# Reviews

*Input-Based Tasks in Foreign Language Instruction for Young Learners*. Natsuko Shintani. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins, 2016. xi + 198 pp.

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Natsuko Shintani's text is an account of the author's research into the use of a modified form of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) with young learners, which she suggests as an alternative to traditional pedagogical approaches such as presentation, practice, production (PPP). The author's term, *input-based tasks,* refers to "listen and do tasks" (p. 7) that do not require verbal responses. Dissatisfaction with traditional language teaching methodology influenced the development of Shintani's strong interest in TBLT as a method to teach language to her young learners and raise their communicative competence. This book, Shintani's first as the sole author, builds upon much of her earlier research, with many of her previously published articles touching upon the key topics found in this text.

Shintani first discusses input-focused TBLT and considers both the research context and the theoretical foundations of TBLT. She then details her method-comparison study and research questions before presenting the results for these. In closing, both theoretical and pedagogical implications are considered prior to the author's conclusions.

In Chapter 1, on page 4, Shintani refers to Ellis's (2003) definition of TBLT, in which language is an outcome-achieving tool, meaning takes precedence over form, learners depend upon their own resources rather than a specified target language, and a need to communicate exists. The influence of Rod Ellis is prominent throughout the text: His work is frequently referenced, and he is acknowledged for his assistance in developing this research. However, Shintani does take the TBLT methodology beyond that envisioned by Ellis, as TBLT was initially developed for learners with specific linguistic needs.

However, as Cameron (2001) noted, many learners' circumstances provide no needs-related syllabus. The learners in this study are such a case: Japanese beginners, aged 6, who are unlikely to need English beyond the classroom. As beginners, these learners would likely have limited conversational skills and therefore would encounter difficulties completing tasks in which spoken output is necessary. The author notes that most tasks featured in TBLT literature require learner output (p. 7), and therefore refines her TBLT approach, concentrating this study upon noncollaborative, input-focused tasks, in which learners must respond with appropriate actions to teacher instructions. These tasks were largely information-gap, focused primarily on meaning, and had clearly defined outcomes. An example of a task used is the *Help the Animals* task (p. 68): To complete the task, learners were required to match animal cards with target item cards in response to the teacher's statements. Spoken output was not necessary to enable task completion, yet it was not discouraged.

In Chapter 2, Shintani summarizes the language-learning circumstance in Japanese education, describing it as a "difficult context" (p. 11) for teachers or curriculum designers to introduce and implement TBLT. Complications discussed range from factors such as an exam-oriented system to prevailing negative attitudes towards TBLT in the wider teaching community. Though TBLT aims to foster communicative skills, circumstantial difficulties hinder the progress towards achieving the government target of developing learner communicative competence (see MEXT, 2014).

In Chapter 3, Shintani addresses key questions regarding the theoretical basis of TBLT, focusing particularly on input-derived language acquisition. The research of Krashen (1982) into language *acquisition*, which is defined as the unconscious learning of language distinct from intended *learning*, features frequently because it is a central issue for Shintani.

In the next four chapters, Shintani covers the study design and the results collected. She begins Chapter 4 by listing four research questions that consider (a) how classroom process features differ between PPP and TBLT methods, (b) which method results in greater vocabulary acquisition, (c) which method more effectively facilitates incidental grammar acquisition, and (d) what relationship is suggested between process and product for both methods. The author then attentively documents the comparative study conducted at her private language school, in which two groups of young learners studied the same target vocabulary and grammar via two different teaching methods. The lessons with the PPP group had clearly specified learning goals and the teacher followed standard PPP procedure

to target these goals. However, in the lessons with the TBLT group, learners performed various input-focused tasks (e.g., information-gap activities) that had specific task goals rather than language goals.

The author presents the results of the first three research questions over the next three chapters. Chapter 5 is focused on instruction-giving and the repair of mistakes for both treatment groups. Through conversation analysis, the author concludes that instructions in her PPP classes were largely form focused, whereas in TBLT classes they were predominantly meaning focused, with tasks having created the contexts through which learners could process meanings. Chapters 6 and 7 provide a substantial volume of statistical data through which the author shows that TBLT was more successful for vocabulary acquisition, which is attributable to such factors as more contextualized input for vocabulary; that is, target language was embedded in sentences rather than learned in isolation from context. The author also reports that incidental grammar acquisition only occurred for TBLT learners, because successful task completion for these learners depended upon them correctly understanding the grammatical content.

In Chapter 8, Shintani presents her theoretical implications of the study, which relate to the foundations of TBLT discussed in Chapter 3. In these implications, she indicates possible directions for future research into TBLT, in particular the need to conduct research with older or more advanced learners, because as Shintani concedes, her research was limited to young beginners. She speculates that older, more cognitively mature students may be able to gain benefits from PPP (p. 153).

This is followed in Chapter 9 by the pedagogical implications, which relate to the contextual issues discussed in Chapter 2. Regarding pedagogy, the author analyzes the use of TBLT with young learners and considers a number of contextual issues concerning English teaching in Japan. Many of these implications depart from a comparison of methods and instead focus upon possible TBLT implementation. This contribution is notable considering the lack of TBLT awareness and training in Japan. Shintani then considers the potential next stage for teachers wishing to further their use of TBLT by presenting two examples of more advanced tasks involving both input and output. These tasks, which relate to the same principles upon which her tasks were based, involve more demanding topics (p. 166) and a greater emphasis on learner collaboration.

