

Korea TESOL Journal

Reviews of Books and Software

Supplement to Vol. 11, No. 1



Supplement to Korea TESOL Journal

This supplement to the *Korea TESOL Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 1 consists of reviews of English language teaching books and software prepared earlier for inclusion in the *Korea TESOL Journal*. It is our hope that their content will be of value.

Korea TESOL Journal
Reviews Editor
Dr. David E. Shaffer

Reviews

Books

English for Specific Purposes

Keith Harding

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Pages: xiii + 169. (ISBN-13: 987 019 442575 9; ISBN-10: 0 19 442575 9)

Reviewed by Michael Duffy

Language Teacher Research Series: Language Research in Asia

Thomas S. C. Farrell (Ed.).

Alexandria, VA (USA): TESOL, Inc., 2006.

Pages: viii + 209. (ISBN 978-193118533-2 Paperback)

Reviewed by Andrew Finch

Dialogue Activities: Exploring Spoken Interaction in the Language Class

Nick Bilbrough

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Pages: x + 244. (ISBN 978-0-521-68951-9 Paperback)

Reviewed by Roger Fusselman

Doing Task-Based Teaching

Dave Willis and Jane Willis

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Pages: xv + 278. (ISBN-13: 978 0 19 442210 9)

Reviewed by Grace H. Wang

From Language Learner to Language Teacher: An Introduction to Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Don Snow

Alexandria, VA: TESOL, Inc., 2007.

Pages: ix + 357. (ISBN 9781931185387)

Reviewed by Hansung Kim

Practice in a Second Language: Perspectives from Applied Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology

Robert M. DeKeyser (Ed.)

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Pages: vii + 323. (ISBN 0-521--68404-8 Paperback)

Reviewed by Douglas Paul Margolis

Teaching Vocabulary: Strategies and Techniques

I.S.P. Nation

Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning, 2008.

Pages: 222. (ISBN: 978-1424005659)

Reviewed by Kevin Parent

Teaching Other Subjects Through English

Sheelagh Deller and Christine Price

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Pages: xii + 151. (ISBN: 987-019-442578-0)

Reviewed by Robert J. Dickey

Storybuilding

Jane Spiro

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Pages: xv + 164. (ISBN: 987 019 4421935)

Reviewed by Roxanne Silvaniuk

Software

Language Gardening

Clarity Language Consultants, Ltd., 2005.

[<http://clarity.com.hk>]

Reviewed by Tim Whitman

English for Specific Purposes

Keith Harding

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Pages: xiii + 169. (ISBN-13: 987 019 442575 9; ISBN-10: 0 19 442575 9)

Reviewed by Michael Duffy

There was an early episode of the animated TV comedy *The Simpsons* where Bart, convinced that his saintly neighbor Ned Flanders is a murderer, desperately calls the police emergency number, only to hear:

Hello, and welcome to the Springfield Police Department Resc-u-Fone. If you know the name of the felony being committed, press one. To choose from a list of felonies, press two. If you are being murdered or calling from a rotary phone, please stay on the line.

Bart furiously punches some numbers at random, and the voice comes back: “You have selected regicide. If you know the name of the king or queen being murdered, press one . . .”

Bart Simpson was certainly not the last person to hang up in frustration at this point of an automated message, but like them or not, routed phone calls may have become an inescapable part of business life in recent years. It is no surprise, therefore, that writing a route map with menu options is one of 70 lesson activities in this latest volume – number 29 by my count – in OUP’s series of Resource Books for Teachers.

The author delimits the scope of *English for Specific Purposes* as the teaching of English for vocational and professional purposes, distinguishing it from English for Business and English for Academic Purposes, which have taken off as separate specialties since the emergence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the 1970s. This still leaves an enormous field, but one, it is claimed, having a number of common needs. In his Foreword, Alan Maley, the series editor, cites among these the requirements for specialist vocabulary, for the use of visual and numerical displays, and for the use of special equipment.

Harding lists 15 work areas (he uses the term “specialism”) to be covered in the book. These include not only obvious ones like business and commerce, information technology, tourism and travel, but also areas like the construction and building trades, horticulture, and agriculture. Whatever the target area, he suggests that the teacher needs to understand the culture and ways of thinking that go with different professions and vocations. Such an understanding, he

claims, can produce remarkable results: “There are stories of ELT teachers on courses for bricklayers becoming bricklayers themselves” (p. 7).

The activities are classified under eight topic headings. These are: needs analysis and course design; organizational structures; vocabulary; processes, procedures, and operating systems; using numbers and figures; customer care and quality assurance; health and safety; and finally, evaluation and review. Each description starts with the target level or levels, ranging from elementary to advanced, and goes on to the time (20 minutes to an hour and more), materials and language required, the procedure, and suggestions for follow-up activities. Since one of the book’s premises is that “General English is being taught throughout the world at earlier ages with increasing success” (p. 7), it is fair to say that the activities start from the top rather than the lower end of elementary level. It is also recognized that ESP classes may include students of varying levels both of proficiency and enthusiasm.

For most of the activities, a sample work area is specified, but many can be transferred with modifications to other areas. In common with other volumes in the series, some of the activities include photocopiable material, but Harding does also stress the desirability of building up a bank of authentic materials (Activity 1.6). The staple methodological approach is group task-based learning. The routed calls lesson (4.7) mentioned above is one example of this. Others are producing a company organization chart (2.1), describing processes (4.1: making olive oil, changing a tire, making a sale), and dealing with information depicted in graphs and charts (5.4). All of these, of course, are directly related to specific work requirements, but some more expansive tasks are included, like designing a Heath Robinson-type flying machine (4.10). There are also several ideas for role plays, ranging from organizing a trade fair or conference (2.6) to playing a flight attendant with awkward passengers to deal with (6.10). Other lessons include games, such as variations on bingo (5.5) and Scrabble (3.3), dictation (5.7), and questionnaires (6.9). Some lessons have a linguistic focus, whether it be on structure, function, or using an appropriate register (6.6: Softening Language), or tone (6.3: Smiling on the Phone).

The final activity in the book (8.7) is entitled “How did *you* do?” with its aim stated as “To evaluate your own performance as a teacher, and to set goals and targets for improving” (p. 165). So how does the book stand up to such a test? Well, as one would expect in such a well-established imprint, the layout of the book and the descriptions of the activities are admirably clear. The lessons themselves are varied and seem doable. I would like to have seen some writing activities, since so much of communication in business and commerce is carried out by email (with text-messaging also increasingly used), some kind of practice in the fourth skill would have been welcome.

Also, although the series format calls for a blow-by-blow account of the lesson activities, and we can trust that those included have been thoroughly road-tested, I would like also to have read something about the author’s own experience of using them. Jill Hadfield (1992) managed to convey something like this in her volume in the series. In Harding’s Introduction, he tells an amusing story about this first experience in ESP, teaching members of the Soviet Trade Delegation in London in the 1980s. Some similar accounts of how activities have gone down with students would be welcome. One activity that calls out for this is a rather ambitious and

lengthy one in the Vocabulary chapter involving the use of online corpora (3.8). What kind of learners did Harding use it with, and how did they deal with such a demanding task? These reservations notwithstanding, I am sure that teachers teaching vocational and company classes will find a great deal of valuable input in every one of the book's eight chapters.

The Reviewer

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Language Teacher Research Series: Language Research in Asia

Thomas S. C. Farrell (Ed.)

Alexandria, VA (USA): TESOL, Inc., 2006.

Pages: viii + 209. (ISBN 978-193118533-2 Paperback)

Reviewed by Andrew Finch

INTRODUCTION

The new Language Teacher Research Series from TESOL “highlights the role language teachers at all levels play as generators of knowledge concerning all aspects of language teaching around the world” (p. vii). Edited by Thomas S. C. Farrell, this series is a welcome move by TESOL, recognizing the importance of action research in the ELT profession. The *Language Research in Asia* volume shares the goals of the series: “to celebrate what is being achieved in English Language classrooms each day, so we can encourage and develop communities of like-minded language teaching professionals who are willing to share these important experiences” (p. vii). Readers of this particular book have the bonus that Dr. Farrell is overall series editor, local editor, and contributor of one of the articles. He provides a Series Editor’s Preface, a summary of the articles (chapter 1) and an example of his own research (chapter 5), which was carried out in Singapore.

