

Reviews

***Talk in Two Languages.* Joseph Gafaranga. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. xi + 225 pp.**

Reviewed by
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By definition, bilingual people can and do talk in two languages. Of course this means that sometimes they need to switch from one language to the other, and for many people this can happen repeatedly within a single conversation. This phenomenon has been well documented, leading to a variety of terms and definitions including code switching, language alternation, borrowing, code mixing, and simply bilingual interaction. In this book Joseph Gafaranga does not attempt to confuse the issue by adding any new theories of language alternation to this already extensive list; instead he pulls together the previously published findings and provides a suitably critical overview of the field. He bases his discussion on a series of case studies taken from his own corpus of Kinyarwanda-French code switching collected from talk recorded among Rwandan refugees in Belgium. His study applies what we know about “talk in two languages” and sketches out the challenges it presents to bilingual people in real world situations.

The book is targeted firmly at an academic audience, particularly those who are conducting research in bilingualism. As such, it is not a volume that all language teachers will be interested in; it will be of most benefit to those already familiar with some of the approaches to investigating code switching.

The strength of Gafaranga’s book is in its interdisciplinary coverage of the topic. He identifies the two key research approaches as grammatical and interactional, and links them through the recurring theme of searching for order. Taking his cue from ethnomethodology, he defines order as “the very possibility of social action” (p. 3), contending that the fundamental question behind any study of code switching is how speakers manage and make sense of bilingual interaction, despite its apparent disorderliness. While this is a well-founded basis for the discussion, Gafaranga’s glossing of order as

“possibility” at times proves to be a somewhat limited depiction of a concept that is crucial to his argument. Order is produced, situated, and occasioned by speakers themselves, and can be found across groups in recurrent interactional resources (Psathas, 1995). To this end, readers should keep in mind that the search for social order in code switching is ultimately an attempt to account for bilingual practices as a systematic collection of interactional resources.

Gafaranga begins by examining “Quasi-theories of language alternation” (Chapter 2), documenting the ways lay people refer to language alternation in nontechnical terms and noting that bilinguals often belittle their own code switching. Importantly, he also outlines some of the shorthand terms that linguists have introduced into the literature, which have been responsible for much of the confusion about what code switching is.

He then looks in further detail at the two main strands of language alternation research: grammatical approaches (Chapters 3 and 4) and interactional approaches (Chapters 5 to 7). He begins by demonstrating from a grammatical perspective how language alternation can be seen as orderly, outlining two general patterns—insertional code switching and alternational code switching. The former adopts an asymmetric view of the two languages, assuming that one is embedded into the other, whereas the latter maintains that the two languages are relatively equivalent. By way of example, consider the following utterance from my own study of Japanese-English code switching (Greer, 2007):

“That will be one hundred yen *desu kedo.*”

Such a sentence can be viewed as either basically English with a little bit of Japanese inserted at the end, or as two distinct languages alternating at the point where they overlap. Gafaranga goes on in Chapter 4 to apply these grammatical models to a case study taken from Kinyarwanda-French language alternation.

Next he moves away from purely linguistic explanations of code switching in order to examine code switching from a socio-functional viewpoint. Chapter 5 offers a comprehensive coverage of socially motivated, identity-related explanations including diglossia, the interactional sociolinguistic notion of “we/they” codes, and Myers-Scotton’s Markedness model. Chapter 6 then discusses the organizational perspective, as put forward by Conversation Analysis, the approach which sits best with Gafaranga’s pursuit of orderliness. Here he reviews the work of Auer as well as his own re-specification of the notion “language” as “medium.”

Chapter 7 applies these socio-functional approaches to another aspect of the author's corpus, the use of language alternation for reporting direct speech. Rather than representing an accurate rendering of exactly what someone said, he maintains that language choice can act as either a depictive or supportive element in a bilingual storytelling sequence, serving to juxtapose a reported speaker's speech against the teller's own utterance, regardless of the language in which the talk was originally conveyed. In other words, when a bilingual speaker is telling someone what a third person said, the reported speech may not necessarily be delivered in the language in which it was originally spoken. A bilingual person might choose to use Japanese to tell a story and then switch to English to quote one of the characters, even if that character originally spoke in Japanese. The function of code switching in this case is to create a distinction between the speaker as narrator and the speaker as character.