There are two particularly positive aspects of this book. First, the author presents materials in depth. In particular, the context and background are extensively researched and discussed in a highly readable manner. Sec-

ond, though primarily focusing on her research, the author includes many thought-provoking comments and ideas that stimulate contemplation beyond the initial scope of the study. For example, topics such as how a teacher's role varies depending upon the teaching method or how views of language learning manifest themselves in class resonate throughout the text without necessarily being the immediate focus in question: whether TBLT is a viable alternative to PPP.

With the broader introduction of English at the elementary level of Japanese education, research such as this will prove valuable in devising a curriculum suitable for young learners. Though this thoughtful and detailed text would be useful for curriculum designers and policy makers, most likely it will gain attention chiefly from those already favoring and/or exploring communicative approaches such as TBLT. As such, it may not receive the full audience it deserves. This text is, however, a welcome addition to the ever-growing selection of TBLT literature because it highlights key circum-stantial features for young learners and their teachers before developing an appropriate form of TBLT to suit them.

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### *English as Medium of Instruction in Japanese Higher Education: Presumption, Mirage or Bluff?* Glenn Toh. London, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. xi + 213 pp.

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As the Japanese government calls for expanded English instruction as a means to creating *guroubaru jinzai* (global human resources)*,* more and more English medium instruction (EMI) programs are being created at the university level. In 2014, undergraduate degree programs taught exclusively in English were offered in 48 faculties at 24 universities. These numbers increased to 73 and 40, respectively, in 2015 (MEXT, 2017). *English as Medium of Instruction in Japanese Higher Education: Presumption, Mirage or Bluff?* is an examination of the status quo of EMI and an assessment of its effectiveness. Toh seems to answer the question posed in the title when he identifies at the outset that one of the reasons he wrote the book was to "call . . . the bluff" (p. 2) of the administration of a university at which he had an unfortunate experience. However, this may result in the reader sensing from the start that this text is more subjective than objective; as the reader moves through the book, this suggestion is confirmed.

The book, an amalgamation of several of the author's previously published articles and book chapters, begins with an extensive discussion of the various underlying symptoms of what Toh describes as "an extremely difficult, if not unsustainable, undertaking" (p. 2)—the implementation of EMI in the Japanese university context.

In Chapter 2, Toh identifies two contributing factors to the failure of the EMI program in the aforementioned university: the underlying purpose of the EMI and the profile of the students in the program. The EMI program was devised as a marketing tool to attract foreign students in an attempt to address the domestic demographic trend, which is an issue especially critical for smaller and lower ranking universities. This plan failed though, and in order to meet enrollment numbers, the university had to enroll more domestic students. Many of those students were later found to lack the English proficiency necessary to study in an EMI curriculum. Chapter 3 is a survey of sociopolitical developments, including the rise of the "insular[ly] conservative" Liberal Democratic Party and *nihonjinron*, the post-WWII

ideological positioning of Japan as a linguistically, ethnically, and culturally homogenous country (Liddicoat, 2007). Toh explains how this perpetuation of the Japanese language and culture as unique has necessitated the careful control of the English language curriculum, in effect preventing the development of students who could or would benefit from a university-level EMI program.

In Chapter 4, Toh explores the concept of power as a social construct and how power is exercised on foreign instructors through employment practices. Toh also presents a valid argument that high scores on standardized English language tests (TOEFL, TOEIC, etc.) do not necessarily equate with the ability needed to participate actively and effectively in EMI at the tertiary level with its demands for critical thinking and communication skills.

Chapter 5 is theoretically based, in which Toh examines the concept of academic literacy, which the author explains as knowledge that emerges from a social context through negotiation amongst actors within the context. This contrasts with "closed knowledge"—a government-controlled, acontextual list of facts and information that does not promote intellectual development. Toh argues that students who have completed the Japanese education system based on closed knowledge are ill-equipped to participate in EMI, in which students are expected to "interact with and dialogize existing configurations of knowledge in their area of study" (p. 77). Toh contends that, without a student body with both the linguistic and the critical inquiry skills demanded by more rigorous academic programs, EAP courses within those programs will be reduced to remedial English lessons. Toh's concerns about thrusting unprepared students into programs where they will be expected to question and debate are valid, as is his thinly veiled criticism of some EAP instructors who he suggests are lacking the requisite academic literacy themselves.

In Chapter 6, Toh calls for the de-anglicization of the English used in EMI programs. He argues that the incorporation of various varieties of English, including the hiring of native speakers from nonwestern countries and also nonnative speakers for teaching positions, would expose learners to the "plural and hybridized character" of English (p. 94). Toh suggests this would also present English as a tool for communication rather than a single correct set of norms to achieve, subsequently creating an environment in which students would feel less pressured to perform prescriptively. Students, he argues, would open up more in class, indeed be more willing to voice their opinions, and in turn become better English speakers. The main thrust of Chapter 7 is that "EMI is appropriated" (p. 122) for various uses or purposes

by institutions, resulting in a loss of its value as a tool for academic inquiry, the pursuit of knowledge, and intellectual debate. This argument, however, is based on a survey of EMI program websites, which as a genre are likely designed for marketing purposes. Toh's argument would be stronger had he examined the actual programs themselves. Instead, the writer relies on the example of his own failed program to make claims more broadly about EMIs in Japan.