Language Research in Asia documents “how individual language teachers at all levels of practice systematically reflect on their *own* practice (rather than on other teachers’ practices)” (p. vii) and “is suitable for pre-service and in-service teacher education programs” (p. viii). In other words, the book is a resource for professional development, giving examples of how teachers in different situations have applied action research principles to investigate and improve the learning that occurs in those situations. The projected audience consists of teacher trainers, undergraduate/graduate students of English education, and teachers attending in-service training courses. The consistent formatting of the articles also makes it easy for readers to compare issues and results from around the world/region and means that the series can be read by anyone interested in the topic of action research.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1 functions as an introduction, describing some of the background to teacher-based research in Asia, as well as the problems. Not only are ELT teachers typically short of time, experience, and theoretical knowledge, but the process of action research “requires, time, commitment, and a certain amount of skill” (p. 2). Despite these problems, there were 32 submissions to *Language Research in Asia*, of which this volume gives us a representative sample, from high school teachers (3 articles) to university teachers (6) and teacher trainers (3) in Singapore (3), Thailand (1), Vietnam (2), China (3), and Japan (3).

At this point, we cannot fail to notice that three countries appear to dominate this book, and 9 of the 12 articles were conducted at the tertiary level. Consequently, a high school ELT teacher in Korea, for example, might find the contents a little unbalanced. When we consider the different learning environments in Turkey, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Indonesia, and the Philippines (all of which are included in the scope of this book), it cannot be unreasonable to ask whether the book ignores significant areas of ELT learning in Asia. Dr. Farrell was aware of this imbalance when he devised this book:

The call for papers appeared only on TESOL’s Web site. This automatically restricts the contributions to those who have Internet access. The three [main] countries . . . are all technologically advanced, and this led to the huge number of contributions from each country. (Fields, 2007, para. 5)

Despite this explanation, one still wonders whether the content of the book has been forced into the template of the series. Readers in Asia and elsewhere might have had more diverse content if the editor had found a way of accessing action research articles from (at least) 12 representative countries in Asia (e.g., emails to all the ELT organizations in Asia). It would have increased the general interest factor to be able to read about action research in India, Turkey, Siberia, etc. If ELT research is underdeveloped in such countries, then this book had an opportunity to influence that situation by encouraging and publishing research.

Having made these points, and returning to the Table of Contents, we find 12 highly interesting, wide-ranging studies. Their significance is not in the results, but in the way the results were achieved. The articles illustrate a process that every ELT teacher can participate in – the identification and exploration of problems that impair learning in the classroom. In this sense, the book helps the reader by laying out the articles in consistent fashion, with headings about Issue, Background Literature, Procedures, Results, and Reflection. Irrespective of relevance to one’s own teaching situation, it is possible to look at each article from a bigger perspective and observe how a particular problem was addressed by the writers, following the process of identification, background reading, hypothesis-forming and implementation, data collection, data analysis, and reflection.

Given that each article is less than 20 pages, it would be a shame to pre-empt the enjoyment of reading them by going into them all in depth. Instead, it will suffice to highlight the main

features of each article. Thus, the second chapter shows us how two teachers set about improving writing in their classes by teaching genre practices instead of the conventional methods being used. Chapter 3 then takes us to Thailand, where a teacher-trainer explains how she tried to make her teaching more suitable for the zone of proximal development of individual students. In passing, it might seem self-apparent that expert teachers learn in different ways from non-expert teachers, but the significance of this paper lies in the way in which the research was applied – formative improvement of individual learning. Chapter 4 raises the old chestnut of learner-autonomy in the Asian context. However, rather than pronouncing on this issue one way or another, the writer raises the valid point that autonomy is rarely attempted by teachers and that even her own explicit attempts to promote autonomy turned out to be more teacher-centered than she had envisaged. In this case, the research question led to a valuable insight on the part of the teacher – one that will help to improve learning, without demanding change from the students. Self-assessment is an important tool for teachers as well as students, as this contributor effectively demonstrates.

Chapter 5 is by the editor himself, and asks what his students really learned in his TESOL methods course. Reminiscent of various earlier research findings, this article tells us that students were unable to apply the concepts they had learned in the course. A notable feature here is that the author used post-course concept maps to investigate the learning that had taken place, and this chapter provides some excellent examples of such maps for interested readers. Also significant are the decisions reached by the researcher. Based on these findings, he intends to “follow the ‘less rather than more’ maxim for all the other TESOL methods courses, so the learner teachers will have more of a qualitative, experiential knowledge of the various concepts presented during the course” (p. 59). Thus, we have another example of a teacher formatively affecting his teaching practice through action research and subsequent reflection.

Chapter 6 takes us to China, where the researcher speculates that his students’ teacher dependence stems from the goal-oriented nature of English learning in China. In this case, the teacher is seen as an “academic gatekeeper” (p. 72). It is good, at this point, to find the writer reflecting on his institutional role in society, developing into a realization that this role can be used in positive ways. Rather than bemoaning the fact that students see us as part of the system, we can use this perception to introduce a student-centered approach: “‘Gatekeeping’ in this class means collaboration, effort, self- and peer-assessment, portfolios, and performance assessment.”

While chapter 6 was carried out with only 14 students, chapter 7 takes us to a larger scenario, looking at the setting up of a self-access center in a high school in Japan. This is a rewarding article for teachers in Korea to read, since it shows how a study center can be set up and can enhance learning, even in a traditional, teacher-centered learning environment. This article shows that bottom-up action by teachers can positively affect learning institutions and that there are ways around teaching restrictions, however insurmountable they might seem. Next, chapter 8 turns to a more familiar topic: improving the listening skills of students through promoting student awareness. Chapter 9 then introduces a new perspective: that of a lecturer in Vietnam who noticed that his students had language problems that he had not anticipated. It is enlightening for the reader to see the writer’s progression through digression, denial, and action.

The results of this action are presented in this article as helpful “ACTION” paragraphs, describing seven key points that resulted from this research.

Chapter 10 again has more relevance for the reader in Korea in that we are presented with “examination hell” (p. 123) and the “I want to study TOEFL” dilemma – the problem of balancing test preparation and language learning. In this article, the author, who revised the curriculum of a university English program in Japan, still found that students were focusing on grammar and suffering from test anxiety. However, while recommending another revision of the curriculum, the author points out that the TOEFL is becoming more performance-oriented and that this will allow more pedagogically justifiable teaching as part of test-preparation. Chapter 11, research also carried out in a university in Japan, examines the perceptions held by teachers and students. Such work follows on from earlier research in America (e.g., Horwitz, 1987), but the significance here is that a teacher is finding out about his own students, rather than relying on the findings of researchers in ESL countries, 20 years ago. As might be expected, the results held surprises for the writer – surprises that can only serve to improve the teaching (and consequently the learning) in his classroom.

The final chapter seems to have an over ambitious title in that it asks whether project-based learning (PBL) works in Asia. It is, in fact, describing a study in which a PBL approach was taken with specific students at a specific university in a specific location, at a specific time. To generalize results to the whole of Asia would be meaningless in view of the number of variables. Having said this, the writer evolves a useful (if not surprising) conclusion – that the success of PBL is dependent on planning, implementation, and assessment. However, one wonders which definition of PBL the author was using, since the projects seem rather teacher-centered, consisting of group discussion, a written report, and a writing task. Perhaps because of this, the Reflection section takes up most of its space in discussion of the importance of motivation in learning, with PBL hardly being mentioned. Perhaps a more student-centered, autonomous approach to project work would have stimulated and challenged the students more, allowing them to explore, discover, and perform.

REFLECTION

Whatever the qualms about the title or the restricted number of countries which are represented, it must be said that this book, and the series in general, is an important stepping stone in ELT research. Having read the excellent examples of action research in the book, the reviewer can only hope that further volumes will be published, dealing with restrictions which make action research difficult, and at the secondary level, often prohibitive. There are many burning issues in Asian education that control the learning that occurs in classrooms and that teachers feel powerless to deal with. Here is a real challenge for action research. In addition to identifying relatively localized issues in the classroom (though chapters 7 and 10 take a broader view), it would be extremely helpful to provide us with examples of teachers addressing major issues. In such a case, the initial problem might be “My students are all too tired to work when

they come to my class, because they have been studying at private institutes,” or perhaps, “I’d like to make an interactive, student-centered, collaborative learning environment, but the school principal insists that we study only reading and grammar in class” (cf. chapter 7), or even, “I have students who can’t read the alphabet in my class, but I have to prepare them all for the university entrance test.” Having confronted such an issue – one that most teachers see as dependent on factors outside their influence – it would be extremely interesting to follow the teacher in his/her attempts to produce positive change.

