
Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

Pronunciation Plus: Practice Through Interaction

Martin Hewings and Sharon Goldstein

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998

Student's Book, 146 pages, \$26.50, ISBN 0-521-57797-7

Teacher's Manual, 148 pages, \$30.00, ISBN 0-521-57796-9

Audiocassettes, 3 tapes, \$98.50, 0-521-57795-0

Teachers, especially those less experienced in teaching pronunciation, have a well-balanced and useful resource to consider in *Pronunciation Plus: Practice Through Interaction*. The text is aimed at intermediate and, to some degree, advanced second-language students and includes both the segmental and prosodic features of English. The material is flexible enough to be used both as a class text for a pronunciation course and as a useful resource for the pronunciation elements of a general ESL program.

I recently used *Pronunciation Plus* in a speaking course for advanced students that combined both pronunciation and conversation. The text worked well on many fronts, and I was impressed with the comprehensive coverage given to both the individual and global elements of pronunciation. The book is divided into eight parts: vowels, consonants, consonant clusters, stress and rhythm, sounds in connected speech, intonation, sounds and grammar, and pronouncing written words. Many of the lessons contained in each unit engage the students in the learning process by encouraging the discovery and prediction of various pronunciation rules and features. For example, in the unit on Predicting Stress in Words, students are presented with a list of words and are asked to identify whether the words are nouns, adjectives, or verbs. Then, after listening to the words on the accompanying tape, they are asked to identify the stressed syllable. The cloze exercise that follows assists students in writing a simple rule for predicting syllable stress. Another strength of the book is how students are led from controlled practice, of the listen-repeat variety to less controlled and more communicative activities. In a unit on vowel sounds students are initially directed to listen and repeat along with the tape. However, they are soon asked to work with a partner on vowel sound recognition and finally to participate in retelling a story. Words in the first activity are used throughout subsequent activities, providing opportunities for repetition and practice in increasingly more communicative situations. As well, the accompanying Teacher's Manual offers suggestions for further activities if they are required. The audiotapes enhance the activities in the book. The male and female voices on the tapes

use what the Teacher's Manual identifies as standard North American English, that is, without regional influences. However, a welcome acknowledgment is given to the Canadian pronunciation of certain words.

The students in the class I taught enjoyed using *Pronunciation Plus* and participating in the activities. They did, however, have some criticisms of the book. Primarily, they felt that there were too many activities on relatively small points. As mentioned, the text has eight parts, and each of these has six to eight units, which in turn have six to 10 accompanying questions or activities. The feeling was, and I agree, that larger concepts like rhythm and intonation were broken down into too many discrete parts, making the task of unifying the fragments daunting and sometimes confusing. However, a shortcoming of *Pronunciation Plus* for an advanced class is probably an asset for intermediate classes, which may need to address more of the components that make up rhythm and intonation. For the more advanced classes, activities can be selected or condensed based on the students' knowledge, understanding, and skills.

Both the students' text and the accompanying tapes are easy to follow and lead users logically from one point to the next. I found it especially helpful on the audiotapes to have the unit number repeated with each question, making it easier to find a given place when using the tapes out of the prescribed order. As the Teacher's Manual points out, the book can be used in the order that it is presented or units can be selected to reflect the preferences of the teacher or the needs of the students. The Teacher's Manual is a comprehensive and practical guide that offers basic information on segmental and suprasegmental features. For teachers wanting a more in-depth treatment of pronunciation, the Teacher's Manual recommends some excellent references.

Pronunciation Plus is a welcome addition to the resources in the field of pronunciation. The text, tapes, and manual are a good choice for intermediate classes and for teachers who have limited experience in teaching pronunciation but who face an ever-present demand for pronunciation instruction.

Judy Breitektutz

The Reviewer

Judy Breitektutz has taught ESL for 12 years and is currently in the MEd (TESL) program at the University of Alberta.

Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Schools: An Integrated Approach

Elizabeth Coelho

Multilingual Matters, Clevedon Hall, 1998

287 pages, ISBN: 1-85359-383-4

Several texts that address the education of diverse students in multicultural schools have been published (Scarcella, 1990). But none of them is written from a Canadian perspective using Canadian examples that cover a similar range of topics at a comparable depth of analysis. *Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Schools: An Integrated Approach* by Elizabeth Coelho is an excellent text that helps to fill this gap. The Canadian perspective Coelho takes in this book is multicultural and acknowledges and respects cultural, linguistic, and racial diversity and aims to integrate these diversities into the mainstream culture.

Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Schools consists of an introduction and nine chapters that may be divided into four parts where the author establishes a rationale, provides practical suggestions for classroom activities, discusses wider issues such as instructional and learning styles, racism and inclusive curriculum, and assessment. In the first part of the book the author provides an overview of the history of cultural diversity and describes the special needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds and the effects of immigration on children's psychological adjustment and integration into Canadian schools. Other topics in this part include public policies that have a direct impact on the cultural composition of Canadian classrooms, colonization, the immigration boom between 1867 and 1895, and changes in immigration patterns in recent years.

In the second part of the book Coelho suggests some practical strategies that teachers can use in the initial stages of immigrant students' arrival to provide support for their English acquisition and create positive social and classroom environments. The suggestions for support for English acquisition includes approaches such as withdrawal programs, supported integration, and bilingual education. The author suggests that multilingual services, role models and mentors, and parental and community involvement be used to create a positive physically and socially inclusive classroom environment for all students, including immigrant students, First Nations students, and students from the mainstream cultural group.

In the third part of the book Coelho discusses the need for teachers to be aware that multicultural students may come from classroom and school cultures that are different from Canadian ones. That is, these students may have been exposed to different instructional and learning styles, and they may have different expectations of their Canadian teachers and schools. The

author points out the need for teachers to be flexible in adjusting instructions to meet the needs of their multicultural students and suggests strategies such as writing scaffolds and visual organizers to be applied in assisting immigrant and other minority students with their integration into mainstream Canadian classrooms. Also in this part of the book Coelho discusses the negative impacts of racism and cultural stereotypes and provides practical suggestions for antiracist education and inclusive curriculum that exposes students to multiple perspectives and critical thinking. This is done by contrasting the traditional curriculum with inclusive curriculum and by discussing the impact of background knowledge on students' learning in new educational contexts.

In the final part of the book Coelho discusses issues related to assessment in multicultural schools. She criticizes some approaches such as the measurement and ranking models currently used by many schools. According to her, these models are inappropriate for assessing multicultural students because they set up barriers for language minority students by testing their knowledge on things that are irrelevant to their prior experience. The author calls for alternative models and approaches for assessment such as the performance-based model and the portfolio assessment approach.

Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Schools: An Integrated Approach has a number of strengths. In addition to her Canadian perspective that aims to integrate students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds into all facets of school life, Coelho invites her readers to look critically at Canada's diverse populations, their histories, and media presentations of them. Such a view is apparent in her theoretical arguments as well as in her design of procedures suggested for numerous classroom activities included in the book. Other strengths of the book include a nice balance of theory and practice, effective and important illustrations, checklists for activities, and lists of references for further reading. It cites important, relevant, and up-to-date literature in the field of second language education and provides ample practical suggestions for dealing with the issues under discussion. Coelho illustrates her points with numerous examples from students who come from diverse backgrounds. For example, she provides a quotation from a Sri Lankan student to illustrate the traumatic experiences that some refugee students bring with them to Canadian schools. She also includes pictures of welcome signs and pamphlets written in different languages to show how they can be used to help create an inclusive environment for immigrant students. The checklists and lists of references for further reading provided at the end of most chapters are a useful resource for students, teachers, school administrators, and teacher educators in their assessment of their learning, teaching, advising, and practicum supervision.

The only weakness of the book, as the author herself points out, is the absence of discussions about how to teach or learn English as a second language (ESL). However, this book can be complemented by the numerous texts such as those of Brown (1994) and Nunan (1999) that already exist on this topic.

In conclusion, *Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Schools* is an excellent text that can be used in university and college TESL and general teacher education courses. Coelho's extensive experience with, and knowledge of, the education of immigrant students as a teacher, author, consultant, and coordinator and instructor in a university teacher education program comes through in the book. She discusses important issues that address the needs and concerns of immigrant students and their parents. Coelho bases her writing on sound theoretical foundations and provides numerous detailed practical ideas for teachers and administrators of diverse students, teachers in training, and teacher trainers. She suggests relevant further reading materials for those who may need them and raises important questions that lend themselves to further research. As Cummins points out in his foreword to the book, this volume is a must-read for teacher education students specializing in TESL and in other areas, as well as instructors, ESL specialists, and policy-makers.

References

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- Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching and learning*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- Scarcella, R. (1990). *Teaching language minority students in the multicultural classroom*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Gulbahar H. Beckett

The Reviewer

Gulbahar H. Beckett teaches in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia. Her research focus is language and content integration through project-based instruction.

Issues, Challenges, and Alternatives in Teaching Adult ESL

Virginia L. Sauvé

Oxford University Press, 2000

Issues, Challenges, and Alternatives in Teaching Adult ESL by Virginia L. Sauvé encourages ESL educators to think critically about their role in the education system. As advocates for their students, ESL teachers need to be empowering agents in society helping to create new "Voices and Visions" for adult ESL learners. *Voice* is about power. According to Sauvé, a person with voice is able to make positive contributions to counteract destructive societal forces.