Finally, in Chapter 8 Gafaranga uses all these findings to address a real-life issue—language shift among the Rwandan community in Belgium. This case study distinguishes patterns of language choice used by this refugee community which are potentially contributing to the loss of their children's minority language. The importance of this chapter is in demonstrating how these "pure" linguistic theories and socio-pragmatic approaches can be used to address real-life issues, such as language loss within a given community.

This link between theory and application is the most worthwhile aspect of Gafaranga's research. While the book gives a clear and concise overview of the most significant research in the field, the analysis does not simply stop there. By demonstrating how these theories can be applied to his own situation, Gafaranga provides a series of inspiring exemplars which other researchers could use to frame their own investigations on bilingual interaction. Although it is sometimes difficult to follow the Kinyarwanda data, there is still much that applied linguistics researchers can take away, especially those interested in bilingualism. However, much of Gafaranga's discussion focuses on interactants who have been bilingual since early childhood, rather than late bilinguals. Teachers who are interested in the way that Japanese students of English mix their languages may discover that some aspects of Gafaranga's discussion are difficult to apply to classroom contexts; ultimately the focus of this book is not on language learning but on bilingual language use. The study's original contribution lies in its attempt to put forward an interdisciplinary perspective on code switching, offering interested researchers an in-depth overview of the subject, as well as some thought-provoking directions for future investigation.

References

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***Idioms: Description, Comprehension, Acquisition, and Pedagogy*. Dilin Liu. New York: Routledge, 2008. xv + 208 pp.**

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When I was told recently that a relative had finally *kicked the bucket*, after a long struggle, I felt a mixture of grief and relief. *Kicked the bucket* may not always be an appropriate way to convey this information. *Passed away* or *is no longer with us* are gentler and more sensitive, but in this case, *kicked the bucket* carried a descriptive force and a metaphorical vividness that the other two expressions lacked. *Kicked the bucket* conveyed the raw reality of the act of dying to me. Idioms are fundamental units of meaning that add color and expression to the language of native speakers; however, they can be difficult for L2 learners, and teachers are often unsure how to approach the inclusion of idioms in a language program. Dilin Liu's book addresses academic and instructional concerns regarding idioms and can serve capably as a textbook in an educational linguistics or a methodology course at either an undergraduate or graduate level. However, although the book is filled with carefully considered pedagogical suggestions, it is not a "how to" ideas book on teaching idioms in the classroom.

Idioms: Description, Comprehension, Acquisition, and Pedagogy is divided into three broad sections. Part I: "Idioms and their Use" offers a comprehensive review of existing research on idioms and how various scholars define them. Part II: "Idiom Comprehension" addresses the research on idiom processing and comprehension, while in Part III: "Acquisition and Pedagogy," Liu reviews the literature on idiom acquisition and its impor-

tance in language programs. Each chapter includes questions for study and discussion. In addition, the book has a useful glossary, an annotated list of selected idiom reference books and textbooks, a list of online resources, and an index.

The book is well organized and academically thorough. Liu strives to be comprehensive in considering what idioms are, how they are processed, and what factors affect their acquisition. He also evaluates the importance of idioms in language programs. As colorful, frequently used expressions, idioms are important, but teachers are often unsure which idioms to introduce and how to teach them. Students, on the other hand, fear the incorrect use of idioms and may avoid them completely.