CONCLUSION

Although written as a resource for teacher training, *Language Teacher Research in Asia* is a significant read for anyone interested in improving his/her teaching practice, whatever the situation and whatever the learning institution. The principles followed by the writers take us through the process of teacher-based research and show us how we can positively affect our learning environments. The significance of this volume lies not only in the big picture that it presents, but also in the individual chapters, with their tales of teachers empowering themselves and finding ways of addressing problems that arise. The last word in this review is left to the editor:

I hope readers will write to me . . . and tell me their impressions. I would hope that one of the greatest benefits is an affirmation of current practice by many teachers who read the research conducted by their peers and say something like, “Yeah! I am doing that, and it works the same for me. Maybe I will try some of my own research.” (Fields, 2007, para. 16)

The Reviewer

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Dialogue Activities: Exploring Spoken Interaction in the Language Class

Nick Bilbrough

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Pages: x + 244. (ISBN 978-0-521-68951-9 Paperback)

Reviewed by Roger Fusselman

Spoken interaction in the target language is something all good EFL teachers strive to promote. At times, however, the presence of dialogues in our students' coursebooks may give us the impression that learning the give-and-take of communication consists of taking a static model, imitating it, and doing substitution drills with it, followed by the students' own unscripted ideas.

Going beyond the above, workaday model of dialogue teaching, Nick Bilibrough, in his book *Dialogue Activities: Exploring Spoken Interaction in the Language Class*, provides an extremely wide range of activities to study, learn from, and promote dialogic speaking. Found within these pages are activities which employ comic strips, debate, dictation, fairy tales, interviews, jokes, journal writing, literature, manipulatives, movie scripts, music, overhead projectors, reading, role-plays, spoken corpora, and Venn diagrams. Cultural cameos in the book show that Bilibrough can please people of different cultural as well as different pedagogical tastes; The David Lynch film *Mulholland Drive*, the British sitcoms *Fawlty Towers* and *Little Britain*, and American singer Britney Spears all make their own appearances, so to speak, in these pages. It is clear that Bilibrough thinks outside the typical coursebook dialogue.

After defining dialogue as "(usually) spoken interaction between (typically) two people," (p. 2) and giving general advice on working with dialogue activities, Bilibrough organizes his 112 activities (not including variations) roughly from most receptive to most productive in nine chapters.

Chapter 1, "Understanding," focuses on activities where learners listen to and/or read dialogues to understand the content and conventions of them. These activities are largely for comprehension of a dialogue's meaning. The first activity is a generic procedure for working with any dialogue. Other activities include matching one-sentence set-ups with their punch lines, guessing the topic of a dialogue as it is slowly revealed on an overhead projector, and having students write exam questions for a dialogue they are studying.

Chapter 2, “Analysing,” focuses on how to treat target forms and functions within a dialogue. Activities include matching speech acts with examples in the dialogue (e.g., matching “Your hair looks nice” with “giving a compliment”), understanding pronunciation features, noticing differences between authentic and scripted dialogues, and matching underlined phrases with their meanings.

Chapter 3, “Reproducing and Reconstructing,” explores scaffolded ways in which students can move to creating dialogues based on what they know to be the essential content of the dialogue. Such activities include putting strips from a dialogue in their correct order, turning a very short news story into a dialogue, translation activities (say, from English into Korean, then back into English again), and even dubbing a film scene after learners have briefly looked at its script.

Chapter 4, “Memorising,” uses dialogues to help students remember particular words, phrases, structures, or content. One activity asks students to turn over cards to match lexical chunks with their replies (e.g., matching “Nice day, isn’t it?” with “Yeah, but it’s a little hot for me”). Another activity has them do the same thing by finding the partner with the corresponding utterance.

Chapter 5, “Rehearsing and Performing,” presents performance or drama techniques that can help train learners in such things as reduced speech, intonation, trying to sound like a native speaker, and stretching one’s imagination to produce new conversations. One such activity has students improvise a scene, write it up, then compare it to a native speaker model.

Chapter 6, “Co-constructing,” reasons that demands for accuracy in a spoken form may be off-putting, so it can be better to have them work on accuracy issues in a written form. One such activity, taken from Community Language Learning, involves group cooperation and input in making a dialogue via translation from the mother tongue, and would be ideal for implementation by a Korean English teacher motivated to teach communicatively yet who sees value in translation.

Chapter 7, “Creating and Personalising,” outlines activities where students can create dialogues so long as they follow a particular rule, stimulus, or objective in doing so. From this chapter, I have tried two activities: (a) having students in pairs write and perform a dialogue that uses particular lexical items from the class textbook and (b) having students in small groups roll dice to determine how many words their utterance in a dialogue will be. The first activity was done with a science class, and it ran into troubles when students had to incorporate scientific terms into their dialogues. The second activity worked well for promoting fluency, and I was fortunate to have polyhedral dice used in role-playing games to make the utterances much longer than what a six-sided die would allow. A student who rolls a 17 must say something like “No, I think that’s a bad idea because we do not have any cars to go there.”

Chapter 8, “Communicating,” presents activities that focus on genuine communication rather than interaction, analysis, or practice. One activity requires students to fill out Venn diagrams to learn about students in a new class in order to compare and contrast their lives and their interests with those of a partner. On the other end of the difficulty spectrum, I tried ABC

Dialogues on my students, which requires speakers to begin their utterance with a particular letter of the alphabet, in alphabetical order, such as in the following:

Speaker 1: (K) Know any good movies?

Speaker 2: (L) Let's see the new Indiana Jones film.

Speaker 1: (M) My friend said it was not very good.

I found that this activity worked well if the use low-frequency letters such as Q, X, and Z was made optional, and I tended to use it more for role-play than for communication.

Chapter 9, "Dialogue as Learning," focuses more on student-to-teacher interaction in a communicative classroom. For example, the activity Cooperative Storymaking requires the teacher to tell a story, interrupting it so students can add characters, details, and settings, as in this example:

T: Once upon a time, there was a very old teacher. One day he woke up and looked out the window, and do you know what he saw? (Wait for a response from a student.)

S: The mother of law.

T: That's right. He saw his mother-in-law. And she was carrying something. What was it?

S: A box.

T: She was. She was carrying a huge box. She put it down on a path and pulled out... (p. 213)

At times, Bilbrough's explanation for an activity's value seems beside the point, especially when he presents activities he reverse-engineered from other fields. This is true of activities he adapted from games used in improvisational theater, an unscripted form of drama used for getting actors and actresses to think on their feet. For example, the official focus of ABC Dialogues is "challenging learners to brainstorm possible utterances" (p. 182), which does not sound like other more specific, measurable objectives such as "Use the past progressive" or "accept and/or decline an invitation." However, in fluency-focused activities, it is the journey more than the destination that often takes precedence.

Dialogue Activities offers a wide range of highly adaptable recipes for classroom interaction that can potentially spruce up any classroom. Even a class that has a strong content focus, such as a science class in English, can benefit from occasional role-play, a class-constructed text, and other tools of the dialogue trade. There is enough variety to these activities so the tastes or needs of particular learners can be met. There is a wide variety of levels to the activities provided. Some activities require little set-up, while others may require a great deal. Teachers who like to create and design their own activities will find this book useful in setting parameters to such designs without getting carried away with whatever novelty their idea pivots on. And judging from the way my own students have reacted, some of these activities will be quite enjoyable while still remaining challenging.

I advise the reader of *Dialogue Activities* to digest and adapt Bilbrough's activities and to mark what they will find helpful, what they may not use, and why. For anyone who wants to

bring conversation to an English classroom, it will be a helpful volume on our shelves. It is hard to imagine what teacher would not benefit from this book.

The Reviewer

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Doing Task-Based Teaching

Dave Willis and Jane Willis

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Pages: xv + 278. (ISBN-13: 978 0 19 442210 9)

Reviewed by Grace H. Wang

For the past two decades, task-based teaching (TBT) has been edging towards the forefront of ESL/EFL pedagogy in the current post-methods era of language teaching. In particular, there has been, over the past 5-7 years, a small explosion of literature on TBT, giving rise to such works as Ellis (2003), Leaver and Willis (2004), Nunan (2004), and Edwards and Willis (2005). With the exception of Ellis (2003), these latter publications have strived to put a firm practical focus on their treatment of TBT. None, however, succeed in offering a “how-to” manual on TBT as well as the current volume by Willis and Willis.

