SPELTers who visit the office, making arrangements for meetings, answering phone calls, preparing brochures / posters etc, giving the office a proper shape. Since SPELT has its own office, now it requires more planning.

The new SPELT house was full of excited members on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1996 – the first meeting at the SPELT house with the program officer from TVO Karachi.

Now that work has started in earnest, SPELT's work seems endless. Every other day we have meetings of different SPELT coordinators with their sub-committees.

So SPELT has entered into a new historic year in 1996, but the corner of F-25-D, block 9, Clifton cannot ever be erased from the memories of SPELTers. This is the place where SPELT was born, learned how to survive and how to stand on its own two feet and now finally to have its own place, for which they have worked hard, with great enthusiasm and dedication. They worked day and night to achieve the objective of SPELT and will continue doing so.

Mind you, the original corner of SPELT is still there it is not empty – a lot of work for the international conference coming up in October will still be done there. May God bless that house and that corner of SPELT!

Now the new SPELT House is again a challenge for all the SPELTers. To acquire a building is not an end in itself. Like any home, it needs funds for the running expenses. It is the second home for SPELTers. Let's accept the challenge and acquire more members and support SPELT in its endeavor to create awareness for ELT and march towards greater professional developments.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. XI NO.3, 1996)*

September is always a hectic month for SPELT, because suddenly all our activities are accelerated towards the International Conference in October. Although the work for the next year's conference commences almost as soon as the running year's conference is over, we still feel short of time and resources by the time the conference is around the corner!

We begin with the feedback from the participants, in an effort to improve our performance next year. Soliciting for the keynote and plenary speakers and for presenters is underway by January each year. There is a lot of excitement as responses come pouring in, sprinkled with suspense, happiness, and – at times disappointment as a 'confirmed' expert withdraws due to illness on some unforeseen personal commitment.

The pace mounts as the conference draws nearer. Handling registrations, arranging for conference materials, the printing of the programme book and the folder are some of the things done in the final stages. More excitement...and nail biting as the electricity and the computer decided to play hookie as we skate on the thin ice trying to complete everything by the deadline which should have been met yesterday! We dearly wish that more members would come forward to help us with the preparations of the conference which is becoming a grand event of this region.

The main conference city this year is Islamabad. There are also conference workshops in Abbotabad and Peshawar. The conference will commence in Karachi and will be held here from October 17 – 19, 1996. We have received a stupendous response from colleagues, and we hope the conference comes up to their expectations.

The conference arrangements always coincide with the taking out of two issues of the newsletter. In the past years, due to lack of human resources, the editorial committee has not been able to meet its schedule – but they always catch up at the conference, because it is an incentive for them to give a "hot from the press" copy of the newsletter to the members. However the September issue would have not been possible without the voluble help given by Kyren Margolis and Beena Sarwar. SPELT is lucky. It always finds some angels who bail it out in the hour of need.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

(VOL. XI NO.4, 1996)

With the last issue of the SPELT newsletter 1996 on, we can look back with satisfaction at SPELT having met three important milestones. First, SPELT acquired its own premises this year with the help of a generous donation from the trust for voluntary organization (TVO) and a helping hand by many SPELTers, whose names will be inscribed as the founders of the SPELT House. Besides an office, the SPELT House has a modest training room and a resource room containing ELT books as well as audio and video material for teaching. We are in the process of organizing the resource room so that members can use it for their professional development.

SPELT was found with four major objectives which were to :

- 1) Provide a forum for ELT practitioners
- 2) Take out a newsletter with ELT support materials for teachers
- 3) Organise workshops, courses and conferences for teachers professional development
- 4) Build an ELT resource Centre for teachers use.

Now that we have already acquired space to house the books and other ELT material, our goal for 1997 will be to work out ways to make it useful for teachers. Thus the forth objective will no longer will be a dream but a reality.

