

*Teaching English to the World: History,
Curriculum, and Practice*

George Braine

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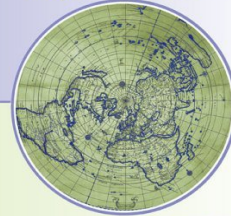
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TEACHING
ENGLISH
TO THE
WORLD

History, Curriculum, and Practice



Edited by George Braine

The world is learning English for business, development, collaboration and diplomacy. Obviously there is much more necessity for ESL and EFL than ever before. According to the historical evidence, English was being taught as a second or foreign language as far back as the 15th century (Braine, 2005, p. xi). For almost six centuries it has been gathering momentum, and now it is flourishing and is almost in a lingua franca position. The edited book titled “Teaching English to the World: History, Curriculum, and Practice,” by George Braine, is for a general and ESL/EFL curious audience who interested in how English is taught and learned in the world. The book discusses this issue through 15 chapters, each of which describes the first-person experience of an EFL teacher in a different country. At the same time, it touches upon the issues pertaining to the history of ELT in certain countries, its purpose of being of part of curriculum and its dominance over other foreign languages not only in countries’ education systems but also in terms of people’s intention to learn English as fast as possible.

There are sixteen chapters in this book. The author starts the book with a preface and introduction where he gives brief information about the book itself while revealing its most interesting and informative points one by one. The chapters include ELT professionals’ voices from Brazil, China, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Lebanon,

Poland, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Turkey. All the chapters follow a consistent pattern: the first part of the chapter gives that country's profile so that the reader can picture the setting. The second part briefly approaches the history of English teaching in that particular country, and the third part describes the current ELT curriculum. The final section of each chapter is called "Becoming an English Teacher" where each ESL professional provides us with the information about their biography and academic teaching autobiography up to now. In addition, each of them also tells us briefly why they became an ELT professional, what challenges they faced and how they are contributing to the ELT field of their own countries. In addition, it includes their initial steps learning English, their choice of becoming ELT people and challenges they experienced in this field.

While reading the book, you will notice that the introduction to ELT for most countries almost always follows the same pattern, with most countries introducing ELT to their education system because of the hegemonic power of the USA and other English speaking countries. There were also some countries that mostly learned English with the assistance of missionaries. Lebanon, for example, experienced the "... settlement in the country of Protestant missionaries from the United States and Britain" (p. 103). It can be implied from other chapters that Germany, Hungary, and Poland understood the necessity of learning English for communicative purposes with their neighboring countries. The book also shows historical evidence that ELT teaching in particular countries such as India, Hong Kong, Singapore and Sri Lanka came from Britain as those countries once were former colonies of Britain.

This book is also unique in that it touches upon many issues concerning the historical introduction of ELT to the rest of the world, while at the same time not ignoring present issues of ELT in those continents. Most of these issues are related to current teaching, such as the lack of

EFL teachers in some areas and schools. The main concern for almost all of the ELT professionals pertains to the minimum usage of Communicative Language Teaching (including TBLT) in the classroom, some difficulties ELT teachers face now when they want to visit English speaking countries, and also other ELT teaching related issues. Interestingly, almost every ELT professional representing their country's ELT profile talked about the native-speakers vs. non-native speakers issue in their country's EFL teaching context. In addition to this, the chapters also make the role of "Peace Corps" and "British Council" very noticeable in terms of ELT development in those particular countries.

This book is very informative for the following reasons: First, each chapter provides the reader with a number of references. Second, ELT professionals not only describe their initial problems and challenges in this profession, but also they include solutions to those problems while sharing very useful information with the readers. This book also includes pictures of world ELT representatives with brief information about their current position in their home countries. When questions arise concerning this or that chapter, you can certainly email them for further collaboration. While taking advantage of information about the ELT professionals, this book gave me the chance to network with those people, and let me find answers for my questions while exchanging ideas with them.

Although this book discusses a number of ELT issues in sixteen well-known countries, it gives neither general nor specific information about other important EFL regions such as Russia, and some Central Asian countries. Ongoing historical transition periods in those countries also make foreign languages, especially English, very important because those countries can collaborate with rest of the world through English. I believe it is also interesting for every ESL/EFL reader in the world to know how the EFL world is currently acting in the African

continent. This sort of information concerning ELT would be extremely useful in forthcoming editions of “Teaching English to the World.” These criticisms of “Teaching English to the World” are relatively minor and I definitely recommend this book. I particularly recommend it not only to ESL/EFL and ELT scholars but also for the people who are pursuing their career in general and higher education fields. Also this book can be valuable and informative source for younger generation of TESL program students in all parts of the world.

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