Doing Task-Based Teaching offers an inductive study of TBT in which the principles of TBT and task design are demonstrated through numerous ready-to-use task sequences, developed by the authors themselves, as well as more than 30 teachers in 12 countries around the world. Each chapter reads like a unit in a teaching module, containing task sequences that are ready to teach “as is,” and used to illustrate the language learning and teaching theories underpinning TBT. Thus, the book allows teachers to build up a working knowledge of complicated concepts associated with TBT, such as “grammatical consciousness-raising” and “pedagogical corpus,” by examination of the task sequences provided, as well as through their first-hand experience of trying out the sequences in their classrooms. The authors also provide useful reader activities to guide teachers in designing their own task sequences.

Willis and Willis do more than address the practical needs of the teacher in this volume, however. They also help to clarify some of the issues and dispel some of the false notions concerning TBT that have hitherto been sources of confusion in the literature. Among these are: (a) the distinctions between focus on meaning vs. focus on language vs. focus on form, (b) task authenticity, (c) the complexity of grading and sequencing tasks, (d) the false notion that TBT is for learners of intermediate or higher proficiency, and (e) the false notion that group work is a necessary component of TBT. These are explained in the chapter summaries that follow.

Chapter 1 begins by addressing some of the common misconceptions of TBT and clarifying the term “task” as it is used in this volume. It then puts forth a strong argument for

putting the focus on form, which the authors define as “recognizing or manipulating the forms of the language” (p. 133), at the end of the task sequence, rather than at the beginning, in contrast with Nunan (2004).

From chapter 2 onwards, the theories and principles behind TBT are illustrated through practical, ready-to-use task sequences, which in themselves, offer a rich teaching resource for teachers. This chapter focuses on “facilitation tasks,” which are tasks that help to prepare and prime learners to perform the task sequence proper. Included, also, is a helpful discussion on task sequencing.

Chapter 3 offers a rich reservoir of task sequences based on written and spoken texts, which are used to illustrate task-design principles that may be followed to exploit written and spoken text material. A clear emphasis is placed on the use of authentic texts, texts that have not been written specifically for English language teaching purposes.

Chapter 4 also deals with the design of the task sequence proper. In this chapter, however, the authors illustrate how task sequences may be created with a topic as the starting point, rather than a text. They offer three types of tasks that may be used to exploit a topic, categorized according to the cognitive process that is primarily involved in accomplishing the task: (a) listing, (b) sorting, and (c) classifying. Again, this chapter is filled with ready-to-use task designs that teachers may immediately use in their classrooms.

Chapter 5 is the third and last chapter to focus specifically on the design of main tasks. It offers four additional types of tasks that may be used to exploit a topic according to cognitive activity: (d) matching, (e) comparing, (f) problem solving, and (g) storytelling. The authors point out that the seven types of tasks introduced in these chapters are not mutually exclusive, but one type may involve cognitive processing that is typical of other task types.

Chapter 6 clarifies and responds to the issue of focus on language vs. focus on form. Focus on language is recognized as a learner-directed activity where learners are naturally motivated by the context to improve their language use, such that they engage in an active search for better ways of expressing their meanings. One context that creates such motivation is the giving of a presentation or report. The focus on language that occurs here is contrasted with a focus on form, which is focus on language accuracy in isolation and outside of a communicative context. Examples of focus-on-form activities are grammatical consciousness-raising activities and certain grammar practice exercises. Willis and Willis argue strongly that a focus on form should be attended to at the end of the task sequence rather than the beginning. They also point out that focus on form is a very necessary component of task-based teaching, dispelling the notion that TBT is all about “fluency” and little about “accuracy.”

In chapter 7, the authors clarify and respond to the issue of task authenticity, or the degree that classroom activities should parallel “real world” activities. They suggest that classroom tasks mirror the real world at three levels: (a) “the level of *meaning*, in which learners produce meanings which will be useful in the real world,” e.g., referring to objects “by describing where they are in relation to others” (p. 142); (b) “the level of *discourse*, in which learners realize discourse acts which reflect the real world” (p. 136), e.g., agreeing and disagreeing; and (c) the level of *activity*, where learners “engage in a communicative activity

which reflects very directly the way language is used outside the classroom” (p. 136), e.g., telling stories and giving directions. They suggest that, although it is most desirable to have learners engage in tasks that mimic real world activities at all three levels, tasks that are artificial at the third level of activity (e.g., games), but which involve real-world meanings and real-world discourse (e.g., describing the location of objects on a tray from memory), are useful in preparing learners to engage in real-world meanings and discourse outside the classroom. In this chapter, also, the authors clarify the matter of group work, that it is not always necessary in TBT, citing the example of Prabhu (1987), whom they recognize as “one of the pioneers of the task-based approaches” (p. 149), and who used no group work.

Chapter 8 responds to the needs of teachers who choose, or are required, to teach from a textbook. It illustrates how practitioners may adapt and refine textbook activities and tasks according to seven task parameters, in order to tailor them better to the needs of the learners. This chapter also contains suggestions for low-level or less motivated learners. Chapter 9 teaches readers how to create a task-based syllabus for beginner-level to advanced-level learners. Finally, chapter 10 rounds out the book with the authors' responses to frequently asked questions about TBT. The appendices contain sample task-based lessons, sample projects and scenarios, a sample task-based course plan, and other resources.

There are two things some might view as shortcomings of this publication. The table of contents and general use of headings and subheadings do not offer the best scanning value. This may be in part due to the holistic approach to learning that the volume embraces. A more coherent picture is found in the actual text than the table of contents would seem, at first, to suggest. Also, because this book reads like a teaching module with an organic and holistic orientation to learning, it may cause a little dissatisfaction for readers who would prefer a more didactic presentation.

Despite these minor limitations, this is a remarkable book that delivers on the promise of equipping practitioners for *doing* task-based teaching. It will be of value to both those who are new to and veterans of TBT, especially those who view this approach to EFL teaching as an idea whose time has finally come.

The Reviewer

Grace Wang is a professor of Communicative English at Yonsei University and the secretary of KOTESOL's Seoul Chapter. She has given task-based writing workshops at the United Nations and designed task-based curricula for university courses. She holds an M.A. in TEFL/TESL from the University of Birmingham, U. K., and her areas of research interest include discourse intonation and language curriculum development. Email: ghwang97@gmail.com

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From Language Learner to Language Teacher: An Introduction to Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Don Snow

Alexandria, VA: TESOL, Inc., 2007.

Pages: ix + 357. (ISBN 9781931185387)

Reviewed by Hansung Kim

From Language Learner to Language Teacher is worth the attention of all language teachers and language teacher trainers, although it is written primarily for English teachers whose first language is not English. This book is, in fact, a twin of Don Snow's *More Than a Native Speaker: An Introduction to Teaching English Abroad*, which he wrote for native English speaking teachers in 1996. He recognized that "English teachers for whom English is a second language are in some ways a special group in that the challenges they face are somewhat different from those faced by native English teachers, and the strengths they bring to their teaching are also somewhat different" (p. v). Snow's unique teaching and academic background as a language teacher provides credibility for the book. He has taught both English as a native English-speaking teacher in China, and Chinese as a non-native Chinese-speaking teacher in the US. He now teaches at a university in China and trains non-native English speaking English teachers.

The philosophy behind this book is communicative language teaching, proficiency, language learning, and practicality. Snow assumes that language learning is about communication and that communicative language teaching has a great deal of benefits for teaching. Proficiency is another element that Snow emphasizes because, more often than not, in many EFL settings, proficiency has often been sacrificed for good examination results, despite proficiency and good examinations being somewhat correlated. Language learning is the other element that Snow puts great emphasis on. He argues that all foreign language teachers may benefit from the experience of language learning. He also stresses practicality with practical content well integrated into each chapter.

According to Snow, the goal of this book is "to provide new English teachers with an introduction to the concepts and methods of English language teaching" (p. vi). The book is divided into two parts. In Part 1, which covers five chapters, he describes language teachers as language learners, principles of language learning, and the role of the teacher, course planning,

evaluation, grading, and lesson planning. In Part 2, covering eight chapters, he addresses aspects of English teaching, covering listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, teaching culture, and even tips on classroom management. The book also has a number of appendices, samples of course planning, culture-topic activity ideas, a list of further reading materials, and Internet resources. Each chapter includes a brief introduction of related concepts or theories; a great deal of practical content, including examples, techniques, skills, and suggestions for thought, discussion, and action; as well as a sample language learning project for the discussed topic of the chapter.