This regular reliance on only one example to support his otherwise valid points is one weakness of the book. Another weakness is the consistent perception that he is the victim of "palpable paternalistic incompetence and egoism" (p. 2). The book begins to lose focus in Chapter 8 as the author denounces (a) the rejection of one of his manuscripts by a publication, (b) the ambiguous use of linguistic terminology by professionals in Japan, and (c) the oppression of Japanese speakers of English by "social policing" (p. 150). The source of the author's tenable frustration is explained in detail in Chapters 9 and 10—the auto-ethnological story of the pseudonymous Chishiki Faculty of Universal Leadership is good reading, and its rise and fall is easy to understand. In Chapter 11 Toh concludes that it is audacious to attempt to use EMI to coyly recruit students from outside of Japan to fill the enrollment deficits resulting from a declining population (p. 196) and that the superficial use of the EMI label to market any parts of Japan's tertiary education system as internationalized reveals a lack of morals, ethics, and professionalism (p. 198).

Toh has clearly researched well the influences of history and politics on education in Japan and presents his main points of dissention deliberately and logically. The early chapters, highly reliant on secondary sources, read at times like a literature review. Unfortunately, however, the reader can clearly sense from early on resentment on the author's part. Readers familiar with the Japanese education system in general, and the Japanese university climate in particular, will likely be able to ignore or pass over this overt subjectivity. However, Toh's real and sincere criticism of a half-baked EMI program gone bad greatly risks misleading less knowledgeable readers into thinking that this is an inevitable scenario or even just the norm. In addition to laying the blame for the failure of the EMI described in the book on institutional failures within a stubborn nationalist environment, Toh suggests that EMI is a nonstarter for higher education in Japan.

The inclusion of an auto-ethnography results in an overlap of the personal and the professional and risks inviting vulnerability for the writer across both personal and professional spheres. However, it also creates "opportu-

nities for radical reworking of categories of thought and action, including those that cross boundaries between fields or professions" (Denshire, 2014, p. 841). Nevertheless, the defensive tone used throughout this book may prevent the reader from accepting Toh's argument as genuinely objective. Furthermore, although Toh offers a detailed analysis of how Japan has institutionalized forces that in essence preclude the legitimization of EMIs, the author fails to consider changes occurring in Japanese education that might eventually cultivate students with the skills he has identified as necessary for EMI. Such changes include the expansion of English instruction at the elementary level and the introduction of International Baccalaureate programs at the secondary level, not to mention the eventual retirement of both bureaucratic and academic actors who have been resistant to change. Without such considerations, Toh has seemingly prematurely closed the door on the future of EMI in Japan.

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### *The Usage-Based Study of Language Learning and Multilingualism*. Lourdes Ortega, Andrea E. Tyler, Hae In Park, and Mariko Uno (Eds.). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016. xvi + 290 pp.

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*The Usage-Based Study of Language Learning and Multilingualism* is an edited volume that brings together language experts in the exploration of the notion that meaning and structure emerge from language use. Editors Ortega, Tyler, Park, and Uno contribute to the investigation of language acquisition and multilingual development by compiling 13 original usage-based studies drawn from diverse target languages, including Cantonese, English, Finnish, French, French Sign Language (FSL), German, Hebrew, Hokkien (a Chinese dialect from the southern part of Fujian province), Malay, Mandarin, Spanish, and Swedish.

The first chapter serves as an introduction to the collection, and the remaining 13 chapters are divided among four broad themes: (a) longitudinal studies of language interactions, (b) corpus-aided studies of learner language, (c) experimental studies of usage-based processing and learning, and (d) studies of human communication outside of laboratory or educational settings.

In the introductory chapter, Ortega and Tyler succinctly define the concept and key notions of usage-based language learning and establish the importance of this perspective in the study of language development. The chapter is rounded out by thorough descriptions of the four general themes and the studies that address each of them.

The first theme, longitudinal studies of language interactions, is addressed in five wide-ranging chapters that explore various aspects of multilingual language development. The first study under this theme by Aliyah Morgenstern, Pauline Beaupoil-Hourdel, Marion Blondel, and Dominique Boutet (Chapter 2) follows the French, British English, and FSL language development of four children from birth to 3 years of age. The authors conclude that parental communicative pressure and frequency of input affect each child's learning trajectory. In Chapter 3, Ursula Kania examines whether children interpret indirect speech acts in English and German as commands or as

requests for information. The results indicate that not only can the children understand the nonliteral meaning of indirect speech acts, they can also reproduce them. Gilad Brandes and Dorit Ravid (Chapter 4) look at Hebrew prepositional phrases of manner in a cross-sectional study of 80 written narratives from participants ranging from fourth graders to university students. Their findings indicate that age and schooling increase the prevalence and internal complexity of the prepositional phrases. The next study by Taina Tammelin-Laine and Maisa Martin (Chapter 5) explores the development of the Finnish L2 negation utterances of four women who are L1 illiterate. The findings show that, rather than learning by general rules, usage-based evidence emerges because these women had all learned negative speech patterns from exemplars. In the final study under this theme, Amy S. Thompson (Chapter 6) develops the construct of *perceived positive language interaction* to better understand how multilingual college students view their own language learning. Thompson finds that some language learners believe that knowing multiple languages facilitates learning additional languages.

