

## Book review

### **English Language Teaching in South America: Policy, Preparation and Practices**

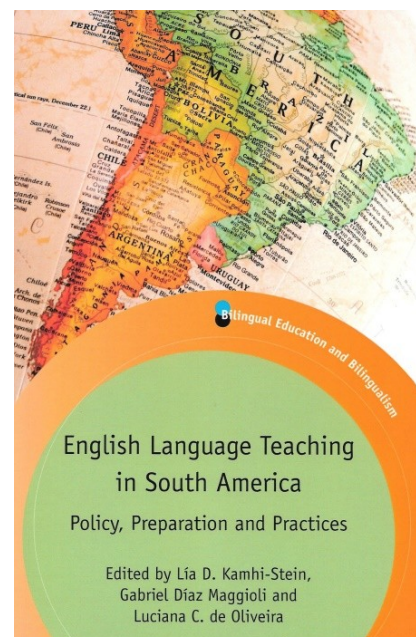
Edited by Lía D. Kamhi-Stein, Gabriel Díaz Maggioli & Luciana C. de Oliveira, *Multilingual Matters*, 2017, Pp. xiv+248; ISBN: 978-1-78309-796-8, £26.49 (paperback)

English language teaching in South America is usually absent in international publications, or at least publications located in “the centre”. Now and then we may read articles or book chapters which are part of international perspectives volumes on a given aspect of ELT authored. This explains why the volume edited by Kamhi-Stein, Díaz Maggioli and de Oliveira is the first of its kind in the literature to put together the voices of ELT educators from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. In this regard, the volume is based in South America, authored by South American educators and written with an international community in mind.

The volume is divided into three parts which respond to issues around, in this order, policy, teacher preparation and development, and school-based research and innovative practices. In the introductory chapter, the editors provide a minimal historical account against which the chapters are written and conclude by acknowledging that

[...] in spite of the fact that South America is a complex and multifaceted region that, historically, has oscillated between periods of deep social and economic turmoil and periods of great social and economic growth, the status of English has changed and has become part of the landscape of the region (p. 8).

Part 1, English language policy, opens with Cristina Banfi (Chapter 1) discussing four programmes which illustrate how ELT programmes, mostly in primary education, can integrate innovation and expansion in Chile, Colombia, Uruguay, and the City of Buenos Aires (Argentina). While Banfi celebrates such programmes and the underlying motivates behind them, she reminds us that research is needed to understand their sustainability and impact on overall language education and planning. In Chapter 2, Díaz Maggioli approaches



policy transfer processes in South America through corpus-based analysis of official documents. It was found that the most frequent content words were: *teachers*, *language*, *learning*, *English*, and *teaching*. More importantly, the author notes that a neoliberal agenda runs deep in the processes under examination. In Chapter 3, Claudia Brovetto describes English language teaching and policy in Uruguay and describes the Ceibal en Inglés project since its inception until the assessment of learners' progress in English in 2015. This part closes with a chapter authored by Tenuta and colleagues in which they analyse language education policies in Brazil and describe the Brazilian national programme of school textbooks. The authors provide an overview of criteria for language practices, features, and key principles that textbooks are expected to feature.

Part 2, English language teacher preparation and professional development, condenses description and analysis of teacher education programmes in different countries. In Chapter 5, Kuhlman and Serrano analyse teacher education reform in Ecuador, its impact on universities and curriculum and the influence and dominating presence of the US embassy. Chapter 6 centres on the current situation in Chile by criticising some decisions and celebrating the Programa Inglés Abre Puertas as a true innovative endeavour to provide the educational system with qualified teachers. In Chapter 7, Veciño reflects on her use of technology to help teacher educators and learner teachers with their lessons and a blended learning approach to teach some modules in a teacher education programme. From this part readers will conclude innovation and reform run deep in South America and that a whole array of programmes and projects are being implemented and monitored.

Part 3, School-based research and innovative practices, comes to confirm a recent rise in teacher research in terms of publications. That is, teacher research has always been strong in South America but seldom published, yet in this volume, teachers have had the opportunity to share their findings in a reader-friendly manner. In Chapter 8, Pozzi examines teachers' perceptions of language policies and their implementation in public schools in the City of Buenos Aires by adopting an ethnographic approach. In Chapter 9, Chacón summarises an action research study with student-teachers on the use of films in project work for fostering critical language awareness. The chapter includes an extremely useful list of activities from films. In Chapter 10, Valsecchi and colleagues report students' beliefs about teaching and learning EFL in Córdoba (Argentina). To this effect, the authors employed a questionnaire and collected quantitative data from 1522 secondary school students. In Chapter 11, Barbosa and Guimarães report the design and implementation of a multimodal framework for teaching English to two groups of public school teenage learners in Brazil. Data come from learners' activities, mainly texts in response to images. Last, Chapter 12 authored by Rodríguez-Bonces engages in evaluation of a bilingual programme at a Catholic school in Colombia. Findings come from document analysis, a parents' survey, a teachers' survey, teachers' interviews, and classroom observations. Overall, this part of the volume illustrates how teachers and teacher educators can engage in school-based research through mixed methods which can help us understand and act in our diverse South American contexts.

This edited volume is a commendable effort to describe and analyse the ELT processes in South America through examination of policies, teacher education, and research. The authors, with varying degrees, have succeeded in drawing on publication authored by other Latin American colleagues to inform their theoretical underpinnings and historical views. We, South American educators should celebrate this book together with other recent publications from the southern cone (Baharona, 2016) because they are channeling our stories and experiences and allow us to share them with the international English-speaking community.

### Reference

Barahona, M. (2016). *English language teacher education in Chile: A cultural historical activity theory perspective*. London/ New York: Routledge.

Darío Luis Banegas  
ISFD N° 809, Esquel, Argentina  
[dariobanegas@hotmail.com](mailto:dariobanegas@hotmail.com)