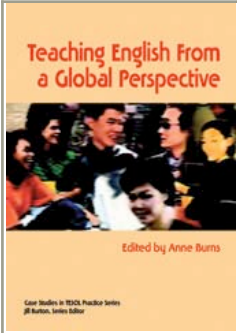


Teaching English from a Global Perspective

Author:	Anne Burns, Ed. (2005)		
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Pp. viii +207	193118518-2 (paper)	£ \$24.95 for TESOL members; \$32.95 for non-members	

A recent edition to the TESOL Practice Series, this volume addresses the implications of English as a global language for ESOL practitioners. Within a context of increasingly fluid linguistic, geographical and ideological boundaries, language teachers must be aware of and sensitive to the changing nature of language, teaching, learning, and language use. This volume presents examples from a variety of contexts and perspectives about how teachers are doing just that. Each of the eleven case studies is presented in similar format: introduction, description, distinguishing features, and practical ideas, with appendices that could be adapted for a variety of instructional contexts. The result is a collection that is, despite some minor weaknesses, extremely practical and reader friendly.

In Chapter 1, Burns provides an articulate and succinct overview of the themes of the book, skillfully synthesizing relevant literature with the case studies into a framework that addresses six central questions related to the teaching of English as a global language:

- Part 1: Whose language?
- Part 2: Which speakers?
- Part 3: Which language?
- Part 4: Which standard?
- Part 5: Which approaches?
- Part 6: Which texts?

Part 1 explores the poignant issue of English ownership. In Chapter 2, Brown describes the ways in which the MA TESOL program at Portland State University has aligned its curriculum with the university mission of internationalization by adopting

a World Englishes (WE) perspective. She asserts that teacher education programs must raise pre-service teachers' awareness about the changing ownership of English to better prepare them for their future professional contexts. In Chapter 3, Friedrich describes a course for faculty in a Buenos Aires MBA program that was transitioning to English as the primary medium of instruction because of the growing international student body as well as institutional pressure on faculty to publish in English. Both chapters demonstrate how teacher education must view English as the domain not only of native speakers, but also of a variety of multi-competent users.

Part 2 highlights the interrelatedness of language and culture. In Chapter 4, Meier describes a seminar offered in an MA-TESOL program at a US university that promoted awareness among pre-service teachers of culture's role in communication. Specifically, students reflected on the ways in which their own cultural backgrounds informed their perceptions of others. In Chapter 5, Matsuda investigates the mismatch between language policy and classroom practices in the context of Japanese high schools. The curricular goal of developing cultural and linguistic awareness through foreign language education is translated into the privileging of native English norms. These chapters suggest the importance of intercultural awareness in language education as well as the need to critically evaluate the ways in which curricula define and implement such awareness.

Parts 3 and 4 focus on the struggles inherent in selecting appropriate varieties of English for the classroom. In Chapter 6, Evans describes a cross-cultural pragmatics course in a Sydney private language institute, which aimed to develop oral communicative competence in the workplace. Due to the multilingual backgrounds of the learners, Evans chose to integrate multiple language varieties into the classroom, using speakers within and outside the classroom as models. The choice to focus on the ways in which discourse practices may vary by cultural context helped learners develop greater facility in intercultural communication. In Chapter 7, Tarnopolsky discusses a business English course he taught in Ukraine and the challenges associated with his decision, based on learner needs, to use both British and American varieties. The chapter raises practical questions for those teachers planning to introduce multiple varieties of English in the absence of a distinct variety of English as a lingua franca. In Chapter 8, Brock reports on a survey distributed to pre-service and practicing English teachers in Macao soliciting their views on the importance of English, the government's role in English language teaching, and which 'normative model' of English should be taught in secondary contexts. Responses indicated the need for increased opportunities for teachers' language development, guidelines on language standards, use of regional English varieties, and proactive teacher participation in advocating language policies. This article provides a useful example of the ways in which teacher attitudes have direct implications for both practice and policy. Together, these chapters underline how important it is to select appropriate English varieties for instruction, varieties based on learner goals and contexts of language use.

Part 5 is disappointingly spare, with only one case study, a study describing the Philippines English Language Teaching (PELT) Project: a teacher education project which aimed to promote communicative language teaching (CLT) in response to a perceived decline in the quality of English use in public schools. However, the absence of a clear rationale to implement CLT begs the question of what is meant by CLT and who, teachers or administrators, deem it appropriate to use across diverse

classroom contexts. It would have been helpful to learn more about whose language use was deteriorating and how (e.g., measures of proficiency, test scores, etc.), in order to better understand why CLT was deemed an appropriate response and to what degree such an approach departed from existing practices. Nevertheless, the article highlights the importance of providing ongoing teacher education to successfully implement educational reform.

Part 6 is one of the stronger sections of the book, both for its case study diversity and the innovative ways in which the teacher-writers use learner needs and local contexts to inform pedagogical practices. Chapter 10 describes how a post-graduate course in literacy education underwent a sociocultural shift to respond to the dynamic, multimodal literacy practices ushered in by the forces of globalization. Chapters 11 and 12 each discuss a university course for international students which exploits globalization as course content to promote language, critical thinking, and student engagement. In Chapter 11, Bozzini introduces students at George Washington University (District of Columbia) to the literature of global English in order "to create a common intellectual locus for peoples of the world" (p. 155). Similarly, Cooke, teaching at York University in Ontario, explores the impacts of globalization as a means of developing learner knowledge of argument text structure within current public discourses.

The themes raised in this collection call to mind Hornberger's (2003) assertion that "[t]he challenge of negotiating across multiple languages, cultures, and identities is a very real one in classrooms all over the world, one not to be lightly dismissed. Yet, on the whole, educational policy and practice continues blithely to disregard the presence of multiple languages, cultures, and identities in today's classrooms" (p. 330). This volume attempts to address a very real need for the ELT profession to counteract this criticism. Together, the chapters call for a reorientation, away from native norms to more multilingual perspectives and closer attention to local contexts to inform pedagogical approaches. However, Burns acknowledges that while her contributors', and others', efforts are a valuable step toward addressing the issues, much more work needs to be done: "Clearly, despite some of the theoretical debates of the past 10-15 years, classroom practitioners are still in a transitional and tentative phase of experimentation in coming to grips with the implications of teaching English as a global language" (p. 15).

To my mind, one of the most noticeable gaps is the voice of the learners themselves. While central to educational research, investigations of teacher education and attitudes tell us little about their relationship to student learning or actual classroom practices. Perhaps this book tells us as much about what needs to happen as it does about how practitioners are currently responding to the complex issues arising from ELT in global and local contexts.

References

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