The next four chapters of the book cover corpus-aided studies of learner language, which have employed corpus techniques to compile cross-sectional data from language instruction situations. Stefanie Wulff (Chapter 7) analyzes the spoken and written variable use of the *that* complementizer by German and Spanish learners of English. She concludes that variation in the use of the complementizer is derived from exemplar-based input rather than rules taught during foreign language instruction. In Chapter 8, Bret Linford, Avizia Long, Megan Solon, and Kimberly L. Geeslin explore L1 and L2 Spanish speakers' use of subject forms. Their findings indicate that, because this topic does not receive much attention during language instruction, differences in the subject expression frequency of these two groups can be due to usage-based input. Monika Ekiert (Chapter 9) studies article usage in written L2 English narratives by Polish speakers. Past researchers have focused on L2 article acquisition, but Ekiert examines the language patterns that learners use in lieu of correct article usage. Helen Zhao and Fenfen Le explore in Chapter 10 how frequency, semantic transparency, and L2 learner proficiency impact the phrasal verb comprehension of Chinese L1 learners of English. Their findings indicate that low proficiency English learners show a better understanding of high-frequency phrasal verbs than would normally be expected and that teachers should try to increase exposure to lower frequency phrasal verbs.

The third theme, experimental studies of usage-based processing and learning, consists of two chapters that move away from the previous sec-

tions' explorations of language development at home or in the classroom and into the realm of experimental approaches to understanding usage-based language learning. Silvia Marijuan, Sol Lago, and Cristina Sanz (Chapter 11) investigate whether L1 word-order transfer effects cause advanced Spanish learners difficulty when processing subject-verb-object (SVO) versus object-verb-subject (OVS) sentences. Their findings indicate that even these emerging bilinguals misinterpret the OVS sentences because they rely too heavily on generating meaning from the grammatical word order of their L1. In Chapter 12, Maryia Fedzechkina, Elissa L. Newport, and T. Florian Jaegar use miniature artificial languages, which are researcher-constructed languages designed for laboratory use, to expose participants to cross-linguistic language patterns that frequently occur. The authors explain that gradual changes in language occur because adults tend to simply reproduce the miniature artificial languages, but children are more likely to alter the language in some ways.

Two chapters cover the final theme, studies of human communication outside of laboratory or educational settings. Unlike the previous studies in the book, these researchers focus on conversations produced through human interaction in natural settings. In the first study (Chapter 13), authors Diana Slade, Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen, Graham Lock, Jack Pun, and Marvin Lam analyze audio recordings of two doctor–patient conversations employing very different communication strategies. Their discovery shows that information exchanges using closed questions lead to less effective hospital consultations, a reduction in patient satisfaction, and a decrease in patient safety. Michel Achard and Sarah Lee (Chapter 14) study the code-switching patterns of multilingual speakers in Kuala Lumpur where there is a high rate of cross-linguistic contact. Their findings show that since the multilingual environment of Kuala Lumpur influences the code-switching accommodations and use of blended grammar units in spoken language, even in monolingual conversations, the usage-based language learning model is strongly supported.

The diverse range of target languages presented in this book contribute to the usage-based language learning notion that it is "interpersonal communicative and cognitive processes that everywhere and always shape language" (Slobin, 1997, p. 267). Moreover, the central theme of the usage-based approach to language acquisition, that humans have a unique ability to understand the intention of language through its symbolic dimension (Tomasello, 2005), is reaffirmed by the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the subjects in each study. Another important aspect of this text is

that although certain topics, such as phrasal verbs, articles, or code-switching, have been studied extensively elsewhere, they are viewed here from a rarely addressed, usage-based perspective. Finally, this book shows that the usage-based perspective of language learning can be applied to a variety of language learning and language use contexts for both native and nonnative speakers.

Unfortunately, there is a shortcoming in *The Usage-Based Study of Language Learning and Multilingualism* that should be mentioned. Although some of the studies use clear and concise language to describe their research methods and findings and provide the necessary detail to make replication possible, others assume that the reader has a deep and firm understanding of linguistic jargon. The result is that their discussions would seem only accessible to the most ardent linguists. On that basis, this book may not be for all researchers interested in usage-based approaches to language learning. Readers looking for a more fundamental entry point into understanding usage-based language learning may want to read Tomasello's (2005) *Constructing a Language: A Usage-Based Theory of Language Acquisition.* Despite this concern, the editors have largely succeeded in presenting a thoughtful and thought-provoking volume on how language is acquired through meaningful input.

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*Team Teaching and Team Learning in the Language Classroom: Collaboration for Innovation in ELT*. Akira Tajino, Tim Stewart, and David Dalsky (Eds.). New York, NY: Routledge, 2016. xx + 196 pp.

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For those who are just beginning to team teach and are looking for ideas or for those who are interested in learning more about the current state of team teaching, *Team Teaching and Team Learning in the Language Classroom: Collaboration for Innovation in ELT* provides an important discussion of collaboration and innovation in the language classroom. The book focuses on the ways in which team teaching has developed and is being applied in classroom settings in various contexts. One overarching theme in this book is that innovation, both in and out of the classroom, can be used to create social awareness. This is expressed throughout the book as the authors discuss ways to develop collaboration between teachers and teachers, and teachers and students. The authors focus on different aspects of team teaching, basing their analysis on theoretical underpinnings while explaining how those theories work, or fail to work, in real classroom settings. From the success of the Peace Corps (Chapter 5) to the failure of virtual collaboration (Chapter 11), this book covers a range of teaching situations and highlights their strengths and weaknesses.