Liu locates his discussion within a conceptual framework of existing research and pedagogical considerations. The explanation of how idioms should be defined and classified is very good in this respect, as well as his consideration of the historical origins of idioms and whether various idioms have counterparts in other languages. He is also careful to point out developmental factors related to acquisition. Research indicates that students are not able to understand metaphorical idioms until a certain age (p. 94). In building his framework, Liu focuses his discussion on how the research can be exploited educationally with L2 learners. He addresses this directly by devoting Chapters 8 and 9 to macro- and micro-pedagogical strategies, pedagogical checklists, for teachers to evaluate the teaching of idioms in a particular program. These strategies provide a bridge between Liu's academic, research-based framework and actual in-class practice.

However, Liu's book falls short in some areas. He belabors obvious points: we are all aware of the fact that idiom processing and comprehension is much more difficult for L2 learners (p. 74), and that research indicates that "familiar idioms are processed much faster and more accurately than unfamiliar ones" (p. 78). In a few areas, he could have provided more useful information as well. For example, his comments on using a corpus in a practical way to select and teach idioms could have been explained in a simple way as Hall and Lee (2006) have done in their article on using search engines for idiom usage research. In Chapter 9, Liu suggests the value of learning the origins of idioms as a way of enhancing student understanding, but offers no practical advice about how to do this, although his annotated list of resources does have potentially helpful references.

Liu's book will appeal to those with a serious interest in idioms. His review of the literature is thorough and carefully considered. Anyone doing research on idioms will find this a very useful place to become oriented and see the lay of the land. It is not a book that will appeal as a classroom-ready

ideas book, though. It isn't light reading and it does drag a bit in places, but for educators wanting a conceptual understanding of how idioms might fit into their language programs, this book could be exactly the shot in the arm they need.

Reference

Hall, C., & Lee, D. (2006). Creating "quick-and-dirty" corpora with search engines. *Essential Teacher*, 3(2), 38-41.

***English Language Learning Materials: A Critical Review.* Brian Tomlinson (Ed.). London: Continuum, 2008. x + 333 pp.**

Reviewed by
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With this edited collection of essays, Brian Tomlinson continues his investigation of language learning materials, previously recorded in *Materials Development in Language Teaching* (1998, Cambridge) and *Developing Materials for Language Teaching* (2003, Continuum). While those works served primarily as guides for teachers and curriculum planners to create, evaluate, and adapt materials, the present volume examines how materials developers have done so far in answering the call for more student-oriented materials, specifically in English language education.

The first half of the book studies English language learning materials according to type and target: young learners, science and technology, multimedia, and extensive reading (ER) are just some of the variations explored. Many of these studies reach the same general conclusion, namely that other needs besides those of students often dictate what and how classroom materials are used, sometimes to the detriment of learners' progress: "Over-indulgence in multimedia can provide the wrong signals to people in education who believe that multimedia can drive pedagogically sound methodology" (Mukundan, p. 109); "Reading in the sense of ER is not amenable to the kinds of control so beloved by institutions" (Maley, p. 136); "There is a need for a more balanced approach where students' learning needs (*how* students learn) are given equal weighting to their language needs (*what* needs to be taught)" (Mol & Tin, p. 89).

The second half of the book looks at materials use from a geographical perspective, shifting from native English or ESL regions like the UK and US to EFL regions of Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. In some of the contexts covered in this section there has been more success with materials than in others, depending on the particular region's needs for English and its cultural or ideological distance from the western, English-speaking world. As an example, Prodromou and Mishan, in their chapter on Western Europe, discuss the problem of "methodological correctness," where methodologies and materials created in native English speaking countries can be tyrannous to nonnative English speaking teachers around the world, who struggle with methodological mandates and cultural generalizations from "above" as they try to teach appropriately for their own environments.

Conversely, other chapters (e.g., Lumala and Trabelsi on Africa) remind us that over-reliance on local, economical, bottom-up materials development may lack "formative or summative evaluation" (p. 227) in that such materials might not be prepared under the scrutiny of trained linguists or teachers. These materials run the risk of being pedagogically ineffective or outdated. Some governments such as Japan and Kenya find their solution in nationalizing their materials and curricula, which improves cultural and pedagogical oversight, but unfortunately limits individual classroom freedom.