A *vision* is necessary to see beyond the current, and often negative, context in which ESL learners are perceived. Sauv e’s intention is to provide her voice and vision on the values that she believes are necessary to create a classroom climate where change is possible.

This book is a valuable resource for TESL instructors who need a course text on current issues in ESL education or ESL teachers seeking to provide informed, compassionate instruction. Divided into three sections, Sauv e’s book explores “Teaching and Learning,” “The Classroom and the Community,” and “Being and Becoming Professional” (p. iii). The chapters are easy to read and contain excellent classroom examples, reflective questions, and workshop activities. In shifting the reader’s focus from the subject of teaching ESL to the *subjects* of ESL instruction, Sauv e explores many controversial topics, providing classroom scenarios about trauma, religious beliefs, learning styles, health, and finances. An entire chapter is devoted to each of the following topics: race and ethnicity, social class and status, and gender and sexual preference. Sauv e suggests principles for designing a professional code of conduct to address such issues as extracurricular activities, dating between teacher and student, administrative complaints, teacher behavior, reception of gifts, and suspected sexual abuse.

Metaphor and story are an important part of Sauv e’s approach to teaching adult ESL and central to her belief in compassionate learner-centered teaching. Her first chapter asks teachers to consider what metaphor would best describe their classroom teaching style and analyzes the classroom implications of commonly held metaphors of teaching styles. Her favorite metaphor is that of learning as a shared journey by teacher and student. To facilitate this kind of learning, she suggests the model of *participatory education* and identifies steps that teachers can take to ensure that learners maximize their opportunities to share their values and life experiences. Stories from the learners’ experience are used as tools to build community and communication skills. Abstract truths such as accountability, responsibility, justice, and self-care are gleaned from the stories, taught by the teacher, and recorded in a classroom “principles poster.” By referring back to these principles, the teacher can empower students to recognize how they can apply them in new situations to influence their environment. Sauv e gives many classroom examples of how students’ sharing influences the classroom and speaks freely about how her own life experiences shape her values.

As a certifying ESL teacher and practicing workplace educator, I find the section “The Classroom and the Community” particularly helpful as it outlines methods of teacher evaluation, conventions of workplace programs, and issues of ESL literacy. The contextualized information and history of workplace education includes the conventions of workplace programs: how to do a needs assessment, write a proposal, negotiate a partnership, consider

ethical priorities, and conduct the final evaluation. These are good reference points for the beginning teacher who is unsure of how to develop self-employed contracts in workplace education.

The concluding section, "Being and Becoming Professional," addresses changes in the TESL field over the last 21 years including TESL training, program standards, accreditation, certification, and the establishment of professional association. Despite these professional advances, ESL teaching continues to be one of the least secure, lowest paid teaching professions. Sauvé encourages ESL teachers to lobby for changes in the profession by partnering with settlement agencies and other large organizations such as the Canadian Council for Refugees.

The stories of the journeys of ESL teachers and learners in *Issues, Challenges, and Alternatives in Teaching Adult ESL* by Virginia L. Sauvé are compelling, thought-provoking, and informative. The questions and workshop activities in the book have encouraged me to think about how I can envision my role in ESL education and use my voice to make a difference.

Rebecca Hiebert

The Reviewer

Rebecca Hiebert, an experienced elementary schoolteacher, is a student in the CTESL Program at the University of Manitoba. She has taught English overseas at summer language programs in both Lithuania and China.

Learning English at School: Identity, Social Relations and Classroom Practice

Kelleen Toohey

Multicultural Matters, Clevedon, UK, 2000

152 pages, ISBN: 1-85359-481-4

Just a few months ago I had a conversation with a language arts teacher about my research on immigrant children's second language education. The teacher, with 30 years of teaching experience, told me that he was lucky he never had ESL students during his teaching career because he would not know what to do with them. I was surprised and troubled. The conversation made me realize that much research needs to be done on second-language students in classroom settings to help teachers understand their learning process. With a growing population of immigrant and minority children in Western countries such as Canada, the task of understanding immigrant children's learning processes poses more pedagogical and instructional challenges for language teachers than ever before. So it was a pleasure (and a relief) to read Kelleen Toohey's interesting and intelligent book *Learning English at School: Identity, Social Relations and Classroom Practices*. It appears in

a timely fashion to provide language teachers and researchers with a new perspective and understanding of immigrant and minority children's second language acquisition in a school milieu.