The book is broken up into three sections. In Part 1, "Characterizing ELT Collaboration and Innovation," what collaboration and team teaching are in an ELT context is explained. Stewart begins by introducing the issues facing collaboration in the classroom and outlines the basis for team teaching. This first chapter details the benefits of team teaching and collaboration which are expanded upon in the following chapters. Tajino and Craig Smith (Chapter 2) discuss the issues facing team teaching in Japan, giving examples of team teaching working in different patterns of interactions between the two teachers and the students and how those different patterns can have different results. Team learning (as proposed by Tajino and Tajino, 2000) and collaboration are said to be the keys to creating successful learning environments. The chapter ends with the explanation that collaboration by all stakeholders places a "priority on enhanc[ing] 'quality of life' in the classroom" (p. 24). Several suggestions on how to do this are given, such as holding small group evaluations throughout the lesson to discuss thoughts and feelings related to classroom experiences.

Part 2, "Team Teaching Collaborations," includes specific examples involving several learning contexts. In Japan, Tatsuhiro Yoshida looks at the current state of team teaching in the JET Programme (Chapter 3), and Francesco Bolstad and Lori Zenuk-Nishide discuss the deficit model, in which the limitations of nonnative language teachers are compensated for by native speakers, and how that has shaped teaching dynamics (Chapter 6). In Chapter 4, Chris Davison evaluates collaboration and professional development at three different schools in Hong Kong using a multidimensional framework. On a related matter, in the seventh chapter, Chaoqi Fan and Yuen Yi Lo investigate the interdisciplinary collaboration between an English teacher and a science teacher at a secondary school in Hong Kong and how that collaboration influenced the writing of academic science texts. The English teacher provided support for students whose English was at a lower level and assisted them in improving their English writing skills as was required by the school. In Chapter 5, Bill Perry explains the team-teaching dynamic of those working in the US Peace Corps by covering the challenges of working with educators from diverse backgrounds in approximately 65 developing countries.

Part 3, "Collaborative Innovations Beyond Team Teaching," contains examples of collaboration implemented in different situations, from the use of technology to facilitate professional growth (Julian Edge and Mariam Attia, Chapter 8), to technology for collaborations between students (Dalsky and Mikel Garant, Chapter 11). Edge and Attia discuss the value of technology for professional development as a way to share ideas and information among educators. Dalsky and Garant detail the difficulties faced when students in different countries used email as the primary means of communication in a writing task. In Chapter 9, Stewart explains the difficulties in getting content teachers and ELT teachers to collaborate in a university context by highlighting the elements of personality and cultural differences that can hinder collaboration. This chapter shows the possible disconnect that can occur between mainstream content instructors and EFL specialists. David Rehorick and Sally Rehorick (Chapter 10) explain the concept of *leregogy*, a term which denotes the changing relationship between learner and teacher, wherein the learner and the teacher exchange roles. The chapter goes on to cover how this concept was implemented in the development of curricula. Finally, Hoa Thi Mai Nguyen (Chapter 12) ends the book by detailing professional development in Vietnamese schools that employ peer monitoring. This author stresses the cultural norms that are challenged through peer monitoring and the role that relationships between the mentors and new teachers have on professional growth.

The chapter authors and editors of this book have extensive experience in team teaching and collaboration with peers, and this is clear in their understanding and presentation of the complex issues that arise when trying to apply theory to the classroom. Rehorick and Rehorick, in particular, provide details on the method they used to design a multidimensional curriculum for university students grounded in content and language-integrated learning (CLIL). This curriculum was further integrated with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), and the European Language Portfolio (ELP; pp. 156-157). They show how theory can be used effectively in the creation of classrooms where collaboration and team learning thrive, and Table 10.1 (p. 148-149) shows the framework of their multidimensional curriculum.

Another good example is given in Chapter 3 by Yoshida, who takes a teaching situation (the JET Programme) similar to those across Japan and applies the framework created by Tajino and Tajino (2000) to explain what is happening in the classroom. This chapter examines a video-recorded team-taught lesson and the collaboration between the students and teachers to show how the classroom is socioculturally constructed.

Although the authors endeavor to provide a solid explanation of how theory and practice mesh, it is apparent that in many situations the interpersonal relationships can play a large role in the success or failure of team teaching. Although this issue is raised, little empirical evidence is presented to address it. Indeed, some evidence presented is based solely on the past experiences of the writers in different contexts (e.g., Chapters 6 and 8).

Overall this book succeeds in its purpose: The connection between practice and theory and how theoretical models can be applied to team teaching are explained. The importance of creating social awareness is evident in the overarching theme of collaboration. Throughout the chapters, it is made clear that communication and collaboration between educators can be a powerful tool for learning. Using some of the ideas outlined in this book, teachers can develop ideas for collaboration with their students and fellow teachers.

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*Text-Based Research and Teaching: A Social Semiotic Perspective on Language in Use*. Peter Mickan and Elise Lopez (Eds.). London, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. xxiii + 372 pp.

