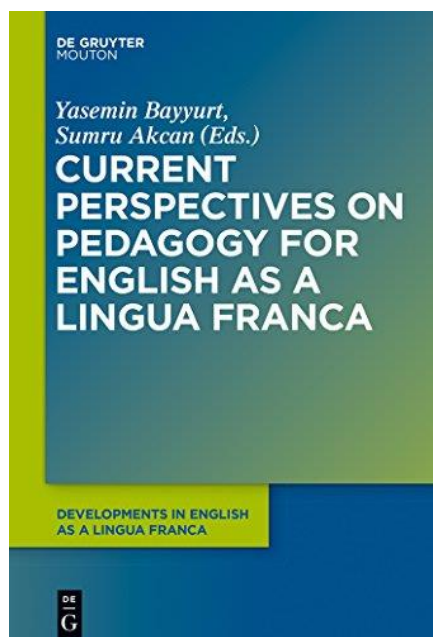




Current Perspectives on Pedagogy for English as a Lingua Franca

Yasemin Bayyurt and Sumru Akcan (eds.)

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Reviewed by Valeria Franceschi¹

The multicultural and multilingual reality of the contemporary globalized society has changed the way we look at the English language and its role as a lingua franca of communication. The fluid and hybrid nature of English in its lingua franca uses has raised an ever-growing interest to the potential implications of ELF in the field of English Language Teaching, with scholars questioning whether traditional ELT tenets are still applicable and appropriate in the global world. The book under review adds to the existing body of research on the relationship between ELT and ELF. The collection of 14 papers covers the main issues and concerns related to the topic from a theoretical and empirical point of view, reporting on the current situation and exploring potential future options.

The volume underlines the importance of including ELF in English language syllabi across all levels of education, in order to provide students with an accurate representation of the multiple realities of English in the modern world as well as to give them tools to function successfully as speakers of English in a multitude of contexts outside the confines of the classroom. Indeed, the teaching of a language with a lingua franca role “should set out to achieve learning outcomes that are different from those pertaining to EFL and ESL instruction” (Bayyurt and Akcan 2).

As per the editors, the book is divided into four sections: “teaching and learning”, “teacher education”, “assessment” and “language teaching materials” (3).

The first section, “teaching and learning”, includes four papers specifically concerned with the current role of ELF within the ELT traditional paradigm and the further integration of an ELF-aware perspective in teaching practices. Flowerdew, and Hino and Oda, present empirical studies on the inclusion of an ELF-aware approach in university courses in Asian countries: Flowerdew focuses on the interface between ELF and ESP through corpus-derived data. She underlines the importance of integrating ELF in ESP classes and

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highlights the use of corpus analysis as both a research tool for ELF and a pedagogical aid. Hino and Oda provide an account of an existing IPTEIL (Integrated Practice in Teaching English as an International Language) course at a Japanese university, which adopts an ELF-aware perspective by exposing students to media from different cultural backgrounds and contexts. They effectively propose a methodology to “fill [the] gap” (Hino and Oda 47) between ELF and classroom teaching.

Kohn brings the discussion to Europe and, questioning the traditional Standard English ideology, advocates for the inclusion of ELF elements in ELT, so that students may find their own creative space in language use and make English their own (Kohn 55). He underlines, to this respect, the potential of CLIL and e-learning projects to foster an alternative pedagogy of English.

Lopriore's paper focuses on primary school education in Italy. Her analysis of lesson transcripts drawn from the ELLiE – Early Language Learning in Europe – shows the presence of ELF-related features in students' production. As a result of migration flows into Europe, and the percentages of NN instructors in primary schools, ELF is already the de facto language learned in school (Lopriore 80). Her final conclusions go beyond the activity in the classroom and address the pedagogical implications of ELF for teacher training, easing the reader into the second section of the volume. The papers in part two remark on the necessity to train both existing and new generations of teachers so that they may increase their awareness of ELF and its pedagogical implications for further implementation in teaching practices. Empirical research on pre-service and in-service teachers, both ethnographic and quantitative, is carried out to gauge their knowledge and perceptions of ELF in a field that to this day remains strongly dependent on the supremacy of the native speaker and on Standard ideology. Blair bases his paper on the notion of multicompetence, which, he argues, should be the goal of second language learning (Blair 91). His study analyzes teachers' perspectives on the implications of ELF in ELT and its influence on their own future teaching practice. He proposes suggestions to foster ELF-awareness in teacher education programs. In their contribution, Azuaga and Cavalheiro administer a questionnaire to pre-service teachers about their perceptions on their English use. The discussion of the results is then employed as a basis for suggestions on how to implement ELF awareness in teacher training programs.