The second milestone is that this year the last of SPELT's founder members, Zakia Sarwar steps down as a coordinator, giving place to newer blood to hold the main stream of SPELT's affairs. SPELT is proud of its democratic traditions and team spirit in which effort has always been made to keep an open door policy, and encourage new practitioners to join in towards the march of progress in ELT. It is important for the institution of SPELT to move away from personalities and base its outlook on academic standards and professionalism in the field of English Language Teaching. So we hope that the new leadership in SPELT keeps up the good work SPELT has done so far, and continue upholding its democratic traditions in future also.

The third milestone is a step SPELT has taken to build up a research project, in collaboration with The British Council. The first meeting of those desirous of being a part of the core project, took place immediately after the 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference, in which the key-note speaker Dr.Adrian Holliday took the role of a catalyst to bring out the areas in which Pakistani teachers would like to research on. He said that to the best of his knowledge, this was the first time ever that teachers had taken an initiative to work out a research project. Kudos to SPELT for this initiative! We hope that the research will focus on genuine EFL problems of teaching English in similar environs. So we welcome 1997 hoping that SPELT's initiative in the field of research will bring forth far-reaching results.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. XII NO.1, 1997)*

SPELT begins 1997 with three new coordinators and a number of volunteers who have opted to be on one of the seven sub-committees. But as SPELT's work-load is increasing, we want more and more members to come in as volunteers and take an active part in its projects and administrative planning.

What are our goals for 1997? Since we have acquired office space, our first goal is to institutionalize SPELT's academic as well as administrative procedures. No longer can we deal with 'ad hocism' and make-shift arrangements. This also places a greater responsibility on committee members to fulfill their undertakings. They are lucky now to have a support staff at the SPELT House who can follow-up the day-to-day progress of all the projects. With this support, we should be able to improve our working arrangements with colleagues as well as the organizations we deal with.

Secondly, we would like to make the SPELT House the hub of ELT activities. We had two excellent workshops on the premises, and would like to have workshops on a regular basis in our training room. What is indicated very strongly is a comprehensive program to enable teachers to improve their own language proficiency. Some planning is being done in this area and we hope to announce a programme soon. Colleagues interested in this project should contact Shahida Haroon on 514513.

As we want the SPELT House to be the hub of ELT activities, we will also have to organize our resource room which is full of very valuable ELT materials for teacher support. At present only SPELT trainees use this facility, but as announced in the December Issue, the goal for 1997 is to extend this facility to all members.

Another goal for 1997 is to make SPELT's programs more participatory, so we urge members to come forward to work as resource persons and also contribute short and long articles to the Newsletter. Sharing is the first step towards teacher development, so we want our members to share their expertise with others.

In the outreach program, we have signed a three year contract with Faran Educational Society and the British Council in which SPELT will train 170 Orangi Town school teachers. The focus will be on improving their language proficiency as well as providing them support in methodology and classroom management. A similar program with government school teachers is also in the offing, which will hopefully materialize within this year – specially as our last training program for government school teachers of District Central (Male) was extremely successful.

As always we invite you to send your suggestions and comments about SPELT, so as we can mould the programs according to your wishes.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. XII NO.2, 1997)*

SPELT completes thirteen years of its existence in July this year. Last year in May we achieved another landmark for SPELT when we were able to acquire a small office space with TVO's support. Having a formal office premises is helping SPELT institutionalize its working procedures, though a lot of work is still being done by the coordinators and their sub-committee members from their homes, because it is not possible for everyone to visit the office frequently. But having an office which can be reached by members during office hours is still a great relief, and a number of routine matters are now being taken care of by our very efficient Resource Coordinator Shahida Haroon, and the ever-willing Office Assistant Nadeem Ahmed. However, a lot of procedures still need to be streamlined. So, taking stock of the year's progress since the office was established, we can only say that the SPELT coordinators are making an effort to gain managerial skills and liaise with Shahida to improve the working of SPELT.