One of the contributions and challenges that this book makes is its emphasis on language teachers as language learners. People generally accept that the experience of foreign language learning helps a language teacher understand his/her students and their learning process. For non-native English speaking teachers, Snow rightly suggests reasons why they should be successful language learners: setting a good standard for students, gaining greater confidence, and being good role models of success in language learning. Native English speaking teachers are, nevertheless, successful language learners and yet may not necessarily be experienced foreign language learners, if they never went through the language learning experience, they may have missed out on some of the crucial elements required to be a successful language teacher. Snow goes further to propose so-called language learning projects that non-native English teachers may use to continually improve their English.

Another contribution of this book is that it is easy to read. Those readers without an ELT or linguistics background will still find it easily comprehensible. Professional and academic terminology is used sparingly, and often paraphrased in easy English. This is a benefit to not only those whose first language is not English, but also to native English teachers whose academic background is not in an ELT-related discipline. The high demand for native English-speaking teachers in the non-English-speaking world today leads to the recruitment of teachers without adequate training in teaching English. Recruitment is often based solely on the fact that they are native English speakers and are willing to go abroad. This book may provide them with practical and essential information on English teaching in a manner that they can understand.

A third contribution and strength of this book is that it is very practical and readily to use. This book is full of examples, methods, and suggestions. Every chapter in Part 2, which deals with different aspects of English teaching, has numerous practical suggestions. These are made taking into consideration the educational context of the third world: limitations of classroom, time, resources, and finances.

Snow is overly inexplicit when he says, “the English language skills of English teachers should be as good as possible” (p. 4). While nothing is “wrong” with this statement, and everybody will agree with it in principle, Snow is well aware of non-native English-speaking teachers’ concern for their linguistic shortcomings. In fact, non-native English-speaking teachers are under stress for not being able to demonstrate native-like English proficiency. Snow, of course, acknowledges that “a native-like command of English is simply not a realistic goal” (p. 4), yet his statement may be perceived by some not as a word of encouragement but as disfavor, though unintended by the author, because of the subjective nature of “good.” An unhealthy self-

image may be created for non-native English-speaking teachers because they are constantly compared with native English-speaking teachers. And at worst, it may make non-native English-speaking teachers feel that they are under the curse of Sisyphus. Although the author means well, he could have been more precise, rather than settle for the opacity of “good,” to elevate the confidence of non-native English-speaking teachers.

Books such as this would do well to put more consideration into terminology used. The term “non-native English-speaking teacher” is widely used to describe those teachers of English whose first language is not English. Many use the term because it serves its purpose, but if the legitimacy of non-native English-speaking teachers is to be widely acknowledged in the world of TESOL, the TESOL community may need to search for a term that not only works well but is also absent of negativity. “Non-native” is negative, both linguistically and in its connotation, and therefore offensive to English teachers who are not native speakers. Snow uses “local teacher” and “non-native English-speaking teacher” interchangeably. It would have been better to have used “local English teacher” throughout the book to promote not just the term but also the identity of the community, which is often understated.

A strength may also be a weakness. The practicality of this book is definitely one of its major strengths, yet at times, it seems to be carried so far as to not aid students in grasping the conceptual background. Overall, this is one of the best practical introductory books for the English teaching profession that I have come across. This book may well serve as a course book for a short TESOL/TEFL certificate program.

The Reviewer

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Practice in a Second Language: Perspectives from Applied Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology

Robert M. DeKeyser (Ed.)

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Pages: vii + 323. (ISBN 0-521-68404-8 Paperback)

Reviewed by Douglas Paul Margolis

A RAW DEAL FOR PRACTICE

Research in second language acquisition has investigated interaction, negotiation of meaning, error feedback, instructional methods, assessment techniques, and a host of other concerns to gain understanding about how students develop foreign language skills and to guide foreign language teachers in instructional design. Scant attention has been paid before now, DeKeyser argues, to the role *practice* plays in language acquisition. DeKeyser writes, in the introduction of *Practice in a Second Language: Perspectives from Applied Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology*, that practice gets a “raw deal in the field of applied linguistics” and “remains remarkably unexamined” (p. 1).

DeKeyser is not talking about praxis, or practice, as the opposite of theory; rather, he defines the book’s focus as “specific activities in the second language, engaged in systematically, deliberately, with the goal of developing knowledge of and skills in the second language” (p. 8). He draws on cognitive and educational psychology, as well as applied linguistics, to address questions such as: What is the role of practice in language learning? How much transfer to other language forms and skills can we expect practice to produce? How much feedback should be given during practice and at what point? And can learners practice enough to transform “learned” forms into implicit linguistic knowledge? The original chapters from leading scholars in the field attempting answers to these questions make this new addition to the Cambridge Applied Linguistics Series an important resource for contemplating the roles and features of effective practice in L2 classrooms.

DeKeyser depicts practice as a point of intersection between many issues debated in the field, such as the relationship between competence and performance, implicit and explicit learning, and production versus comprehension. Building upon his earlier writings on automaticity (DeKeyser,

1998, 2001), he distinguishes practice from audiolingual-like drills, suggesting that practice involves transforming declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge and beyond. That is, effective practice entails repetitive use of known items, not new information. If learners attempt to practice new information that they have not yet fully grasped, then the practice might be detrimental or ineffective. DeKeyser values practice as an activity that aids students in reducing the amount of attention, and other cognitive processes, given to comprehending or producing language. By reducing cognitive load, students automate language use, increasing both fluency and accuracy. The key to this perspective, however, is that students need to have mastered the learning of the information prior to beginning the practice.

The book claims to be of value to both researchers and educators, who should find the conceptual clarity brought to the issue illuminating. Teachers might not walk away with a specific activity for Monday morning, but they will gain insight about how practice might benefit learners, how to adjust tasks to obtain effective practice, and how to determine what and when students need to practice.

BEYOND FORM VERSUS MEANING DEBATES

DeKeyser organizes the book into three parts: foundations, institutional contexts, and individual differences. The Foundations section presents viewpoints believed applicable to all language learners and learning contexts. The section particularly addresses the following questions: How much focus-on-form practice is necessary? At what stage of the learning process should focus-on-form practice begin? Should form be learned through practice or first instruction and then practice? How much practice is needed for comprehension, and how much for production? Four papers comprise this section.

The first paper, by Ronald Leow, addresses input and comprehension practice offering an “attentional perspective on receptive practice” (p. 21). That is, the author subscribes to the theory that learning requires attention or noticing. He focuses on input processing from the perspective that noticing permits subsequent internalization of linguistic data. The chapter reviews receptive research in three areas: studies where attention is the primary focus, processing instruction studies where attention is a secondary focus, and skill acquisition studies. Leow is primarily concerned with the roles of attention, awareness, and language form complexity in practice.

Flipping it over, Hitoshi Muranoi, considers output practice in chapter 2. The chapter begins by offering an articulate summary of Swain’s (1985, 1998) output hypothesis and the potential value of output to language development. Then Muranoi reviews studies that compare input and output practice, that investigate output practice through text reconstruction activities, output practice through interaction, and, finally, output practice through communication tasks. The chapter concludes that the research findings support output practice in L2 classrooms. However, Muranoi’s definition of practice is all-inclusive and not the same as the more limited notion put forth by DeKeyser and described above.

In chapter 3, Alison Mackey offers an interaction-oriented perspective of practice, providing a review of the interaction hypothesis and its origins. Then Jennifer Leeman follows with a chapter on error feedback that unpacks the literature on feedback and frames it within the book's themes. Both these chapters offer syntheses of the literature, interaction and feedback, respectively, but with little advance toward the main focus of practice.

The second part of the book examines practice from within four different institutional contexts. Unlike the first part, which attempted to unveil universal features of practice, this second section "illustrates the variety of specific concerns about the nature of practice" stemming from different institutional contexts (p. 139). The four papers in this section cover a foreign language context, by Lourdes Ortega; a young learners' second language context, by Kris Van den Branden; a language immersion program, by Leila Ranta and Roy Lyster; and last but not least, a study abroad context, by DeKeyser. KOTESOL readers will be especially keen to read chapter 7, by Ortega, because she focuses on foreign language teaching. One issue that she deals with at length is how to make practice meaningful without losing accuracy.

