

Geoff Hall, *Literature in Language Education*. Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills, Basingstoke, 2015, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition; 340pp. ISBN 978-1-137-33182-3 US\$95 (hbk), ISBN 978-1-137-33183-0 US\$29.99 (pbk), ISBN 978-1-137-33184-7 US\$19.99 (e book).

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In 2005, the first edition of *Literature in Language Education* provided a much-needed comprehensive and useful overview of work for researchers and students working on the teaching of literature in both L1 and L2. As Hall himself notes in the introduction to this revised second edition, the landscape has moved on since 2005 in terms of the ways that literature is read and discussed and in the kinds of research methodologies and methods that have come to characterise the field. The increasingly multimodal and diverse ways that we experience literature, the affordances of online communities of readers and the changing nature of classrooms and technology together with broader advances in literary, linguistic and educational scholarship have all reflected in this second edition. And, since ten years is a long time, there are over one hundred new references that have been added.

The organization of the book remains largely the same although the original four-part structure has been condensed to three parts (each with three chapters), with the original *Resources* section being incorporated into the *Researching Literature in Language Education* section that completes the book. An introduction chapter highlights the book's central concerns, emphasizing literature as discourse and as social practice, examining its relationship to creativity and everyday language, discussing the various historical tensions between language and literary scholars, and arguing for the need to view English as a less compartmentalized and more integrated curriculum subject, both theoretically and actualized in the classroom.

Part 1 is essential background reading and covers a range of theories, concepts and approaches. In chapter 1, 'Literary language and ordinary language', the notion of

literariness is examined in relation to discourse types and registers and an overview is provided of the vision of English as promoted by Arnold and Leavis, movements such as Russian formalism and New Criticism, and approaches, concepts and methods such as corpus and discourse-based studies of register variation, the representation of speech, creativity, metaphor, narrative and dialogism. Most of the material mirrors that of the first edition although there are some useful updated references to creative writing and studies of second language users. Chapter 2, 'Reading literature' (Chapters 2 and 3 have been switched from their original organization in the first edition) provides more extended discussion of research on the process of reading. Taking the stance that reading is a highly situated event where identities are engaged in and shaped by multiple contexts of interaction, the chapter covers key reader response theorists such as Richards, Rosenblatt, Culler, Iser and Fish. There is careful consideration of both the similarities and differences of each approach, and good, clear examples given to support the reader, for example in the section on the differences between the positions of Iser and Fish on the respective roles of text and reader. The second part of the chapter focuses on 'real readers' largely drawing on research from psycholinguistics and educational studies in education. The strength of Hall's approach is evident in how he outlines very clearly the demonstrable impact of key thinkers (e.g. Rosenblatt) on practice. Inevitably though, some of the newer references are not given as much coverage as they could have been – a pattern at times replicated in other parts of the book. One notable example is Sanford and Emmott's work on 'hot cognition' (Sanford and Emmott 2012), which is offered as a potentially useful avenue of exploration for the reader/researcher but then insufficiently discussed so as to question its mention in the first place.

Chapter 3, 'Literature in education' is the final chapter in part 1. It begins with some research questions that arise from discussion of topics in Chapter 2. The questions, namely how and why teachers value use literary texts in different contexts, and what benefits students gain from literary study, firmly root the role and study of literature within the education context and thus provides a solid background for parts 2 and 3. Chapter 3 starts with a review of Cox's well-known and discussed 'models' of English in the secondary context, before moving into discussion of the evolution of literature in the curriculum, the construction of the literary canon and claims for the value of literature in second language teaching contexts. Sections on assessment (complete with very useful discussion of the difficulties of setting questions on literary texts) and the relationship between literature, language and culture complete the chapter.