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This book clarifies how the concept of systemic functional linguistics (SFL)—language as a semiotic tool that allows people to negotiate, construct, and organize human experiences—is grounded in daily life, schools, and language education (see Halliday & Hasan, 1989). SFL researchers and practitioners such as Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) understand that language and its use should not be viewed in terms of the correctness based on grammatical rules but rather how social activity is expressed in communication and how language is shaped by social action. When individuals interact with each other, texts act as mediators and are consciously or unconsciously chosen according to the specific setting, with grammatical functions, structures, and vocabulary found therein.

The many studies in *Text-Based Research and Teaching* are underpinned by a linguistic theory in which not only the functioning of language but also language itself are viewed as being deeply related to the societal context in which the language is practiced. This book is an intriguing collection of 19 research articles that apply the concept of "language as a resource for the expression of meanings"—that is, a "social semiotic resource"—to teaching and learning (p. 16). In the Introduction, editors Lopez and Mickan introduce the concept of text-based research and teaching with texts in SFL. Text-based research refers to studies on both written and spoken texts that are contextualized language used for social purposes and situations.

Part I, entitled "Text-Based Research in Everyday Social Settings," comprises six chapters. In Chapter 2, Mickan discusses "researching authentic texts and teaching texts as acts of meaning" (p. 15), from a social semiotic perspective with the aim of renewing and transforming language teaching and curricula. He also discusses the study of texts and the reasons for adopting text-based and semiotic perspectives on language research. Although modified written and spoken target language texts are usually used in EFL classrooms, one of the essential concepts of the genre-based approach in SFL is for teachers, instructors, learners, and researchers to work with authentic

written and spoken texts. Using a corpus-driven analysis, Elizabeth Robertson Rose (Chapter 3) explores online media discourse in spoken texts. In the fourth chapter, Coral Campbell looks at "action" and "inaction" (p. 4) in how Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan semantically and syntactically encoded this experience during the 2007/8 financial crisis. Next, Amanda Janssen looks at a social semiotic multimodal analysis of discourse in banking in a chapter of the same name. Then, in Chapter 6, Lopez clarifies the link between linguistic and creative writing perspectives to analyze the narrative voice in memoirs. In the final chapter of Part I, Ribut Wahyudi explores calls for papers emailed from predatory publishers, which *JALT Journal* readers are likely receiving at an increasing rate.

Part II, entitled "Text-Based Language Pedagogy," consists of 12 research chapters. First, Celine P. Y. Chu analyzes teacher–student talk in ESL Year 6 and 7 classrooms, focusing on questions asked by new arrival students from migrant and refugee backgrounds during picture book reading. Although there is abundant research on applying an SFL- or text-based approach, also known as a genre approach, to learning English, in Chapter 9, Maggie Gu reports on observations and challenges in the analysis of Chinese language education classes at a high school in Adelaide in which a text-based teaching methodology is used. Ruth Widiastuti, in Chapter 10, evaluates a section from an Indonesian EFL textbook from the point of view of opportunities for meaning-making by learners. In Chapter 11, Melissa Bond explores how learners in a Year 10 German class at a high school came to understand the idea that texts are social semiotic tools through a combination of text-based teaching methods including extensive reading. Ten learners were exposed to different formats of written texts—letters, postcards, maps, and posters—related to a unit of work on World War II from the German perspective. Classroom observation data, book logs, assessment data, and surveys were analyzed, with the results suggesting that the average word length of learners' written texts increased across three writing tasks.

Jonghee Lee, in Chapter 12, examines how washback from the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) English in South Korea is reflected in high school English teaching and testing practices and explores the nature of the CSAT English spoken texts from the perspective of SFL. Lee claims that these examinations tend to have a low degree of interpersonal meaning and determined that these modified spoken texts usually include unnatural intonation and slower speaking speeds, which could impact learners' knowledge of how to respond to authentic English interaction. Sharif Moghaddam (Chapter 13) outlines text-based teaching and research into spoken argumentative texts

developed in the classroom by learners preparing for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination. Moghaddam's research focused on three objectives: to explore verbal argumentative classroom texts for IETLS exams, to elaborate verbal argumentative texts which EFL learners develop, and to provide implications for IELTS preparation by learning to structure, stage, and organize target genre texts.

After 16 weeks of study, Raelke Grimmer (Chapter 14) reflects upon her own understanding of the Czech language in short spoken conversations and written micro stories. She finds that learning from authentic texts is beneficial from day one. In Chapter 15, Debbie G. E. Ho examines the move structure of target language texts written by her learners on tourist attraction places in Brunei and the thematic choices that the students made in their writing. Then, in Chapter 16, Hasti Rahmaningtyas, Yusnita Febrianiti, and Nina Inayati report on the use of a text-based approach in a speaking class and the implementation of "the teaching and learning cycle" by Feez and Joyce (1998). One of their findings is that text-based teaching provides an explicit framework for students' work.

In Chapter 17, Clare Knox records and observes ESL learners' lexicogrammatical practices and responses to multimodal texts over 10 weeks in an out-of-class Facebook group. Results show increased language and culture awareness and changes in identity as language learners. Tiffany Seok Yee Wong (Chapter 18) explores the changes in the academic discipline literacies of one international student in an Interior Architecture class where specific semiotic resources (e.g., drawing, sketching, tracing, wall pin-ups, and feedback exchange from lecturers and peers) were used for both knowledge building and skill development. In the final chapter, Mickan and Lopez summarize the potential for investigations of language use in different contexts of human experience and reveal the scope of text-based studies in business, media, and teaching.