The last section of the book contains two papers considering how individual differences, specifically age and aptitude, may influence the value of practice and require adjustments in practice design to obtain optimal results. The first paper is by Carmen Munoz and compares differences between young children and adolescents or adults. She argues that instructors of young learners must adapt practice activities to capitalize on the different strengths of young learners in regards to memory and analytical ability. The final paper is by Peter Robinson, who shows how aptitude affects the effectiveness of language practice. He discusses ideas for adapting practice activities to address the various learner profiles that might be encountered in the classroom.

DeKeyser introduces and concludes the three parts of the book. His introduction provides a conceptual framework and working definition of practice. The conclusion offers a vision for the future of research on practice and sets forth a research agenda. The 323-page book also includes a handy glossary and index.

RESOURCE AND REFERENCE

The book jacket and preface emphasize that all the papers in this volume are "original articles" and that the book will become a "valuable resource and reference for second language educators and researchers alike" (book jacket). The book does consolidate a handy review of second language acquisition theory for those wanting to delve deeper into this topic. Unfortunately, however, for readers familiar with the literature on input, output, interaction, and feedback, for instance, many of the articles seem to rehash old ground. On the other hand, newcomers to the field may find the book to be a concise and helpful overview of these main theoretical perspectives.

The book attracted me because L2 classroom practice is an important focus of investigation that deserves attention. Teachers should be interested in this topic, too, given that practice appears to

be an essential part of language learning. Educators may find the book, however, disappointingly too abstract and theoretical, devoid of practical experience. Nonetheless, this book bestows credibility on practice as an area of inquiry and offers some guidance for how to proceed. In this respect, the book is a success and important contribution to the field.

The Reviewer

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Teaching Vocabulary: Strategies and Techniques

I.S.P. Nation

Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning, 2008.

Pages: 222. (ISBN: 978-1424005659)

Reviewed by Kevin Parent

Paul Nation has been invited to two major KOTESOL events and was a major draw each time. If you were able to attend one of his sessions, you might have been struck by the irony of why common sense is considered common when Nation possess such a rare gift of it. His previous books, published in 1990 and 2001, are at once back-to-basics overviews of second language vocabulary teaching and reviews of the literature that inform and shape the field, presented with a no-nonsense clarity lacking in many other teacher-oriented texts. They do not assume you have prior knowledge of the subject but very economically lay the foundation and bring you up to date.

Teaching Vocabulary: Strategies and Techniques continues this trend. The shortest of the three books at 222 pages, it is presented, by editorial decision, as an updated complement to the 1990 text also published by Heinle as both books follow the same graphic design and layout. The new book, however, is intended as a stand-alone text that does not assume its reader has read the earlier book or any other treatment of the subject matter.

The book comprises ten chapters and six appendices, plus references and an index. The first chapter, entitled very appropriately, “The Big Picture,” is just that: a top-down view of the field that orients the reader in the broadest terms to the relevant issues. The following five chapters relate vocabulary to the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Five chapters are required as reading is partitioned into two, one for intensive reading and another for extensive. Each chapter describes the issues of vocabulary related to the skill in question and offers several techniques designed to increase the learner's vocabulary in that skill.

The seventh chapter tackles head-on the teaching and learning of vocabulary, discussing planned-ahead classroom activities and arming learners with specific techniques for learning new words. Examples of these include the Keyword Method, using vocabulary cards, learning Latin prefixes, reviewing at fixed intervals, using dictionaries, etc.

Chapter eight describes specialized vocabulary, in particular the *Academic Word List* and technical vocabulary. The following chapter explores the field of vocabulary assessment,

discussing Nation's *Vocabulary Levels Test*, used to determine the approximately how many words a learner knows. Also examined are various kinds of tests that can be made for classroom uses (whether for placement, general knowledge, or final grading) and for research purposes.

The final chapter is again a big picture, if not quite the large overview of the first. Here the topic is "Planning the Vocabulary Component of a Language Course," and it discusses the elements which any good language program should have, helping the administrator avoid any costly mistakes in establishing or improving a language program such as finding the current level of students, how much vocabulary learners should be expected to learn in the program, how progress should be tested, and how the vocabulary element of the course itself should be evaluated.

The appendices include *The General Service List* (essentially the 2000 most frequent words in the English language), the *Academic Word List*, a complete version of the *Vocabulary Levels Test*, a complete *Vocabulary Size Test*, a productive version of the *Vocabulary Levels Test*, and a survival language syllabus for foreign travel.

This book is easily recommended, especially for those unfamiliar with Nation's previous books. It brings the reader firmly into an entry-level orientation of second-language vocabulary acquisition studies, while his previous 2001 book continues on to more complex matters and more intricate details. This most recent book is entirely practical with theoretical issues limited to those the instructor, rather than the researcher, needs to know.

The Reviewer

Kevin Parent has completed his PhD in Applied Linguistics, examining the pedagogical aspects of polysemy. He has worn various KOTESOL hats including Daejeon Chapter President, National Membership Committee Chair and National Secretary. A native of Chicago, he first visited Korea in 1997 and currently works at Jeonju University. Kevin enjoys collecting CDs, composing music, and drinking coffee. Email: ksparent@yahoo.com

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Teaching Other Subjects Through English

Sheelagh Deller and Christine Price
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
Pages: xii + 151. (ISBN: 987-019-442578-0)

Reviewed by Robert J. Dickey

DEFINING THE SUBJECT

Whether called “teaching other subjects through English” (TOSTE), content-based instruction (CBI), content and language integrated learning (CLIL), or any of 40 other labels (see <http://www.content-english.org>), the challenges are the same. First, we must frame the question. Only then, perhaps, can we address solutions through both theory and classroom-grounded perspectives. We start this review with the sad reality that, for this subject, after 40 years of discussion and publications, we can’t agree on either the labels or the questions. Additionally, as the authors observe, despite the number of claims made in support of CLIL [and CBI], “it is difficult to substantiate them” (p. 7).

Series editor Alan Maley reminds us of one under-discussed rationale for TOSTE: the use of early English education programs has resulted in children who are “relatively proficient in general English by the time they reach secondary school age” (p. 3). While this is no doubt true in Europe, and perhaps increasingly true in Korea, Japan, and Malaysia, it is only one of many rationales for TOSTE. This statement is the first indication of what becomes increasingly obvious as we work through the book – there is a strong orientation to the European secondary school classroom. As the authors themselves point out, “this book is meant to be a support to the subject book” (p. 8). This resource is also specifically prepared to include the needs of “subject” teachers called upon to deliver their lessons in English. That does not make this resource irrelevant to the Korean private language school or content-based university program, but it does explain the focus.

Deller and Price describe four scenarios for foreign language teaching: (a) general purposes, with a focus solely on language objectives, (b) work purposes (ESP), where the content is determined and influenced by the work purposes, but assessment is based on language objectives, (c) cross-curricular foreign language teaching, taught by language teachers with language objectives, and (d) CLIL – subject teaching through a foreign language, which they

describe as “entirely subject-led and the subject dictates what language support is needed” (pp. 5-6). It is important to recognize here that their definition of CLIL is by no means universally adopted (see Dickey, 2001; Marsh, Maljers, & Hartiala, 2001; Ting, 2007), and CLIL, as well as CBI, may be described as a “blend” of language and subject-matter learning objectives (Dickey, 2004). Sangho Han and I proposed something a bit “weaker” than these authors’ CLIL-Foreign Language Medium Instruction (FLMI) where a subject course is designed with language learning objectives as a major focus (Han & Dickey, 2001) and we must of course also consider Pally’s (2000) sustained content, which is quite similar to CLIL in many respects. The strictest definition of CLIL within European state schools often marries one academic subject, such as math, science, history, or a vocational/technology subject, with English or some other foreign language. This often results, as the authors note, in a “continuum from total to partial immersion” (p. 6), which is to say that teaching through the mother tongue may be appropriate at times, and that there may be a lot of code-switching taking place at various times in a lesson (p. 9).

BOOK DESIGN

Like other titles in Oxford’s Resource Books for Teachers series, following short initial units, we jump right into 69 teaching ideas across more than 120 pages, with brief introductions for each of the seven sections that are organized by teaching aims: (a) giving new information, (b) vocabulary, (c) speaking, (d) writing, (e) consolidation and revision (review), (f) supplementary resources, and (g) project work. Although these units are not balanced in terms of the number of activities described within each, if we think of this as a “cookbook” of ideas to be modified and adjusted “to taste,” then we can imagine ideas crossing these sections. Similarly, while some teaching aims, such as “academic structures” (passive voice, etc.) and critical analysis are excluded in this list, we might well be able to adapt items within other sections for this purpose.

