

Book review

International perspectives on materials in ELT

Edited by S. Garton & K. Graves, New York, Palgrave, 2014, Pp. v + 292, ISBN 978-1-137-02329-2 (hbk): £65.00; US\$ 95.00; ISBN 978-1-137-02330-2 (pbk): £21.99; US\$ 30.00; ISBN 9781137023322 (ebook)

International perspectives on materials in ELT was published in May 2014 and is a compilation of several articles written by authors from all over the world, including Argentina, Japan, Spain, and Thailand. As the title suggests, it presents a varied collection of insights on how materials are crucial to the teaching of English, as well as how they are perceived in different contexts.

The volume contains sixteen chapters organised into four sections: (1) Global and Local Materials, (2) Materials in the Classroom, (3) Materials and Technology, and (4) Materials and Teacher Education. Although not every chapter has a conclusion per se, each one of them includes a segment titled “Engagement priorities” where the author(s) provide the reader with some questions to reflect upon after reading the section, together with an extensive list of references. Some of the chapters also include a copy of selected activities used by the authors to illustrate their point. These activities can be useful to readers who may want to use such exercises with their own students or as templates to create new activities. It is worth mentioning that not all materials discussed are deemed successful, a view that readers can easily relate to. Some of the authors, such as Joe Pereira, Fabrizio Maggi, Maurizia Cherubin and Enrique García Pascual, have tried a number of materials in their teaching practice but they have not been as effective as they thought they would be. That said, this publication includes not only selected materials to adopt straightaway, but also suggestions on how teachers could implement and modify them for specific purposes.

There is an introductory chapter to the volume that provides an overview of what is understood by materials in ELT and "the way that teachers use them" (Garton & Graves, 2014, p. 11), as well as a summary of what each section deals with. This chapter makes a

point that, contrary to other publications, this book includes a more theoretical approach to ELT materials.

Part 1 includes four articles that discuss how textbooks are used and how they influence students in diverse parts of the world. It provides a clear definition of the ELT textbook, the difference between global, localised and local textbooks especially in Argentina, how materials are adapted to suit Bahrani learners' needs and how Algerian English textbooks represent culture.

Part 2 provides readers with examples of how materials, including textbooks, can be used as adaptable tools to teach English as a Second or Foreign language around the globe. Each chapter deals with one country in particular, i.e. Albania, Ghana, Thailand, and the United States. They provide a wide perspective on how to adapt the material to suit different students with heterogeneous levels of proficiency in different contexts.

Part 3 focuses on technology as a variable when considering materials in ELT. Among the technological suggestions are mobile phones, Interactive Fiction (IF) and Web 2.0 Tools. Bangladesh is one of the countries that has experience using mobile phones in the EFL classroom. Portugal has seen the growth in utilising Interactive Fiction at the service of Digital Game-based Language Learning. Teachers claim it enhances the students' reading skills while it challenges them. Lastly, chapter 12 discusses Web 2.0 (Google Documents, Google Calendar, Skype) and the Interactive WhiteBoard, as well as their advantages and drawbacks.

Finally, Part 4 presents, through actual examples in the United States (The Story Reading Project), Brazil (Pre-Service Teachers' course) and Japan (factors influencing the adoption of new textbooks), different ways of adapting ELT materials.

The concluding chapter is written by the editors and works as a final word as well as a vision of the future where English will continue to be a well-established lingua franca (2014, p. 270) and therefore, new materials will need to be developed to teach it.

Overall, the book brings together different views on how to use materials when teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language. Some articles provide a more practical approach readers can apply directly in their classes; others are descriptions of experiences which can enhance our understanding of how people in different parts of the world teach and select materials for teaching.

This book is suitable for teachers who are starting their teaching career because it provides methods and ready-to-use activities or for those who have been teaching for some years for it includes newer tools such as mobile phones and IWB that could be used in the classroom. Also, teacher trainers can take advantage of these authors' approaches to teaching with traditional (textbook) and new (mobile phones, Web 2.0) tools.

It is certainly a comprehensive publication that should not be missed if you are

interested in ELT materials.

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