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*Iranian Journal
of
Language Teaching Research
(Book Review)*



***Exploring English Language Teaching: Language in Action, Graham Hall. Routledge, New York(2011).
ix+282 pp., ISBN: 978-0-415-58415-9.***

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Edited by Ronald Carter and Guy Cook, *Routledge Introductions to Applied Linguistics* series (alternatively referred to as *Introducing Applied Linguistics* series (p. xi)) offers state of the art overviews of major issues in applied linguistics. As a volume in this series, *Exploring English Language Teaching: Language in Action* adopts an applied linguistics perspective to introduce English Language Teaching (ELT) to advanced undergraduate students of ELT. Those starting graduate/postgraduate studies in applied linguistics and language practitioners coming back to academic study can benefit from reading the book. Like other books in the series, the book follows an innovative practice-to-theory approach or front-to-back structure for introducing the real-world applied linguistics problems, followed by tasks teachers get engaged in to solve these problems, and the theoretical implications or underpinnings of these solutions. Therefore, “there is a movement from problems, through intervention, and only finally to theory” (p. xii).

As with the other *Routledge Introductions to Applied Linguistics* series, the book by Hall, which seeks to provide an answer to whether the actual classroom situations are considered in applied linguistics literature, focuses mainly on the practicality of ELT. To achieve this goal, the book has been arranged into four major sections: 1) classroom interaction and management, 2) method, postmethod and methodology, 3) learners, and 4) institutional frameworks and social contexts. The arrangement of the book content around four broad themes in ELT, according to Fitzpatrick (2013), is appropriate since “it moves from what is probably most familiar to the practitioner/reader—features of the classroom—through perspectives on teaching methods and learner characteristics, to less-often considered socio-cultural influences on ELT” (p. 109). Each section has further been divided into three more specific chapters. These chapters are accompanied by a variety of tasks that aim to “raise questions, prompt reflection and seek to integrate theory and practice” (p. xii).

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The book also contains a glossary of key terms, commentaries on some tasks, a list of references, and a list of further readings.

The first part of the book, i.e., 'Classroom interaction and management', opens with the chapter titled 'Language classroom: roles, relationships and interactions', in which the sophisticated nature of the ELT classroom which makes it distinct from other learning situations is exhibited, drawing on van Lier (1988) and Tudor (2001). More specifically, this chapter discusses the teacher's beliefs, the relationship between teachers and learners, and the nature of their interaction in the classroom. In chapter 2, 'Intervening in the language classroom: classroom management, interaction and learning opportunities', the author forcefully argues against the possible best model of teaching and encourages the consideration of different approaches used by different teachers in different learning environments. Chapter 3, 'The language classroom in theory and practice: complex, diverse and local', drawing on the social nature of the classroom environment and the context-relevant learning, invites language teachers to reflect on their teaching act.

The second part of the book entitled, 'Method, postmethod and methodology', is similarly divided into three chapters. Chapter 4 focuses on 'Language, language learning and method: dilemmas and practices' as its title goes. Promoting the movement away from the notion of method, this chapter presents the language learning theories that explain the acquisition of learners in different pedagogical contexts and the ways that these theories can be applied to numerous classroom activities and tasks. Chapter 5, 'Language teaching methods: perspectives and possibilities', centers on where different language teaching approaches are introduced in line with the theories of language acquisition presented in the previous chapter. The aim is to highlight the concept of 'postmethod' as a movement away from the search for the best method. Teachers are considered as specialists in their area who are free to test and develop their own theories of language learning and teaching. Closely related to chapters 4 and 5, chapter 6 discusses the 'Theoretical insights for a postmethod era' with a focus on the concept of 'plausibility' according to which teachers need to be skillful enough to determine the effectiveness of the decisions they make.

Part 3 of the book emphasizes the role of 'learners'. In the first chapter of this section, 'Focus on the language learner: individual attributes and attitudes', different learner characteristics such as age, gender, and aptitude, and their contribution to language learning are discussed. The author argues that although none of the learner characteristics overrides the language learning process, "learners' contributions to language learning are the result of the dynamic interaction of these variables." (p. 142). Chapter 8, 'Learner diversity and development: considerations for the language classroom ... and beyond', refers to the significance of learner strategies and learner autonomy in the classroom. However, the author pinpoints some problems to be heeded when applying the concepts of learner autonomy and independence to non-Western contexts. Chapter 9, 'Images of language learners: from individual to social, and universal to specific', considers the importance of both the individual and social aspects of language learning and encourages the teachers to include both in their teaching.

Part 4 of the book links the micro-level classroom context to macro-level contexts; hence the title: 'Institutional frameworks and social contexts'. The section begins with 'From global trends

to local contexts: language dilemmas in the ELT classroom' as its first chapter. This chapter, therefore, extends the issue tackled in chapter 9 by evaluating English language teaching in a broader context. Chapter 10 examines the role of native speaker model in English language learning, and chapter 11, 'Planning and organizing L2 learning and teaching: contexts and curriculum, possibilities and realities', attends to the development of language materials and highlights the role played by the learners and teachers' interaction with syllabuses. This chapter also focuses on the wider scope of ELT considering its social aspect, thus paving the way for the theme of the last chapter on ELT: 'ELT in the world: education and politics, contexts and goals'. The chapter acknowledges the global position of ELT and compares it with its local role in specific teaching contexts. The general conclusion that the author of the book arrives at the end of the work is that further cooperation is needed between researchers and practitioners to enable the teachers to contribute to appropriate research opportunities.

Exploring English Language Teaching adopts a critical view of the ELT profession by examining both theory and practice to better reflect the profession to learners who are familiar with the language teaching field but are unfamiliar with it from an academic perspective. The fact that the book is committed to the 'practice to theory' approach makes it a very practical and easy-to-digest book for all those involved in ELT: undergraduate students, pre-service/in-service teachers, post-graduate students and ELT teacher-trainers/lecturers. The book can also offer some insight even for those with remarkable experience and background on the topic in that it takes a new perspective to old issues.

The organization of the book into four sections is effective and each part gives a brief and adequate overview of the related issue, although withholding unnecessary details. The book moves clearly through four parts which are well sequenced. A particular strength of this book rests on its provision of a number of practical classroom activities and tasks that assist the readers in bringing to practice the previously presented topics and theories.

Another particular strength of *Exploring English Language Teaching* is that it brings a couple of issues about the concept of postmethod (chapters 4, 5, and 6), the significance of local contexts in language learning (chapter 7), and the attention that should be given to learner autonomy (chapter 8). However, some topics such as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) covered in chapter 2 and the issue of variation in English (chapter 10) would have been more illuminative to the reader if more details have been provided.

References

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