Each activity runs one to two pages in length and includes briefs summaries of aims (language and “other”), demo subject, materials needed, alternative subjects, preparation needed, and procedure. It is interesting that, while the authors call for a student-centered approach, they use the language “how to *teach* the activity” (p. 11, emphasis added). Do we “teach” activities (tasks)? Or “lead,” “guide,” “facilitate”? My sense is that there is a strong undercurrent of the 1980s-era PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) Approach underpinning these activities, even the project-based activities. This may be understandable when thinking that teachers have to deliver the “content,” but “student-centered” seems to be a mere buzzword here, hardly applied. An example is the recurrent pre-teaching of vocabulary out of context prior to attacking reading, fill-the-gap, and other text issues. There are plenty of teacher reference books available to offer other ideas, such as “noticing” – one can look even within the Resource Books for Teachers series (i.e., Morgan & Rinvolutri, 1986).

The four appendices are a valuable resource for those new to this field. Appendix 1 contains higher-level “classroom English” for teachers with limited English proficiency. It is an interesting mix of some simpler terms and ideas with more challenging ones, such as “Mix and

mingle. That means talk to as many other students as you can during the time.” and “Explain this to me as if you were the teacher. Good. Now write it like that.” Appendix 2, however, is perhaps much more useful. It is rare to find a “classroom English” list compiled for students’ use! The language we might need a semester to work through in a typical EAP coursebook is boiled down to approximately 100 phrases. Appendices 3 and 4 (useful books and useful web sites) are both good, though they may quickly become dated. Most of the web sites would seem to be targeted to language teachers trying to become familiar with various subjects, but perhaps they also have good activities that subject-specialists would adopt. The index is divided into two sections – language and skills, and subjects taught – and refers to both pages in the discussions and specific activities.

CONCLUSION

Maley’s comment that there is a “relative dearth of books offering practical, classroom-tested ideas on ways to implement a CLIL approach” (p. 3) is probably true only in the strictest European definition of CLIL, as Languages Across the Curriculum has a long history in North America, and Forte & Pangle (2001) is but one of a long list of outstanding ready-to-use resources for the busy classroom teacher. If we start from Stryker and Leaver’s assumption (1997, p. 3) that CBI/CLIL/TOSTE is “more a philosophy than a methodology,” we can then adapt the ideas offered by Deller and Price as intended, i.e., a collection of ideas “you can dip into” (p. 10). As such, *Teaching other subjects through English* is a valuable resource that should stay within arm’s reach of practicing teachers, regardless of whether they teach more traditional English courses or other subjects.

The Reviewer

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Storybuilding

Jane Spiro

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Pages: xv + 164. (ISBN: 987 019 4421935)

Reviewed by Roxanne Silvaniuk

Storybuilding is the latest book in OUP's Resource Books for Teachers series, and as with the others in the series, it offers teachers a well-organized, succinct book jammed with lesson ideas on how to help students build stories. Of course, as Editor Alan Maley notes in his Forward, OUP has already published three books on storytelling: Morgan and Rinvoluceri's *Once Upon a Time*, and Andrew Wright's *Storytelling with Children* and *Creating Stories with Children*. Spiro's book differs in that it focuses on teenage and adult learners. Because storytelling is ubiquitous in our daily lives, it is the perfect vehicle to motivate language learners and improve language-learning skills. Briefly, Spiro gives nine reasons as to how storytelling can improve language skills, including preparation for written exams (such as TOEIC and TOEFL in Korea), and a second list details how it can improve learning skills. Her emphasis is on how storytelling can improve writing ability and how the benefits extend to other course work: "So to prepare the ground well as a storyteller is to give your students many learning opportunities that will help them both inside and outside the language classroom. A good writer of stories is a good writer; a good storyteller is a skilled and confident speaker" (p. 7).

Although a slim volume, in ten chapters this book provides a how-to guide for teachers wishing to incorporate storytelling into their lesson plans. Even though the vocabulary in the book may be British English, the lesson ideas and sample stories can easily be changed to suit learners' experiences. The activities have been developed and used in workshops and classrooms in the United Kingdom, Europe, Mexico, India, Japan, and China. Furthermore, to help teachers better choose activities for their students, the table of contents indicates the student level for each activity. There is a good balance of activities for different ability levels: elementary and above (32), pre-intermediate and above (15), intermediate and above (25). Another plus is that Spiro has worked from the position that "No technical equipment of any kind is required, including tape recorders or photocopied material. The only assumption is that the teacher is able to write on the blackboard" (p. 12). Later on, she encourages teachers who decide to use storytelling to a greater degree to collect ideas, photos, etc. to create their own bank of materials.

After choosing an activity, one finds that it is conveniently laid out, beginning with suggested learner levels (plus ideas on how to modify for other levels), suggested class time, a list of learning aims, and any preparation that is needed. The time required varies from 10 to 40 minutes depending on the purpose of the activity (warm-up, drama, game, review, etc.), with a note if homework (minimal) is required. Her step-by-step approach is continued in the procedure section of each activity with many suggested story ideas and a sample story or two – some being marked as photocopiable.

The following is a brief description of the ten chapters in *Storybuilding*. The first chapter serves to introduce storytelling and elements of it, which are expanded upon in the following chapters. After determining what a “story” is, genre, cohesion, beginnings, endings, and temporal influences are discovered through activities. Chapter 2 offers helpful suggestions on where to find story ideas: opening lines, newspaper headlines, proverbs, writer’s notebook, using a well-known story as a starting point, a picture, family stories, and local stories. The next chapter discusses story characters and offers some exotic examples with “moaning Mona Lisa,” “Delica Darling,” and “President Featherhead.” However, “Inner and Outer Animals: The Toad and the Giraffe” (Activity 3.8) caught my attention as a serious subject dressed up as fun in that learners explore how inner feelings do not always match exterior actions and words. In the same vein, chapter 4 shows the importance of location by beginning with “Comfort and Discomfort Zones: The Elephant in the Bus Station.” It ends with Activity 4.5, which brings Little Red Riding Hood into the 21st century. Chapter 5 has seven activities on how to develop traditional story plots with many examples in each, while chapter 6 focuses on pattern stories that allow the whole class to participate in the fun and challenge of building a story together.

The Voices in Stories chapter shows how different genre (letters, doctor’s reports, diaries, newspaper articles, radio commentary, etc.) can be incorporated into a narrative, or become the narrative, as a way to provide different viewpoints. The seven activities are all based on the love story of Nemorino and Adina from Donizetti’s opera *L’elisir d’amore* (p. 98). The chapter Story Games offers some light-hearted activities such as jokes, puzzle stories, miming, and story bluff. Two of the activities, while still light-hearted, are meant to focus students on some discourse features of language. Story Dominoes uses repetition as a cohesive device, and The Shrinking Saga requires students to shorten a story to a grammatically correct, fifty-word mini-saga. The longest chapter, Challenging, relates to story performance: bringing the story alive by adding sounds, changing voices, using gestures, and adding a chorus, props, and music. There are also tips on memorizing a story and reading a story aloud. To help learners fine-tune their stories, the final chapter on writing stories has various activities (with some checklists) to develop students’ editing abilities: coherence; punctuation; tense, aspect, and mood; vocabulary; stylistics; and characterization. Two other activities involve interaction and feedback: interviewing a partner to clarify story ideas and an editing workshop.

Spiro concludes her book with several short appendices: a list of story archetypes to help generate plots, character ideas, and story genres. The index is useful for teachers looking to supplement a teaching point and expand on some aspect of storytelling as well as find the 25 mini-stories introduced throughout the book.

This book offers a lot of ideas and step-by-step instruction to teachers interested in introducing storytelling to their classes or in expanding their repertoire of storytelling ideas. For project-based teaching, storytelling offers a fun way to learn, and teachers will be delighted with the creativity and hard work that students demonstrate. There is a small quibble with Spiro's choice of title, *Storybuilding*. If you search "storybuilding" in a search engine, most of the entries refer to the development of online games, and one web site is about visuals in filmmaking. A more apt title would have aided teachers in searches for related sites. Otherwise, the many creative activities make *Storybuilding* a welcome addition to my resource library.

The Reviewer

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Language Gardening

Clarity Language Consultants, Ltd., 2005.

