



Book Review

Jason Goulah and John Katunich (Eds.), *TESOL and Sustainability: English Language Teaching in the Anthropocene Era*. Bloomsbury, 2020; ISBN: 9781350115095.

Reviewed by

Marco A. Micalay-Hurtado

The University of Alabama, USA

E-mail: micalaymarco@gmail.com

TESOL and Sustainability: English Language Teaching in the Anthropocene Era represents an earth-centered challenge to re-think the identity of the TESOL field and to let its practice be shaped by sustainable epistemologies. The 204-page volume, edited by John Katunich and Jason Goulah, collects the writings of nine experts in sustainable language education who outline theoretical and pedagogical pathways for initiating an ecological turn in TESOL's practice and priorities.

The book is divided into two main sections and a coda. The first section of the book, *Foundations for Sustainability in TESOL: Cultural Perspectives, Products, and Practices*, outlines a wide range of discourses and theories to establish the basis for a sustainable TESOL practice. This section opens with a chapter by M. Garret Delavan that introduces 10 discourses aimed at persuading TESOL practitioners to incorporate sustainability into their pedagogy. The first seven are discourses already-in-circulation, but the author also introduces three new discourses for promoting sustainability within the field. One of these new discourses particularly helps to highlight the importance of this book by showing that TESOL practitioners have been integral to the propagation of environmental destruction; the author provocatively explains that history shows that the “[sustainability] crisis speaks English” (Delavan, 2020, p. 31).

In the second chapter, John Katunich asks TESOL practitioners to abandon the historical propagation of English as a money-making resource and as a technology that colonizes learners' agencies and cultures. As an alternative, the author proposes the view of language-as-a-commons in which vernacular languages are prioritized, standards rejected, and linguistic practice is community-based. Instead of being an extractive technology, the author envisions a version of English that learners can shape for the wellbeing of their communities and of the ecosystems they inhabit. The third chapter also asks the TESOL community to challenge taken-for-granted ideologies in English language

instruction. In this chapter, Sandra Kouritzin explores what it means to teach English in a post-truth society that holds feelings above facts, rejects expertise, and prides itself in opposing sustainability and denying the ecological endgame. The author also explains that the TESOL community is logistically better positioned than most educational communities to challenge post-truth ideologies and to help students fight unsustainable untruths with facts and deliberation. Kouritzin goes on to discuss the questions that post-truth pedagogy should seek to answer as it attends to the political nature of facts, questions such as: “how do we engage with one another and teach our students to engage with one another in non-extractive ways,” and “how has education come to serve the economy rather than people and other beings?” (Kouritzin, 2020, p. 73). At the end of the chapter, the author shares with readers an honest glimpse into her efforts and struggles to practice post-truth pedagogy.

The second section of the book, *Climate Change and Place as TESOL Curriculum and Pedagogy*, presents four studies that show how to operationalize sustainability in an array of English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts. The first two chapters in this section exemplify the application of sustainable frameworks in English language classrooms. In chapter four of the book, Jason Goulah discusses the process of developing a climate migration unit for one of the largest school districts in the US and a teacher’s experience field testing the unit in a beginner ESL class for high school students. Reflecting a framework of sustainability and ethical spirituality, the study shows that beginner learners can benefit from an education of eco-ethical values while successfully participating in standard-based learning. Moreover, the study shows that training teachers to practice sustainable ELT proves transformative for learners as well as for educators. Goulah makes this point vivid and relevant as he shares with readers that the teacher field testing the unit was hesitant to teach about climate migration until she learned that one of her students had been forced to leave her home in Puerto Rico because of the devastation caused by Hurricane María.

Chapter 5, written by Kevin Eyraud, moves the classroom outdoors and explores the implementation of place-based eco-pedagogy to promote sustainability in an English for academic purposes (EAP) context. The study consists of a discourse analysis of the interactions between learners and teachers during a field trip to a national park in Utah, showing that place-based eco-pedagogy empowers learners to manipulate English for their own purposes and to become experts on and advocates for their local environments. Moreover, the author shows that a place-based and experiential approach to language learning allows students to gain unique insight into the multi-layered, meaning-making relationship between language, culture, and ecosystems.

The last two chapters focus on sustainable learning beyond the classroom. The sixth chapter was written by Bal Krishna Sharma and presents the analysis of three instances of greenspeak in tourism encounters in the Himalayas and discusses what the analysis means for sustainable TESOL practice. Defining greenspeak as “a form of discourse used for discussing and representing environmental and ecological issues,” the author looks at the

interactions between an American tourist and Durga, a local tour guide who had been through an English for specific purposes (ESP) program for tourism workers that focused on relating language learning to the protection of the Himalaya's ecosystem (Sharma, 2020, p. 137). The instances of greenspeak that emerged from the data show that cross-cultural conversations helped the participants to develop awareness about issues of sustainability, spirituality, and social justice. Regarding TESOL, the study suggests that there is no need to sacrifice traditional teaching to incorporate sustainability in the classroom and that microanalysis of real-world interactions can provide valuable learning opportunities in ESP contexts. In the last chapter, Cori Jakubiak and Alan Hastings unveil taken-for-granted root metaphors present in English language tourism promotional material. The study shows that English language volunteer programs portray rural education as deficient, undermining the community-based, sustainable practices which are often present in these schools. In addition, the promotional materials construe success as individualistic and capitalistic which contradicts rural communities' sense of social and ecological responsibility.