The articles in this volume discuss their subjects in a variety of ways, ranging from the anecdotal (Skeldon on EST; Bolitho on Eastern Europe) to the highly analytic and highly quantitative (Cooker on self-access materials; Smiley and Masui on Japan). At times it becomes difficult for the reader to "switch gears" when reading from one chapter to the next. It also confounds attempts by readers/researchers to make point-by-point comparisons among regions or teaching contexts: hard data for one context in one chapter may be completely unavailable in another.

Tomlinson makes a noble attempt to draw all this disparate research together, but he has to walk a thin line at times. In his concluding chapter, for example, as part of his summarized criticism of language learning materials he lists, next to each other, "They are form-focused and control-centred" and "They are Anglo-centric or Euro-centric . . . in their assumptions about the best ways to learn" (p. 320). Going into detail on these two items can be touchy, since in countries like Greece, Russia, and Japan the criticisms of "Anglo-centric" materials specifically include their methodological over-emphasis on open-ended "communication activities" to the exclusion of form-focused exercises that have been part and parcel of language education in such countries for generations, and indeed may be part of the pedagogical

psyche of these cultures. For curriculum planners, it can amount to being between a rock and a hard place.

For Tomlinson and many of the authors in this book, though, the way out of such straits seems to be through *adaptability*. The best materials are malleable for use in a world of different teaching contexts. And adaptability should not be only the domain of materials developers, but of teachers and learners as well. Tomlinson, citing himself in 2006, surmises that “learning would be far more effective” if materials writers “started to cater more to divergent needs and wants, if teachers more readily and confidently adapted materials . . . and if learners [were] encouraged and helped to make more decisions for themselves” (p. 22). Perhaps the finest example of adaptable materials, described in glowing terms by several authors in the book, is the extended reading library. When properly implemented, the ER library essentially floods learners with authentic and interesting material that they can freely choose from.

English Language Learning Materials: A Critical Review will not easily tell teachers in so many words whether the textbook they’re planning to use next semester is worthwhile or not. Nor, for example, will it clearly tell English for Science and Technology curriculum developers in China how their materials needs match or differ from those in Poland or Argentina. In a sense Tomlinson’s task is futile: there are innumerable ways in which good or bad materials can be used well or poorly, in favorable or unfavorable conditions. However, one overarching concept that is implied in his conclusion is that *teachers* are the fulcrum on which a text either swings or falls flat. Most of the bold-letter points in Tomlinson’s concluding list of “negative characteristics” of ELT materials, such as “underestimating learners” and “overuse of the PPP approach” (p. 319), can be offset by dedicated, innovative teachers with a vested interest in the development of their learners.

This idea of the teacher as the pivotal implementer—and even creator—of materials is what explicitly drove Tomlinson’s two previous books on this topic, but that point is not made as strongly here, focusing as it does instead on what publishers, technologies, and governments are doing. In that sense it is not as useful a book for practitioners. But *English Language Learning Materials* may still serve as a motivator for teachers to depend less on what their textbooks tell them to do and to draw more on knowledge of their students, of teaching, and of the world they live in.

***Japan's Built-in Lexicon of English-Based Loanwords.* Frank E. Daulton. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2008. vii + 185 pp.**

Reviewed by

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When the *abereji* Japanese *suchuudento* says he likes watching *beesubouru* on *terebi*, his English teacher may want to close her eyes in despair. However, Frank Daulton argues in *Japan's Built-in Lexicon of English-Based Loanwords* that this average student's knowledge of the loanwords for *baseball* and *television* and other terms is actually a positive L1 resource for L2 English acquisition. This is bound to be a controversial assertion in certain quarters, as numerous studies have suggested that cognates in general and Japanese *gairaigo* (Western loanwords) in particular do more harm than good in the language learning process. Nevertheless, the evidence presented in this highly readable, well-researched book is likely to convince many otherwise.