[<http://clarity.com.hk>]

Reviewed by Tim Whitman

DESCRIPTION

Language educators, at some point in their teaching, find themselves in need of material to help their learners get a deeper understanding of grammatical concepts. For learners to progress in their ability to produce language, they need to focus on language form as well as meaning. Clarity Language Consultants have a new program, *Language Gardening*, which is an innovative software package for teaching syntax and lexis using stories and poetry. The program uses the metaphor of language as plants that grow and branch out. Understanding how different language elements grow together and connect to each other will help learners to figure out the syntactic connection of language and collocation of lexical items. There are several unique aspects in this program, the non-linear exposure to language items, the use color and chunking. The plants present language in a non-linear fashion which allows learners to see broader relationships within sentences. Color provides an easier way for learners to understand grammar. Chunking language, breaking sentences into manageable pieces, can help learners to remember new expressions and lexis more easily.

Language Gardening is designed to be integrated into classroom instruction or self-directed learning and seems well-suited for a wide range of teaching situations and could be used for reading, listening, writing, and speaking classes where there is a need to present grammar-focused lessons. *Language Gardening* is a multi-level program that comes with four levels, fifteen lessons per level, and fourteen or more activities for each lesson. Each lesson in *Language Gardening* uses seventeen different activity formats, covering a warm-up, word focus, text listening and clause construction, pronunciation, text reading and comprehension questions, sentence construction practice, word painting, syntax focus, text reconstruction, and a role-play section. According to the software producers, this should provide more than 200 hours of lesson material. Though this program is offered by Clarity Language Consultants, it is not designed for integration with other Clarity products such as *Results Manager* or *Author Plus*.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Once *Language Gardening* is inserted into the drive, it will automatically start to install. Once the program has completely installed, product verification is required. Registration of the password requires Internet access and must be completed for the program to be used. The online registration means that the disc is no longer required to operate the program. Occasionally, a double install, where the program starts to install itself again, occurs, but stopping the second installation usually corrects the problem. Clarity Language Consultants can of course be contacted by email should users have problems they cannot resolve.

Language Gardening opens by clicking on the rose-shaped icon placed on the computer desktop, and once opened, users will see a screen with five flowers, one for each level, and the teacher's section. Users first choose which level, and then which lesson, they want with their mouse. *Language Gardening* is designed with a number of different activities for each lesson, and each activity screen is free of unnecessary text or images since it makes good use of pop-up boxes to reduce overloading each screen. The teacher's section provides vital audio and visual demonstration of how to use the different activities, allowing users to maximize the materials. Self-study users may be confused with the "textbox" and "sentence structure" activities because there are no instructions available on-screen, however previewing the teacher's section will reduce their confusion.

Learner interaction with *Language Gardening* is through mouse, keyboard, and speakers; there is no need for a microphone. Activities are completed predominantly by using the mouse. Learners click and drag words or phrases to drop them into the appropriate space or to rearrange on-screen materials as needed. The mouse is also used to highlight important features of the program, such as the description of lesson objectives for each level, or the instructions for each lesson activity. The keyboard is required for only three or four exercise sections per lesson. Learners will have an opportunity to put together sentences from the lesson or add their own ideas. Each lesson has activities that require learners to listen to texts. The sound quality is good, the voices are quite natural, and for those users who find the listening too challenging, there is the option of seeing the text as it is spoken simply by keeping the cursor on the button marked "verse."

PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS

Overview

Language Gardening is intended for beginners to upper-intermediate learners, and the content is graded well. Most pages are easy to follow with clear and understandable graded instructions. Lower levels focus on simpler aspects of language, noun-verb or adjective-noun collocations, and yes/no questions. The lessons also try to teach poetic rhythm, and recycle concepts throughout each level to reinforce prior learning. Higher levels focus on relative clauses,

adverbial clauses, and other more complex clause structures. The lessons consist of fourteen of a possible eighteen separate sections, and though the lessons are designed to follow a sequence, the user can choose any activity in any order they wish, giving control of the lesson to the learner.

The texts have been selected to be used with a particular level and do not appear to have been significantly altered from the natural form. The listening sections, text, and pronunciation focus, use a wide variety of both male and female voices. The material is British English, and the voices are from the United Kingdom. This may be problematic for learners who have been exposed to only American English. Some of the voices are very authentic and may be difficult to comprehend after only one listening, but encouraging learners to listen multiple times to catch “chunks” will allow them to build the language plants as well as match phonetic symbols and words with similar pronunciation.

Feedback is relatively simple, but immediate, consisting of both correct-answer-only and answer-until-correct formats. The correct-answer-only form ends with a simple “Well Done!” message that serves more to indicate an end to a particular activity than to modify learner production. When learners move an item on the screen to a correct location in the phrase, the item changes color and locks in. When incorrect, however, the item does not change or lock in; the learner must try again until correct. Answer-until-correct feedback provides learners with opportunities to reflect on what they are doing, which could foster better interaction with the material (Murphy, 2007). A drawback to this form is that some users may just guess the correct answer through trial and error, which may not necessarily lead to a change in their overall understanding and learning. Teachers should encourage their learners not to guess, but to think about why their answer is wrong and change it accordingly.

Non-Linear Language Presentation

Language Gardening presents language in a non-linear fashion. Rather than seeing boring, regular text like that of a book, the sentences and clauses look like plants with many branches spreading out. This allows a simple sentence to be expandable by including many other possible verbs, adjectives, nouns, or phrases, which are all connected together. While this may seem like an overload of information, by having learners cover-up parts of the sentence and teaching them to block out the unnecessary branches, learners can see how a sentence can be expanded in many ways and how the different branches work together with each other. Combining this with color and chunking, creates a unique way for learners to visualize language.

The Use of Color

Color is an important feature of this program as it is used to signify different syntactical features of sentences. All words are color-coded to match a particular function, such as verb, noun, and adjective, or prepositional phrase, noun phrase, and adverbial phrase. Collentine (2000) suggests that combining textual with aural data and color is beneficial for grammatical

hypothesis formation in CALL tasks and enhances “the perceptual prominence of grammatical phenomena that lack overall salience, such as verbal or case morphology” (Collentine, 2000, p. 47). The program uses a consistent pattern of color for different classes of words throughout all levels, making it easier for learners to understand syntax and word morphology. When learners drag a particular word item to the correct place within a sentence or clause, it assumes the appropriate color. Learners also have sections where they are required to paint words or phrases with the correct color which will help reinforce language concepts.

Lexical Chunks and Collocation

Lexical chunks, the sequence of words that operate as a single unit, involve the use of pieces of preformed language as well as individual words in the construction of language for communicative purposes (Schmit, 2000). The mind stores language not just at the word level but also as phrases for easier recall (Schmit, 2000). Learners can benefit from an understanding of how language is chunked and the way certain words collocate. They will be able to not only communicate more effectively but also learn strategies for analyzing texts for meaning.

Though the text for each lesson is a story or a poem, they are presented in smaller chunks, as a series of phrases or clauses, to focus learners on features of the sentence and collocation of words which make-up these smaller units of the sentence. In the listening section, there is a click-and-drag word/clause construction activity, which learners must complete as they listen. This activity focuses on the verb, adjective, noun, or adverbial phrases, and learners must put together the proper collocants. In some cases, to show morphological similarity, the pieces of words that have commonality with another word must be put together, such as two plural nouns that share the same *-s*, or two nouns that share the same suffix. Learners do not see the whole text, except in the comprehension section, where the answers to the questions may cover one section of text or may focus on broader meaning within the whole text. Getting learners to recognize the chunks and pieces of language that work together as units, as well as highlighting the collocation of words can benefit learners greatly.

CONCLUSION

Language Gardening, available through Clarity Language Consultants, is an innovative program that provides a refreshing way for the learner to look at grammar and lexis in a wide range of teaching and learning situations. The metaphor of language as plants provides a good way to get learners to look at language anew. Changing to a non-linear sentence and clause structure, using a regular color pattern to highlight word function and using lexical chunks and collocations will increase learner interest and retention of new concepts. While the material is suitable for self-study, it is ideal for a classroom setting where the teacher can provide guidance to learners, and learners can maximize the impact of the material in off-line learning as well. *Language Gardening* is a program that all users will “dig.”

MINIMUM OPERATING SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

While using the most up-to-date computer equipment would be ideal, *Language Gardening* is designed for use on less sophisticated equipment PCs. The minimum computer requirements are a 600MHz processor with 256 MB RAM, 450MB hard-drive space, a CD-ROM drive, sound capabilities, Internet access, standard mouse and keyboard input devices, and a Windows XP or Vista operating system.

The Reviewer

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