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### Book Review

#### **Language Curriculum Design and Socialisation**, by Peter Mickan, Multilingual Matters, 2013, 133 pp., \$1,583.52 (Hardcover), ISBN 987-1-84769-829-2

Language Curriculum Design and Socialisation is a book for all those who are involved in language education. Readers, be they school language teachers, mainstream school (or content) teachers who wish to develop a content-language integrated curriculum, tertiary students or lecturers in language education programs, language curriculum designers, or language education policy makers, will find useful information for their work or studies. To serve its wide range of readership, Language Curriculum Design and Socialisation was written in accessible language and structured in short and topic-based chapters. It is divided into 11 sections which include nine content chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion. Each content chapter focuses on a topic of language curriculum, namely: 1) Texts in the fabric of life, 2) Change and renewal in curriculum design, 3) Learning the language of social practices, 4) Curriculum design, 5) Curriculum planning, 6) Teaching practices, 7) Curriculum applications, 8) Curriculum design in higher education: Planning academic programs, and 9) Language planning, curriculum renewal, and the teacher as researcher.

These chapters are of between 10 and 15 pages and structured in the same sequence: Introduction → Discussions of the chapter content → Summary → Notes and Readings → Tasks. While the first three sections present a complete discussion of the topic, the Notes and Readings section provides extra explanations of some key points discussed in the chapter and recommends further readings for the topic. The Tasks section gives readers opportunities to reinforce the content and reflect on their own context of language curriculum and/or language teaching and learning. An advantage of the above structure is that it allows for flexible use of the whole book as a textbook or of separate chapters as readers for tertiary courses or professional development training in language curriculum design and evaluation.

Informed by Halliday's theory of language as social semiotic (Halliday, 1975, 1978), Language Curriculum Design and Socialisation calls for renewal in language curriculum to be based on texts as units of analysis for teaching and learning. It argues that language curriculum development has seen a shift from "traditional reductionist" to "integrated skills in communication" models (p. xv). Neither of these are seen as ideal. While the former reduces language to a rigid system of grammar and vocabulary items and the outcomes of teaching and learning language to memorising these items, the latter merely adds sets of components and skills related to communication without reconsidering the nature of grammar and vocabulary competence. The author argues that these latter curriculum designs are pragmatically unrealistic for language teaching and learning in many places around the world due to scarcity of costly imported resources, big class sizes, and unqualified teaching staff. In addition, they are pedagogically unviable because they strip off social meanings from texts through the use of simulated texts.

Placing language education amid social changes and globalisation of education, Language Curriculum Design and Socialisation argues that language curriculum design be informed by a social theory. The theory foregrounds texts as meaningful units of the social practices of different communities encoded through the use of language and other semiotic resources. Language teaching and learning is to apprentice learners to these meaning making practices of different social communities. This theoretical stance is seen throughout the book informing all language curriculum design and practices for all levels of education.

Chapter one further supports this argument by outlining the centrality of texts in social practices and in language learning. The author affirms social life as a web of social practices which are representative of social and cultural communities or groups. The meanings of these social practices are mediated through language and other semiotic resources which are patterned into texts. Therefore, language curriculum is to be constructed around texts through decoding textual patterns and linguistic items so that learners can learn both of them. A key argument the author makes in this chapter is that the learning of language must begin with social meanings created in social practices. In other words, language use is contextually shaped in terms of both what and how language is used.

Chapter 2 reviews the change and renewal of language curriculum design since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of global mobility. The chapter presents brief characteristics of nine different models of curriculum: 1) Grammar translation; 2) Situational curriculum; 3) Audio-lingual/Audio-visual; 4) Functional-notional curriculum; 5) Communicative language learning; 6) Task-based curriculum; 7) Content-based curriculum (bilingual and immersion programs); 8) Genre-based curriculum; and 9) Text-based curriculum. Through the historical review of language curriculum, the author argues that language teaching and learning has taken text and language out of context, dismantled it into lexico-grammatical components and now is “patching up communication” (p. 23) by reintegrating context, but without changing the original grammar template. This chapter provides useful information about the development of language curriculum designs, which can be used in teacher education coursework on language curriculum development.

Chapter 3 provides a description of a social theory of language learning which forms a theoretical basis for curriculum design, planning, teaching, and learning. The theory foregrounds the relationship between social practices, language, and meaning. It argues that social relationships are mediated by language and other semiotic systems patterned into texts. For this reason, the author asserts “texts are convenient units of analysis” (p. 40) for language teaching and learning. This theoretical basis informs the curriculum design and planning approaches which are presented in chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 outlines how social theory can be applied in language curriculum design. It introduces steps to be taken through the curriculum design process and what components are included in the curriculum. This chapter is useful for language teachers who wish to develop a language curriculum or students and lecturers in language curriculum design and evaluation courses. Chapter 5 introduces considerations to be taken during the process of planning, with specific instructions on how to proceed with these considerations. An example of this is to identify target community and social practices to which language learners are apprenticed. Chapter 6 focuses on teaching practices guided by the social theory of language learning. It introduces seven defining features of a social practice pedagogy and eight proposals guiding the teaching of language according to the social practice pedagogy.

Chapter 7 provides an illustration of how the social theory is applied in language teaching and learning in different educational programs, institutions, and contexts. It showcases the use of text-based curriculum in foreign and second language education, bilingual and content-based teaching and learning, literacy, and language revival programs. Through these examples, readers can critically reflect on the application of the social theory in the language curriculum design in their setting.

Chapter 8 deals with the topic of language curriculum in higher education. Internationalisation of tertiary educational programs, especially those that are offered in English – known as English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) – is a current trend in language education (Dearden, 2015), and with the global use of English, higher education institutions are competing to offer EMI programs. This chapter offers an insightful proposal for designing a language-content integrated curriculum which uses the aims and learning outcomes of the disciplinary knowledge and skills to inform the identification of literacy practices and texts for language development.

The final chapter, Chapter 9, addresses questions regarding the policy work entailed by the application of the social theory in language curriculum. Topics covered in this chapter are language planning for curriculum renewal and teacher professional development to meet the challenges of the curriculum renewal.

In the era of global mobility of humans and semiotic resources and of the internationalisation of higher education (Blommaert, 2010; Dearden, 2015), *Language Curriculum Design and Socialisation* is a timely publication. It is especially so for English language education when teachers are faced with questions of which English to include in the curriculum and how to teach the curriculum content (Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Given the useful information and suggestions the book offers to address the above questions, the readerships of the book may be confused of the differences between genre-based and text-based curricula, especially when both are informed by Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. In addition, content teachers in EMI programs will find the identification of texts and language features challenging because they are not English language specialists and are not trained to teach the language. This remains a critical issue in EMI programs across different contexts and requires further research into how content and language specialists can and should work together throughout the development and delivery of the curriculum in EMI courses (Dearden, 2015).

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**Ngoc Ba Doan**

School of Education, University of South Australia, South Australia  
Email: ngoc.doan@unisa.edu.au

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