Dewey's paper reports on in-service teachers' perceptions of knowledge about language. He highlights the importance of critical reflection on existing principles in ELT on the part of teachers so that they may contribute to dismantling the traditional, native-based paradigm and develop alternative, ELF-aware pedagogies.

İnal and Özdemir report findings from a study carried out in Turkey on the perception of academic, pre-service and in-service teachers on ELF and teaching. They remark that the need to include ELF in teacher training in Turkey is a pivotal step towards the revision of ELT practices.

In the neighboring Greek context, Sougari and Faltzi focus on ELF-awareness in pre-service teachers; they were asked to reflect on the impact their intercultural experience have on their self-beliefs as well as on their own teaching practices. The authors put emphasis on the role of the current generation, who is in a “transitional time of globalization” (Sougari and Faltzi 166) as pivotal to attitude change.

Weber's contribution analyzes the perceptions of non-native teachers, native foreign language assistants and students at various levels of the Austrian educational system. Results show that while teacher training is considered important, a strong bias towards the native speaker as the preferable role model for ELF is still in place across the three groups.

The two following papers address a delicate issue in this field of research, namely the assessment of language proficiency. To this day, competence is still measured on a preeminently formal level against an idealized native speaker. These traditional norms are no longer appropriate when ELF is taken into account, but in the field of ELF studies itself it is not clear so far how assessment methods may be changed in order to evaluate students' ability to use the language to navigate multiple and heterogeneous communicative contexts. Chopin addresses both issues in her contribution (Chopin 194). She advocates a shift from the form-based testing employed today to an alternative assessment based on the students' functional competence in ELF settings. Her study attempts to pinpoint which aspects of ELF are essential to communication, so that they may be included in tests. Newbold's contribution takes another step forward and reports on a “test with an ELF component” devised by a group of researchers at the University of Venice. The test aims at assessing English by reproducing “authentic language situations and use in an academic



environment in Europe” (Newbold 2010 quoted in Newbold 2015, 207).

The fourth and last section, “teaching materials”, is concerned with the lack of ELF-oriented content in existing textbooks as well as with the creative potential of teachers as designers of materials and activities appropriate for an ELF-aware syllabus.

Gimenez et al. provide an account on an optional course on ELF offered to training teachers. The course included the production of ELF-aware English teaching materials to be used as an alternative to traditional ELT materials. Siqueira, on the other hand, analyzes existing textbooks. The study shows that the materials and activities presented in these books remains strongly tied to the language and culture of Britain and the USA, lacking on the other hand in material representing other cultures and varieties of English.

This edited volume provides a valuable collection of case studies on the current state of ELF in a variety of educational settings and contexts. The observations in many of the contributions stem from the very core elements of ELF, that is, the undermining of the dichotomies of native and non-native speakers and Standard and non-Standard English. The de-territorialization of English in ELF also plays a relevant role in the shift from traditional ELT to a more international approach: the interrelation of language and culture, namely of English and Anglo-American culture, is seen here as problematic, just as in ELF, “the development of intercultural competence is more important than teaching about the culture of a particular country” (Gimenez et al. 228).

The volume is a relevant contribution to ongoing research on the integration of ELF in ELT practices; its aim is achieved by addressing four core topics in the field that have gained increasing attention in current debates. Through the presentation of empirical data and thought-provoking observations, the papers paint a cross-section of the current situation in a range of different locations and contexts, directing the reader towards the gaps that still need to be filled in order to promote and implement a shift to an ELF-aware pedagogy.

Works Cited

Newbold, David. “By-product of Bologna: A Minimum Level of English for European University Students.” *Annali di Ca’ Foscari* XLVIII 1-2 (2010): 205-234.