Finally, in the book's coda, Satoru Nakagawa exemplifies a form of knowledge-making that has not often had a space of authority in the field. The author is from the Island of Tokunoshima, where the Amami, his indigenous community, have lived for hundreds of years; Shima-guchi is the language of his Island. Mixing storytelling with academic discourse, the author exposes the gulf between the truth of his community and the truth constructed by science and academia. The author laments the Japanese colonization of his island in 1609 and the colonization of Indigenous truths every time academia, whose discourses resonate in English, attempts to engage these truths. The author's lament is woven with beautiful stories of human connections that last forever not only in the intergenerational lives of each member of the Amami community but also in the sacred rocks, rivers, trees, and soil of the land they inhabit. This story of connection between all of nature, this generous ontology, also outlines for the field a long-lasting path of sustainability. The author ends by calling TESOL professionals to understand local contexts and histories and to respect those whose land they visit. The author also argues that TESOL needs to give room for indigenous representatives to inform our practice. As this volume exemplifies, TESOL needs indigenous truths, even if indigenous communities do not need us.

The book's greatest strength is its scope as it addresses the *what*, *how*, and *why* of a sustainable version of TESOL. Throughout the book, and especially in the first three chapters, the volume outlines the theoretical and discursive paths that are to encompass the sustainable transformation of TESOL. Frameworks such as earth democracy (Delevan, 2020), language-as-a-commons (Katunich, 2020), global citizenship (Goulah, 2020), and place-based pedagogy (Sharma, 2020) offer a roadmap for *what* sustainable TESOL should entail. The book also exposes *what* unsustainable ideologies and root metaphors the TESOL field needs to challenge: The post-truth regime (Kouritzin, 2020), language as a resource (Katunich, 2020), rural education as deficient (Jakubiak and Hastings, 2020), and indigenous epistemologies as inferior to science (Nakagawa, 2020), to name a few. In

addition, the book presents several studies on *how* to operationalize sustainable pedagogies in a variety of English language learning contexts from a beginner level ESL class for high school students in the US to ESP classes for tourism workers in Nepal.

Perhaps the most relevant question that *TESOL and Sustainability* addresses is *why* TESOL professionals need to care about and commit to ecojustice. This is addressed throughout the book, but the first chapter of the volume and the coda offer the most complete and compelling answers to this question. As stated previously, in the first chapter, Delavan addresses the issue head-on and offers 10 discourses that explain *why* the TESOL community needs to address sustainability. In addition, the coda narrates the immense loss of indigenous truths caused by “English and other killer languages” (Nakagawa, 2020, p. 178). The coda, thus, gives us a glimpse into the suffering that the TESOL profession has caused to countless indigenous communities, vernacular languages, and ecosystems. This personal narration of the profession’s unsustainable legacy should resound throughout the TESOL field as an urgent reason for *why* TESOL needs a new non-extractive identity.

In addition to a comprehensive scope, the book has an effective organization, each chapter flowing naturally into the other. The volume’s division into two sections, for instance, leads readers from a theoretical foundation for sustainable TESOL pedagogy to empirical illustrations of such practices. Section one ends with the author sharing how she practices post-truth pedagogy which gives way to section two and more detailed discussions of sustainable pedagogy in TESOL. In addition, chapter five discusses place-based ecopedagogy and links into a chapter that focuses on language learning through hiking interactions in a rural setting, the Himalayas. In turn, this discussion connects to the last chapter in this volume which explores how rural learning is portrayed by English language teaching tourism programs. The coda includes a discussion of sustainable practices in a rural, indigenous community, but it goes beyond the book’s academic orientation to establish indigenous epistemologies as sustainable paths that our field must embrace. The coda marks an end and a beginning, foreshadowing a new TESOL identity that listens to and is guided by indigenous truths.

A minor critique pertains to chapters’ six and seven slight departure from the pedagogical emphasis of the book. These chapters rely on ecolinguistics-informed discourse analysis to explore instances of greenspeak in tourism encounters and root metaphors in advertisements for ELT volunteer programs. Both chapters engage with ELT from a greater distance than the other two chapters aimed at illustrating sustainable pedagogy. These chapters offer implications for TESOL practice, but these implications are not at the center of the studies’ results. This, however, does not diminish the value of the chapters for the TESOL community. On the contrary, it makes them all the most relevant. Chapters six and seven pioneer research in areas of TESOL pedagogy that need further attention.

Overall, *TESOL and Sustainability* represents the beginning of an earth-centered shift in the field. The book offers several theoretical and pedagogical pathways for the enactment of sustainability in ELT, and the organization helps readers effectively explore each of these

paths. In addition, the book's structure serves as a pointer to indigenous epistemologies that protect sustainable realities hidden to academia. This book also makes clear that the TESOL community is well equipped to promote sustainability everywhere in the world. Thus, my hope is that this book will reach every corner of the TESOL field and that the TESOL community will respond with transformative urgency to reshape the field into a life-sustaining practice, extending sustainability to every classroom and ecosystem on earth. After all, "If we do not, we will then be able to do nothing more than engage in language education at/for the world's end" (Kouritzin, 2020, p.73).

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