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Book Review

English Language Teaching Today: Linking Theory and Practice, by Willy A. Renandya and Handoyo Puji Widodo (Eds.), Springer International Publishing Switzerland, 2016, 307 pp., 93.59€ (Hardcover), ISBN 978-3-319-38834-2

One of the most significant professional challenges for language learning researchers is to transform research findings into language teachers' pedagogical practices. For this reason, I am particularly attracted by this edited volume on English language teaching, in which Renandya and Widodo attempt to link theory and practice in teaching English with contributions from more than twenty leading researchers in the field. There are two parts in the book. The first part titled "Theories, Research and Principles" has seven chapters and covers a wide range of topics, from student-centered language learning to multilingualism. The second part titled "Pedagogical Practices" contains thirteen chapters and explores the use of those aforementioned theories and principles in pedagogical practices in teaching conventional language knowledge and helping learners acquire specific language in particular contexts. The book provides readers an up-to-date account of current principles and practices for teaching English, this reader-friendly book has clear content index, and every chapter is coherently and cohesively organized.

Chapters in Part I provide some principles of English language teaching and thus establish a sound foundation for the practical accounts in Part II, and in so doing many chapters in Part I themselves have practical suggestions for teaching. In the chapter by Jacobs and Renandya, they present the principles associated with Student-Centered Learning in which students are expected to be independent of teachers and to be responsible for themselves since learning is truly a student-centered journey. Such focus on language learners is closely related with what Mahboob and Lin convey in their chapter, as supporters of the belief that mother tongue-based multilingual education can make students' lives more lively and diversified. Instead of strictly discussing the relevant theories, they provide some guidelines for teachers to use local languages productively in classrooms where language learners are immersed in a familiar experiential context.

The fourth and fifth chapters depart from the theme of pedagogy and address the critical issue of curriculum and textbook development to support pedagogical practices. In Macalister's chapter, he reminds curriculum developers that language courses should strike a balance between meaning-focused input and output. In the next chapter, Tomlinson stresses the importance of using authentic texts and tasks in English language teaching to cater to diverse needs of learners of English as a global language, so it is quite essential that current material development should be internationally-oriented, and language teachers should prepare English learners for lingua franca interaction.

In the subsequent chapter, Brown puts forward twelve theoretically sound assessment types. In the last chapter of Part I, Farrell documented how three EFL teachers made use of journal writing as a reflective tool to gain insights into their practice. Writing is of course a valuable opportunity for learners to reflect on their beliefs and assumptions on various experiences. Through different kinds of introspects or reflections, learners can gradually understand themselves and find their shortcomings, then make some

adjustments, so teachers' careful and comprehensive reflections will serve as an effective avenue for self-improvement.

The thirteen chapters in Part II discuss a wide variety of pedagogical approaches to teaching different language skills. In the chapter by Renandya and Jacobs, implementing extensive reading and listening together in input-poor L2 classrooms are specifically examined. Zhang's chapter is also highly recommended in which reading and viewing are blended together, thus makes the lesson more dynamic and interactive. Similarly, Chang's chapter is also a very useful resource for teachers interested in supporting students with strategies for listening beyond the classroom, as Chang suggests that teachers develop students' independent learning skills through narrow listening, repeated listening and simultaneous reading.

The next chapters involve two productive skills, speaking and writing. As for speaking, Goh presents a comprehensive and holistic method. I am in favor of her view that designing an effective speaking lesson must take a speaker's linguistic and cognitive needs into account. Newton proposes a set of principles to guide the teaching of English for intercultural spoken communication. Language educators should consider seriously the cultural or intercultural problems in English language teaching. Only when teachers have a full understanding of communicative norms between different cultures can they help learners find "a third place" (Kramsch, 1993) to negotiate differences and interact across cultures in the intercultural learning processes comfortably. As for writing, Cheung presents a social-cognitive approach to teaching writing. I am particularly appreciative of Xu's efforts in comparing three academic writing courses in Beijing, Hong Kong and Melbourne in his chapter.

The remaining chapters in Part II cover not only language knowledge such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, but also English language learning with technology support and English language teaching for vocational purposes or in workplace settings. As for grammar teaching, I concur with Agustien that texts should be used as vehicles for grammar teaching since meaningful and appropriate contexts of authentic language use is essential for the command of grammar. When it comes to the teaching of pronunciation, Wong's proposal that teachers should raise the awareness of learners in phonetic and phonological features is very constructive since these features are vital for learners to grasp pronunciation.

In those final chapters, Wilkinson stresses that information and communication technology (ICT) in the L2 classroom should be integrated with relevant L2 learning principles. Widodo provides language teachers with both theoretical and practical guides to designing and implementing an EVP (English for Vocational Purposes) course. I am especially drawn to the VOLL (Vocationally Oriented Language Learning) programs which offer students English courses with vocational practice. In the last chapter, Jaidev and Blackstone deliver an account of inquiry-based communication proposals designed to equip students with workplace communicative competence. I concur with the authors that some key skills in the 21st century should be carefully and productively embedded in workplace language teaching.

Overall, the book presents a comprehensive overview of key theoretical considerations and pedagogical issues in English language and its teaching worldwide. The book reflects the dynamic and complex nature of English language teaching in different parts of the world. Therefore, this reader-friendly book successfully addresses its intended diverse readership including postgraduates, practitioners and researchers in the field of TESOL. If I have to point out anything that the editors could improve, it seems the two parts in the volume do not relate to each other very well. I suppose these days very few readers would read a book from the first page to the last like me. Therefore, rich content of individual chapters matters more than organic integration of different chapters in an edited volume. Nevertheless, as a reader, I do wish to see a closer connection between chapters in Part I (theory) and Part II (practice). Despite these reservations, I believe that every chapter in this volume illustrates well the complexity and multifaceted nature of ELT in the world today. These chapters also constitute a principled way of dealing with the complexity of ELT to inform teachers' professional practices.

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