The book is divided into four parts. Part 1, "Japan's Importation of English," gives an entertaining, informative history of the assimilation of loanwords into the Japanese language and explains how the number of English loanwords has increased so dramatically in recent years as to now make up roughly 10% of the Japanese lexicon. In one of the book's most interesting sections, Daulton details the phonological, morphological, grammatical, and semantic ways in which English words are transformed into Japanese.

Part 2, "*Gairaigo* and Language Acquisition," looks at the competing views in the literature on the effects of cognates on L2 English acquisition. Where *gairaigo* is concerned, Daulton summarizes numerous studies demonstrating the positive effects of loanwords on spelling, retention, listening comprehension, and recognition. His points are clear and his evidence well presented. That said, he makes a better case for the benefits of cognates where receptive knowledge is concerned. He cites relatively few studies regarding productive knowledge (it appears few have been done) and seems to overreach somewhat on those he does. For example, Daulton explains how Japanese university students with low English proficiency seem to prefer using borrowed words in written English production. He claims this is "evidence that loanwords are pushing their corresponding borrowed words into production, thus facilitating acquisition" (p. 70). The first part of this claim seems valid. However, to use an example he cites himself, if a

learner produces the borrowed words *flower* and *fire* to express the English word *fireworks*, how exactly is acquisition being facilitated? Without reader intervention (and this assumes an understanding that *flower fire* means *fireworks*), isn't it possible that the production of these borrowed words will have a negative effect? While errors are a natural part of the learning process, it's difficult to see how *gairaigo* is helping the learner here, except by simply encouraging production.

Part 3, "The Built-in Lexicons," is the main section of the book. Much has been made over the past two decades of the value of learners mastering the high frequency words of English. Daulton discovered "that nearly half of the 3000 most frequent word families in English have correspondences with common Japanese loanwords" (p. 81). Not only is this an amazing figure, but the research he presents seems to indicate that the quality of this correspondence is quite high. If one accepts the evidence presented in Part 2 as to the beneficial effects of loanwords, even if only where receptive knowledge is concerned, it's hard to escape the conclusion that these loanwords with connections to high frequency vocabulary words have the potential to be quite useful for Japanese learners of English.

Using cognates does involve difficulties, however. Daulton's final section, "Exploiting Japanese Loanword Cognates," looks at the problems involved in working with *gairaigo* (including orthographic and phonological difficulties) and how it's unclear whether knowledge of individual loanwords can directly enable Japanese learners to extend their knowledge of English words inside word families. Despite these concerns, an epilogue devoted to suggestions on the use of *gairaigo* in the classroom and extensive lists of loanwords in the appendices should spark numerous ideas in the minds of instructors. Some readers will want more detailed suggestions, but that would seem to be beyond the scope of this book.

In the end, one walks away from *Japan's Built-in Lexicon of English-Based Loanwords* with the feeling that simply making learners aware of this "built-in lexicon" would be beneficial. As all learners know, acquiring the necessary vocabulary to be proficient in English is a very difficult task. Shouldn't realizing they already have substantial knowledge of these words serve to make this task easier for them and at the same time boost their confidence? Only the most intractable opponents of *gairaigo* will disagree after reading this book. *Japan's Built-in Lexicon of English-Based Loanwords* is highly recommended as a resource both for individual instructors and high school or university English departments.

***Professional Encounters in TESOL: Discourses of Teachers in Teaching.* Sue Garton & Keith Richards (Eds.). Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. xxvii + 262 pp.**

Reviewed by

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What do English language (EL) teachers do and why do they do it? This is the profound question that editors Sue Garton and Keith Richards explore in this volume. In order to do so, they have invited EL practitioners from various backgrounds to examine different aspects of professional talk that teachers encounter at different points in their careers. The result is an accessible and thought-provoking read with some practical information and ample resources for further study for beginning EL teachers, especially for those who are interested in discourse analysis.