Part 2 builds on part 1 by focusing in more detail on specific research carried out within literature in education contexts. In Chapter 4, useful overviews of foregrounding, corpus stylistics and metaphor are placed within the context of recent research in these areas while Chapter 5 covers empirical studies of reading, again providing neat summaries of the most relevant studies again with a number of useful and well-placed updates to the first edition. Following the switch of chapters in Part 1, Chapter 6 (Chapter 5 in the first edition) is now on 'Educational perspectives'. In this chapter, Hall surveys L1 school curriculum design in England/Wales and Australia, L2 design in Malaysia, Turkey and Singapore. Surprisingly, discussion of the situation in England and Wales is limited, a short note aside, to the 1995 *English in the National Curriculum* document. Given the extent of the most recent secondary reform that further narrowed the curriculum for schools and awarding bodies in terms of its unequivocal focus on canonical literature, it would have been useful for more

recent policy to receive greater coverage and scrutiny, particularly given the discussion in Chapter 3. The ending of this chapter outlines some key studies in both L1 and L2 reading classrooms with particularly intriguing, albeit brief, discussion of the role of literature in developing empathy and social justice. It is surprising, however that beyond a passing comment (which lacks a full reference) the work of Michael Benton is not discussed, given his undeniable influence on the pedagogy of literature teaching in English schools (see for example Benton et al. 1988).

Part 3, 'Researching literature in language education' is designed to support those wishing to undertake their own research around topics introduced in the first two parts or, as Hall challenges the reader, 'to bring new perspectives to the study of literature in language education' (p. 231). The introduction offers a useful summary of some basic differences between various methodological approaches, before Chapter 7 moves on to more extensive discussion of particular research methods such as experimental studies, think out loud protocols, survey research, case studies and ethnographic studies. The summary examples of research using these methods, a feature retained from the first edition, provide a welcome reference point for the reader reader to follow up the full article at a later date. Moving into planning and data generation and analysis, Chapter 8 then gives guidance for those starting research with advice on building research questions, managing data and analysing documents. The chapter ends with extensive discussion of six potential projects and data generation methods (again maintained from the first edition) and a new and very useful sub-section that outlines further possible avenues, most of which are informed by more recent research since the publication of the first edition. Finally, Chapter 9 includes an updated further resources section and a glossary.

The updating from the first edition undoubtedly works to improve readability. Whilst key quotations and key concepts are retained in boxes, the addition of ‘questions addressed in this chapter’ at the start of each chapter are a welcome from a pedagogical perspective and I think give this edition a neater, more user-friendly feel. It was a surprising, however, given the book’s emphasis on encouraging and supporting researchers and practitioners to undertake empirical work that the further reading suggestions at the end of each chapter are still sketched out rather than fully explained for the reader.

Like the first edition, the updated *Literature in Language Education* is a volume rich with content and advice and offers much to those undertaking research in this area. Its strengths remain its comprehensive overview of topics ranging across curriculum theory, assessment, research design and methods as well as well-presented coverage of relevant thinking from literary theory, literacy studies and educational studies. Its extensive cross-references to existing literature, its potential use to multi-audiences (academic and student researchers, practitioners) and its switching from L1 to L2 contexts across different phases of education help to provide a comprehensive survey of the field but in trying to appeal in so many ways, at times the book will undoubtedly fail to please everyone. For example, I imagine classroom practitioners wanting to begin the journey towards classroom-based research might benefit from greater coverage given to action research as a research paradigm and more extensive directions to the existing literature.

Overall, the second edition maintains the style and content of the first edition but with some very welcome additions. It will serve as a must-have reader for those conducting research in the field and for students taking modules concerned with literature and language teaching in a range of different contexts. It will no doubt

provide an excellent introduction to the field and a rich source of further reading, sitting neatly alongside more recent works that discuss the role and value of literature teaching in education from the perspectives of empathy and social justice (e.g. Alsup 2015), the positioning of reading as discourse and as social practice and its implications more widely for practitioners (e.g. Cliff Hodges 2015) and empirical studies on the study of literature in specific educational settings (e.g. Burke et al. 2016; Arizpe and Cliff Hodges 2018).

## References

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