SFL is a linguistic theory related to the relationship between social context and linguistic phenomena in which languages are considered to be shaped by users within social contexts. By meeting the aim to represent this theory in practice through empirical studies, *Text-Based Research and Teaching: A Social Semiotic Perspective on Language in Use* can provide a new perspective for literacy pedagogy. In Japan, where learners and researchers may not be aware of how to unpack or incorporate this social aspect of language in their classrooms, this book can enlighten EFL teachers and learners about new prospects for writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills.

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## *Transitions From Education to Work: Workforce Ready Challenges in the Asia Pacific*. Roslyn Cameron, Subas Dhakal, and John Burgess (Eds.). London, England & New York, NY: Routledge, 2018. xii + 249 pp.

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At first glance, a book on workforce readiness and employability in the Asia Pacific region would seem an odd fit for this journal, as it focuses neither on Japan nor language teaching. However, there are several salient issues discussed in this volume that could be applied to the situation of language teaching in Japan, particularly at the tertiary level. In particular, the nexus of "soft" skills—communication, English, critical thinking, and adaptability (pp. 22-24, p. 177)—commonly cited by employers as lacking in new recruits, can be readily accommodated into a language teaching curriculum.

The book is divided into three sections. It begins with two chapters that provide a broad overview of the problem of workplace readiness in the Asia Pacific region and a review of the relevant literature. The second section consists of nine country case studies examining Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, India, Australia, Nepal, and Laos. Each case study discusses the social and economic factors that affect workplace readiness in the respective countries. The book concludes with two short chapters written by the editors where they consolidate the information presented, provide predictions of future trends, recommend ways to improve work readiness, and suggest avenues of future research.

The bulk of the book comprises the country studies that outline the educational system, demographic trends, key economic features, and a history of how the issue of workforce readiness has been or is being addressed. A snapshot of each country's labor market, educational structure, workplace-readiness issues, current initiatives and policies to address the issue, and suggested remedies is included in a convenient summary table at the end of each chapter to facilitate easier cross-national comparison. The research methodology of the chapters was basically a review and interpretation of information from secondary sources. The majority of the discussions were based on data obtained from reports on government labor statistics and industry surveys conducted by local governments, local or regional research institutions, and international organizations (e.g., UNESCO, OECD, or World Bank). The one exception (Chapter 6 covering Indonesia) included an original case study that effectively showcased, in an easy-to-comprehend way, the issues in workforce readiness and how two companies have faced the challenges of meeting their labor needs. The case study approach showed how the issue of work readiness can be related to interpersonal factors in management style and the specific nature of an industry. Particularly useful from the case study were the descriptions of the specific measures used to improve work readiness such as an internship program with a local vocational education institute, company-wide coaching on proper procedures, and recruitment based on specific rubrics of skills rather than personal connections.

The country studies span nations at several stages of economic development, from emerging economies such as Nepal and Laos, to rapidly developing nations such as Vietnam and Indonesia, to more mature economies such as Taiwan and Australia. In spite of differences in culture and economic development, there are striking similarities between the nations discussed in the book in terms of the issues regarding the mismatch between the set of abilities employers need and the skills being taught in universities. Rigid hierarchical structures and stagnant educational traditions and curricula that do not match with current economic or technological realities were common complaints as well as the quality and legitimacy of universities (particularly in emerging economies). These issues with university curricula have created a paradoxical situation in which there are a sufficient number of qualified people in terms of formal education but an insufficient number of candidates who are employable and have the necessary skills required by industry (p. 22). These complaints are also familiar here in Japan. For example, Kaneko (2011) found that 75% of graduates did not use the skills

or knowledge gained at university in their current jobs. This lack of practical skills, in turn, costs employers time and money in training, only to have the people they have developed poached by other companies once their skills improve.

Another barrier to workforce readiness was a willingness to work or continue to work. In Taiwan, youth who leave the workforce early are described as the "flash generation" and the "strawberry generation" because although they obtain employment, they frequently quit after a year or two because they are easily bruised (like a strawberry) by the realities of workplace pressures (p. 55). A similar situation regarding workforce readiness and willingness to work exists in Japan where, despite a recent positive report that 98% of new college graduates in Japan received employment offers ("Record 98%," 2018), there remain an estimated 1.7 million NEETs—youth not in education, employment, or training—representing 10% of the 15- to 24-year-old population (Osumi, 2017). Other Asia Pacific graduates prefer to remain unemployed after graduation rather than take a job perceived as difficult or with low status. This leads to a widespread phenomenon: Many of the youth seeking education, particularly tertiary education, as a way to social and economic advancement also find themselves with the highest levels of unemployment or underemployment even in countries with rapidly growing economies.

One of the shortcomings for many *JALT Journal* readers is that the book focuses largely on broader policy-level suggestions. Nevertheless, it does provide a useful international context to the issues facing new graduates. Although there are few hands-on, practical suggestions for implementing avenues to develop workforce readiness skills at the program or classroom level, the general conclusions and the trends and areas of further research shown indicate some ways to improve the work readiness of graduates. Furthermore, the editors emphasize the need for evidence-based decisions on the analysis, planning, and monitoring of skill gaps and the employment of new graduates by government and universities. There also needs to be increased cooperation and coordination between stakeholders (governments, educational institutions, industry, and students) to ensure that the skills fostered are not only those that are currently necessary but also the ability to learn new ones. University and vocational school administrators in Japan can attempt to increase industry–academic cooperation through internships and collaboration on curricular content. With a bit of creativity, individual instructors can adapt their language curriculum or the 3rd-year job-hunting and seminar classes (*zemi)* common at Japanese universities to

develop some of these key survival skills in their students. As the authors of the conclusions note, paraphrasing a 2017 report from the management consultancy McKinsey Global Institute, "resilience, flexibility, and the ability to respond with dexterity will be essential attributes when jobs are likely to change over time" (p. 238).