The book is organized into stages according to a modified version of Huberman's classic description of the teacher career cycle which the editors have renamed as 1) Starting Out; 2) Becoming Experienced; 3) New Horizons; and 4) Passing on the Knowledge. Garton and Richards explain that they omitted Huberman's final stage, *disengagement*, as it falls outside the scope of the book. However, it might have been useful to include such a chapter to view a teacher's career from start to finish as it could give distinct insights into the development of EL teachers throughout their careers. The editors also assume that all EL teachers start out as teacher-trainees, but some teachers find themselves in such a career with no training, as if they "sort of drifted into EFL" (p. 174), to take the words of Harry from Richards' chapter. Where would such a teacher fit in this model?

Although the topics have been organized according to their relevance to each stage in the career model, readers will be able to relate to and learn from most of the chapters in this book. In "Starting Out," Copland's and Hooton's chapters on feedback are useful to both teacher-trainees and teacher trainers. Seedhouse's chapter on classroom discourse encourages teachers to reflect on how they interact with their students and how they can improve this skill.

In "Becoming Experienced," Garton's article on teacher beliefs and the following reflections by Tarnpichprasert are not only valuable to novice teachers, but to experienced ones as well, while Howard's chapter on classroom appraisal may be useful for teachers having to undergo such observations.

Morris-Adams' chapter on informal talk between NS and NNS and how it can be beneficial to students outside the classroom, although of interest to ESL practitioners, may not be so helpful for those teachers in an EFL setting, where opportunities to practice English outside of class are limited.

In "New Horizons," Quirke's chapter on web-based support for teacher development and Mann's chapter on cooperative development and metaphor are pertinent to all levels of experience as they both focus on the important concept of fostering personal and professional growth through community support. Richards' chapter on the experience of establishing a new school may be interesting for those considering such a move as he offers some important lessons necessary to succeed in such a venture.

Finally, in "Passing on the Knowledge," Kuchah describes his experiences in the transition from being a classroom teacher to becoming one of the youngest school inspectors in Cameroon. In particular, he discusses how he had to overcome the challenges of the power relationships in education that exist between the youth and elders in his society. Wharton's chapter provides advice to those who are contemplating taking that daunting, yet important step of writing for publication, while the final chapter of the book by Edge focuses on semantic patterning, action research, and cooperative development, and their interrelationship. Anyone interested in such topics will find Edge's chapter insightful as this appears to be the first attempt to investigate the underlying similarities of those constructs. However, as the concluding chapter, it wasn't effective because it failed to tie the various strands of the book together.

There is one major contradiction in the book, though, highlighted in Wharton's chapter: "Speaking for oneself is an indicator of power, whereas being spoken for by others suggests relative powerlessness" (p. 229). She is referring to the frequent use of teachers as data, but the lack of teachers as authors. The editors do include reflective chapters by EL teachers on their current stages in teacher development, but these are simply reflections, not original research. The overall impact of the book would have been greater had there been more entries written by EL teachers at each particular stage; however, it seems that most practicing EL teachers do not take that step; an issue that should be dealt with in future research.

As a teacher between the "Starting Out" and the "Becoming Experienced" stages, I am very interested in the stories that EL teachers tell and in what can be learned from them. It is through interacting with one another, both dialogically and monologically, that we learn and grow as teachers. For me, this book was quite informative and practical. I especially appreciated Seedhouse's and Garton's chapters as both encouraged me to reflect on my

own teaching and interactions with my students; Quirk's chapter on supporting teacher development on the web was quite valuable in providing an alternative venue for interacting with and learning from other EL teachers, both beginning and experienced; and Wharton's chapter presented useful information on writing for publication.

The question of what a teacher does and why is a valid one that will continue to receive attention in the future. Overall, this book is useful, albeit in different ways, for all EL teachers, both experienced and inexperienced. While those newer to the field may find the book informative and enlightening, those with considerable experience in TESOL may find it of more use in helping them gain a perspective on how they have developed as teachers. Whether you are in the "Starting Out" stage or the "Passing on the Knowledge" stage, this book should prompt you to reflect upon and share your own development as a professional with others.