We mentioned in our December Newsletter that SPELT is working on a plan for a research project in coordination with the British Council. The first meeting of the Research Group took place immediately after the SPELT International Conference in October 1996 in which Dr. Adrian Holliday worked with the group as a research consultant. Dr. Fauzia Shamim was appointed as the local consultant for the project. As we go to press, the Research Group is scheduled to have a 6-day workshop on Research Methodology, in coordination with the British Council in which the Research Group will review its research questions, and fine tune them to forge ahead with a work plan under the guidance of Dr. Fauzia Shamim. The participants will be the same people who had initially enrolled for the research project. A baseline study has been approved by the British Council to gauge SPELT's sustainability for a larger research project. This is indeed a challenge for SPELTers, but given our determination and professional dedication, we hope to do this spade work and begin a large project in 1998. The prospects are indeed exciting because, as Dr. Adrian Holliday pointed out, teachers' initiating a research project is a rare occurrence – in fact it might be the only one of its kind so far!!

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. XII NO.3, 1997)*

This is the conference issue, the conference was initiated in 1985 basically to celebrate SPELT's first anniversary, and to provide teachers a forum to meet and network with like-minded colleagues. In 1977 – after thirteen years of SPELT's inception, we continue with the same aims, but feel proud that the conference has grown in many ways. For the last five years, we have been having “chain conferences” nation-wide, reaching over 2000 colleagues as our presenters travel from one chapter to another sharing their plenaries and workshops with them. This has made our conference a well-known international event. This year we have presenters from three different continents, America, Australia and Europe, and instead of having just one featured speaker, we are fortunate to have three! Besides, our own resources have increased tremendously, and there are a number of local resource persons of international repute who will also present at the conference. In Karachi, there will be over 35 presentations in the course of the three-day conference. This year we have added one more dimension by having two post-convention institutes which focus on primary education. Taking advantage of the presence of two primary level experts, Dr. Brigid Smith, and Dr. Geoffrey Williams, these two workshops will give focused attention to the important issues of when grammar should be introduced to children in EFL settings, and how spellings can be used to help children write creatively in a foreign language.

The other exciting event which is now taking shape in the research project which SPELT has undertaken in collaboration with the British Council. This one year project, formally started in June, will continue till May 1998. Twenty-five researchers are enrolled and have completed the first quarter by finalizing their research questions. In this quarter, (October – December '97) they are now busy gathering data. In the next quarter, they will begin analyzing the data which will be supervised by the local consultant Dr. Fauzia Shamim from Karachi University and Dr. Adrian Holliday from Christ College, Canterbury, U.K. There are two very exciting aspects of this project. One, the researchers are addressing issues which involve the local learning environment. Two, a baseline study is being carried out by Erum Imran, SPELT's Research Coordinator, who came on board in June. In this study, information about the work done in ELT in particular and education in general, will be compiled so as to pave the way for future research which SPELT hopes to do after the completion of this project.

With two research seminars each month, PTTC/RSA top-up sessions in progress and the conference preparation in full swing, SPELT house is electrifyingly alive like a bee-hive. But we wish more SPELTers were active in helping out SPELT, because we feel more under resourced in terms of man power than ever before. SPELT has grown up being financially under resourced, but the dearth of human resources can cause a serious hindrance to further growth.

I urge SPELT members to come forward in the coming elections and help SPELT face challenges in its growth.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. XII NO.4, 1997)*

The 7th to 9th of November 1997 marked the thirteenth Annual Conference of SPELT. Our Chief Guest was the Governor of Sind, Lt. General (Retd) Moinuddin Haider who graciously gave his time to the entire inaugural session. The keynote speaker was Dr. Brigid Smith, and the plenary speakers for the conference were Dr. John Bolton and Dr. Geoffrey Williams. Workshop leaders also included members of the outstation SPELT chapters.

Despite the change of venue, from the AKUH Auditorium to the Defence Authority College for Women and the sudden civic disturbances, the participation of the first day was very encouraging, and to capacity on the next two days'. The Director Education, DHA and the principal of the College, Prof. Bilquis Iftikhar are to be acknowledged for their co-operation. The feedback from the participants will be compiled and reviewed, to improve future conference arrangements and contents.

The monthly Academic Sessions held in coordination with the PACC, have been conducted according to schedule. R.S.A COTE trainees of the fifth and sixth batches and the eleventh group of PTTC trainees also received their certificates.