Toohey first gives the context and the theoretical underpinnings of her research in the first part of the book. Her study, different from earlier research, considers the social relations among learners, and between learners and teachers. Toohey's research informs teachers and language researchers that learners' social relations and interactional practices in the contexts or communities are an important part of ESL learning, which constitutes the appropriation of language and voice. By way of example, she takes the readers into the social worlds of six focal ESL children in their kindergarten, grade 1, and grade 2 classrooms. In this longitudinal study Toohey provides a detailed account of these children's language learning process over the course of three years. Toohey draws attention to three aspects of social and interactional practices in the classrooms and their influence on the access of the focal children to classroom conversations and thus to the possibilities for appropriating language and voice. These three social practices are (a) identity practices, (b) physical, material, and intellectual resource distribution practices, and (c) discourse practices.

Toohey first addresses the practices of identity construction in the children's kindergarten classroom. She notes that ranking practices in the schools affect how the children take up positions and identities assigned to them, and these differential ranking practices produce "success and failure for the children" (p. 75). Toohey identifies that the kindergarten ranking practices are based on five most salient aspects of school identities. These include academic competence, physical presentation/competence, behavior competence, social competence, and language proficiency. The description and analysis of the children's identity construction is particularly useful for teachers who have never taught ESL children as it provides them with an understanding that teachers' (and schools') practices play a significant role in framing or assigning who the individual child is becoming in the classroom setting, and raises a critical awareness of the ranking practices teachers use in the classroom.

Toohey then examines the class dynamics of the focal children in their grade 1 class. Her observations of the physical placement of participants in a classroom, individual management of material resources, and the practices of individual work reveal a highly individualized practice of the children with their material belongings and words (both oral and written). These practices of individualization and stratification reproduce the notion that second-language children are those who own less and thus need normalizing. Therefore, these practices result in systematic exclusion of second-language children from access to conversations and activities, and consequently

from the possibilities of appropriating language and voice. Toohey's observations have practical implications for classroom teaching. Teachers with ESL children should not overlook the everyday classroom arrangements and the informal social relations among ESL and non-ESL peers, because these discursive practices may prohibit ESL children from participating in certain learning activities.

With respect to the grade 2 classroom, Toohey turns her focus to three classroom discourse practices: (a) recitation sequences, (b) teacher-mandated peer conversations, and (c) peer managed conversations. Teachers who do not know what to do with ESL students will find Toohey's observations of the grade 2 language arts lessons illuminating. She discovers that recitation sequences restrict second-language children's opportunities to construct their meaning, and the teacher-mandated and peer-managed conversations become powerful places in classrooms where second-language children actively participate in the conversations and tasks; hence they are actively involved in the process of appropriating language and voice. Through the remarkable detail of her observations of real classroom scenarios—who the ESL children are (and are becoming), their interactions in informal and formal classroom settings—Toohey provides a vivid picture of what it is like to teach second-language children and what hinders or facilitates the children's learning.

The implications of this study for classroom teachers are clear and strong: educators should aim to facilitate access to classroom resources so that second-language children have more possibilities to appropriate voice for themselves in the process of learning. That is, "educators should attempt to find ways to build communities in which community resources are accessible to all, and in which desirable and powerful positions are available to all children" (p. 127).

This book has numerous strengths. Its most significant contribution is that it uncovers the myth of ESL children in typical Canadian classrooms. Toohey (re)presents the inner worlds of the focal children in their initial journey into the second language and literacy from both an emic and an etic perspective. Through the kaleidoscope of her insider and outsider lens, Toohey's observations powerfully confront the traditional individual, cognitive view of what second-language learning is all about, and provides new insights into how and what learning and teaching a second language means for both ESL children and teachers. There are, however, a few aspects that Toohey might want to address in her future work. Teachers who have no experience with ESL children may still raise some questions after reading this book. They may ask: Why are the children's experiences during the course of the three years distinctly different? Why are they "broken up and taken away" as soon as they enter grade 1? Thus it would be necessary to look at

how the children's three years of experiences are interrelated in the second-language children's overall learning experiences and the implications of the progression and changes for ESL teaching. Another question might be: Is gender a factor in the children's participation in the activities? It would be helpful to address how gender identity is played out in the children's positioning in the classroom and how it affects their access to conversations and appropriation of voice.

In sum, this remarkable book *Learning English at School: Identity, Social Relations and Classroom Practices* is an excellent resource for classroom teachers (such as the man I conversed with a little while ago) and the language and literacy research community. Teacher candidates and experienced teachers will find it a valuable contribution to their understanding of second-language learning and teaching.

Guofang Li