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## *Creating Experiential Learning Opportunities for Language Learners: Acting Locally While Thinking Globally*. Melanie Bloom and Carolyn Gascoigne (Eds.). Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters, 2017. xxi + 270 pp.

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"How can I get my students to practice more outside of the classroom?" is a question that every language teacher has asked. This is an especially pertinent question for teachers in Japan because students often lack opportunities to communicate in a second language outside of class. Well-known options for language learners include study abroad, conversation school classes, and language exchange. However, students might lack the financial resources or initiative necessary for these choices. An increasingly popular

method for increasing student exposure to the target language is through experiential, or service, learning (Furco, 2004, p. 14). Experiential learning is based on the educational reformer John Dewey's (1938) theory of an "organic connection between education and personal experience" (p. 24). In other words, learning that occurs in the classroom should be connected with real-life experiences out in the community.

*Creating Experiential Learning Opportunities for Language Learners: Acting Locally While Thinking Globally* thoroughly examines the many forms that experiential learning can take and its benefits to both service providers and recipients. Some of the benefits to students include more practice with the target language, greater intercultural awareness, and increased motivation. Editors Bloom and Gascoigne preface this collection of 13 research studies by highlighting the growing popularity of experiential learning in university second language programs despite the scant amount of literature on this topic. The book is divided into three sections focusing on experiential learning through community engagement, professional engagement, and other unique, context-specific opportunities.

The first chapter by Adrian J. Wurr begins with a review of the literature on experiential learning and describes the variety of forms it can take such as interning, volunteering, and community service. In Chapter 2, Josef Hellebrandt discusses community engagement and common requirements for such programs. The author notes that service learning is an increasingly common component of American university courses; however, this is largely not reflected on the websites of Spanish departments. In the next chapter, "Civic Engagement and Community Service Learning: Connecting Students' Experiences to Policy and Advocacy," Annie Abbott states that the majority of service learning programs in the United States involve Spanish and work with immigrant communities. Abbott describes how students' perceptions of which issues are important to immigrants often differ vastly from immigrants' actual concerns. Chapter 4 by Cecilia Tocaimaza-Hatch and Laura C. Walls covers the benefits of service learning for both second language learners and heritage language learners (somewhat bilingual individuals who speak a language other than English at home) and how these are similar and different.

The second section of the book contains research related to experiential learning and professional engagement. Chapters 6 and 7 by the editors Gascoigne and Bloom, respectively, offer plenty of practical advice for beginning an internship program at a university. Similarly, Chapter 8 by Carmen King de Ramírez and Barbara A. Lafford is another practitioner-based account of

an internship program that focuses on how mentor and intern expectations often differ. This chapter highlights the need for goal setting and careful preparation for selecting and preparing interns before creating a program.

The final section of the book describes experiential learning in various local contexts. In Chapter 10, Brigid Moira Burke describes what she refers to as "expeditionary learning" (p. 183), based on Outward Bound programs (see www.outwardbound.org). She describes how the principles that guide this outdoor, task-based approach to life education can be adapted by language teachers for the classroom. In the following chapter, Jessica S. Miller shares how a university-based experiential program had a real impact in helping to revitalize a small rural town in the United States. Sabine Marina Jones (Chapter 12) then examines foreign language dormitories and the factors necessary for success. Finally, in "Language Camps: By Teaching We Learn," Jacqueline Thomas looks at both day camps and weeklong immersion camps and their respective advantages and disadvantages.

*Creating Experiential Learning Opportunities for Language Learners* presents the reader with a well-balanced look at many forms of experiential learning. For educators or administrators thinking of starting their own programs, this book could provide them with a useful road map to follow and capitalize on the experience of other practitioners. Taken as a whole, this book presents a convincing argument for why experiential learning should be incorporated into language classes because of the benefits to both service providers and service receivers.

However, there are a few shortcomings of this collection. The first, noted by the editors themselves in the conclusion, is the lack of statistical analysis in these papers. Out of the 13 studies, only one includes statistics to document student gains through a mixed-methods approach. Evidence of benefits is largely anecdotal, although some studies do use qualitative data in the form of survey comments. Perhaps statistical analyses are not so necessary because these papers are largely practitioner-based accounts detailing the goals, challenges, and successes of service learning programs. Another point is that a few studies are overly detailed, going as far as listing sentences that were used in certain activities. Perhaps these studies are best approached by skimming and saving the expanded content for later reference. Also, it should be noted that none of the programs described are located in Japan, although that should not stop resourceful teachers from applying the same concepts to their own contexts.

An experiential learning component in language classes can give students additional practice outside of the classroom and increase their intercultural awareness. Furthermore, knowing that they will have to actually use their language skills can be a tremendous motivator for students (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In a country where students spend years learning a language for potential future interactions or possible benefits to their career, perhaps it is time for teachers to create opportunities where genuine communication will occur. This volume can give teachers advice toward doing just that.

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