SPELT has successfully completed three sessions of language training for the Orangi School teachers. This is a collaborative venture between SPELT, the British Council and Faran Educational Society (FES), through which FES will build its own training program.

The Research Project initiated and organized by SPELT, with support from the British Council, paves the way for further research and data compilation in the field of teacher development. The project will be completed in May 1998. Dr. Fauzia Shamim, from Karachi University and Dr. Adrian Holliday from Australia are the consultants for this project. The A.K.I.E.D, Director Dr. Robert Baker has also expressed interest in the outcome and follow-up of this SPELT venture.

From January 1998, SPELT begins an intensive two-month language proficiency course specially designed for new entrants of the NED University in which nineteen SPELT tutors and approximately seven hundred students will be involved.

In short, SPELT has intensified its language teaching activities since it moved to SPELT House. Best of luck for 1998.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. XIII NO.1, 1998)*

1998 began very eventfully for SPELT. We took up a massive project with the Humanities Department, NED University of Science and Technology. In this project an intensive English Language Program of 120 hours was designed for the new entrants of the University. The sheer numbers are daunting because it involved approximately 650 students who were taught by nineteen tutors for 8 weeks. The dedication, hard work and the professional attitude of the tutors on the project has been commendable. What SPELT feels proud about is that a number of SPELT trainers worked as tutors on this course. In 14 years SPELT has reached a point, where besides this project, another high powered six-week training program was started at Karsaz in mid-February for English Language Teachers in Naval institutions. The administrative work involved in these two projects would not be possible without the support of the SPELT personnel, and volunteers.

Simultaneously, in the midst of these two activities, the Research Group, which is nearing the end of the third quarter in the SPELT/British Council Research Project on baseline studies, worked together in the first week of March to analyze the data collected so far, and to deliberate on ways of writing up the research reports and to look into the possibility of building up a "Research Community". It was invigorating to see five groups of researchers, who have been slogging for over eight months to collect research data, totally engrossed in analyzing their data and submitting to the international vigor of research methodology under the guidance of Dr. Adrian Holliday, from Christ College, Canterbury and Dr. Fauzia Shamim from the Karachi University.

This week was also historic, because SPELT branched out into yet another sphere by forming a research interest section (RIS) of members of SPELT. Taking advantage of Dr. Holliday and Dr. Shamim's presence, the SPELT/British Council group of researchers invited SPELT members to a session to discuss what members of the Research Interest Section can gain by formulating SPELT RIS. Before the meeting was over, eleven members had already signed up with paid-up subscriptions and a second meeting of RIS had been scheduled for April 2, 1998 at the SPELT House. The SPELT RIS will be a platform for further teacher-development for those members who, through research, want to have informed discussions about their own teaching, and of course share their findings and experience with other SPELT members.

With so many exciting events taking place, SPELT's regular programs, such as the Academic Sessions, PTTC/RSA Training / International Conference and the Newsletter might seem to be routine. But each one of them required a high level of volunteer work, a spirit of dedication and professional dealing--all the more so because expectations from SPELT are much higher now. However, SPELT continues to be under-resourced in terms of, not only finances, but human resources. As the SPELT desk is being written, the Academic Coordinator Azra Ba'akza is finalizing the session for March. Mohsin Tejani is getting the flyers ready for the international conference (already!!) – and Azra Ahmed is diligently getting two issues of the Newsletter ready to send to the TESOL convention in Seattle.

What I, as a founder member, find exhilarating is that a very large number of SPELTers are involved in SPELT activities, but because of expansion in our activities we still feel as under-resourced as we did when we started in 1984. So we are still desperately looking for volunteers. Will you be one of them? Come and help. We need you!

## *From the SPELT Desk*

(VOL. XIII NO.2, 1998)

The second quarter of 1998 has kept up with the pace of activities that marked the beginning of the year-- SPELT and SPELTers have been busy.

The teacher training program at PNS Karsaz, for English language teachers concluded successfully in March 1998. A simple and dignified certificate distribution ceremony was held at the Engineering School, Karsaz, for the successful teachers.

The RSA/PTTC Tier I, ran from June 1 to June 22, 1998, at the SPELT House. Altogether 35 trainees are participating in these courses.

The first phase of the SPELT - British Council Research Project was completed in June. Ms. Erum Imran has compiled the researchers' reports. This research is yielding valuable and interesting insights into ELT practices in our institutions. The project has brought together teachers/researchers representing the spectrum of educational institutions. Their findings will no doubt help to improve current ELT practices.

The venue for the monthly academic sessions has been shifted from the familiar PACC premises to the British Council. We gratefully acknowledge the support and cooperation extended by the PACC over the years, and look forward to a similar supportive working relationship with the British Council.

SPELT's 14th Annual International Conference has been set for October 16-18, 1998 in Karachi, and October 23-24, 1998 in Islamabad.

The organization and preparation for this event has already begun. International and local participants, keynote speakers and guests are being contacted and confirmed, and abstracts are coming in.

Finally, SPELT's strength lies in its members who are interested in bringing about improvements in language teaching. They are invited to come forward and work with a volunteer spirit to see their hopes become a reality!

## *From the SPELT Desk*

(VOL. XIII NO.3, 1998)

Our focus this quarter is on the Annual International Conference. This is an event that is eagerly awaited by English language teachers across the city, and year after year it has lived up to its promise.

The conference provides a forum for interaction among language teachers from varying backgrounds and different levels; it generates active thinking and solutions to common problems. This exchange of views and news is as exciting and educational as the opportunity to hear speakers of international repute deliver their keynote addresses.

The post-conference institutes addressing both writing and assessing skills have met with a popular response--considering the enrollments.

The Inter-Chapter meeting will be held in Islamabad this year, during the Annual conference there from 23 to 25 October 1998.

The RSA-COTE and PTTC sessions and the monthly Academic Sessions are being conducted on schedule. At the SPELT House we are working to further streamline our activities and your suggestions will help us plan for the next year. We shall be circulating a questionnaire and would like you to complete and return it.

Once again, SPELT members are invited to come forward to share their time and ideas with us. We need to work together to make this a dynamic and progressive organization, ready to take on the challenges of the future.

## *From the SPELT Desk*

*(VOL. XIII NO.4, 1998)*

This issue of the Newsletter carries a report, the keynote address and the list of presentations at the 14<sup>th</sup> International Conference held in October 1998. This is an effort to share the conference proceedings with those members who were unable to come to this event. The conferences – as we call them now, because the event not only takes place in Karachi, but in other cities of Pakistan as well, have grown over the years from a hundred nominated teachers from the government schools and colleges to teachers and institutions voluntarily enrolling themselves for the event. This is a welcome change, if we look at it as an indication of realization on the part of teachers/institutions that English Language Teaching (ELT) is a specialized field which needs training. This is also an indication that classroom practitioners are desirous of self-development through sharing, networking and exposure to modern trends in ELT.

Also, the fact that across the country, SPELT has shared ELT expertise over 1500 teachers should make SPELTers happy. However, the teachers from the government institutions are almost conspicuous by their absence. This is a worrying factor, because the major infrastructure of education belongs to the government sector. Unless SPELT can penetrate in this sector, and take the government teachers along in its struggle for change and improvement, its achievements can only be peripheral. In all fairness, SPELT, in its early years, made the effort. In the first three conferences, the majority of the participants were nominated teachers from schools and colleges from the Government of Sind. But this relationship was severed as the Department of Education withdrew all its nominees on the eve of the conference in 1988, due to personal ego in the department. Getting teachers nominated to be released on duty to attend the conference used to be a major chore because of red-tape and the unpredictable attitude of the officials who had the nominating power. Pursuing the nominations required time, effort and contacts. Because of these reasons the nominations have not been actively pursued in recent years. But now that SPELT has established itself and in 1999, is going to celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> year of inception, the conference organizers should think of making the effort to liaise with the Departments of Education in Pakistan to nominate the teachers from the government institutions to participate in the conference 1999.

As we can see, ideas to prepare for the SPELT's 15<sup>th</sup> International Conference are already being focused on. We would appreciate your letting us know what would make the next conference a memorable event for you.