

## ***Book reviews***

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### **PLURILINGUAL PEDAGOGIES. CRITICAL AND CREATIVE ENDEAVORS FOR EQUITABLE LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION**

*Sunny Man Chu Lau & Saskia Van Viegen (Eds.)*

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Acknowledging the need for studies that break barriers, Lau and Van Viegen's edited volume offers a deep discussion related to the application of plurilingual approaches and translanguaging across a variety of educational contexts. The book comprises a unique balance between theoretical/conceptual and empirical contributions which focus on the complexities of the everyday language practices of bi/multilingual communities. It offers implications for promoting inclusion and well-being of these learners. It critically delineates both methodological and pedagogical approaches with which the existing monolingual bias and inequitable power relations embedded in language hierarchies can be resisted. The collection is divided into five different sections. Moreover, as an innovative feature which showcases the work's ongoing reflexive and dialogic nature, the editors include scholars' commentaries on the main sections of the book.

The first section focuses on the heteroglossic understanding of language practice, noticing the pressing need towards critical and creative approaches concerned with the equitable inclusion of the linguistic repertoires of students. These chapters point out the importance of situating these discussions amidst sociocultural, political and historical origins and directions. Lau and Van Viegen provide an overview of key terms and highlight some discussions in the field, reinforcing the idea that preferred multilingualism tends to include dominant European languages, ignoring the multilingual resources of speakers of minoritized languages, "a luxury afforded to a privileged few" (p.11). The editors' conversation with Moore in the second chapter gives an overview of the epistemological background and theorization of

plurilingualism and plurilingual competence in relation to understandings of translanguaging. They emphasize the need for adopting a reflexive plurilingual posture (p. 41). The third chapter by Lin, Wu and Lemke explains the move from a substance-based to a process-based ontology which would capture sense-and meaning-making practices in the real world. This means moving away from the conceptualization of named language systems as static and bounded and embracing the *translanguaging and flows* analytical framework, depicted as a nexus of dynamic material, social and historical processes across multiple timescales (p.54).

The second section includes chapters focusing on case studies where plurilingual pedagogies are applied to different teaching and learning contexts. These works reinforce the connection between language learning and critical literacy in bilingual and Indigenous school contexts, highlighting the need to consider every student as having agency, capable of challenging dominant ideas and social assumptions regardless of their language proficiency level. Aitken and Robinson's study focuses on the way language, culture, power and identity intersect in the First Nation communities and their school setting. Within an intergenerational project in the Naskapi Indigenous community involving grandparents, Grade 3 students produced identity texts in multiple languages, taking ownership of their learning of English and increasing their metalinguistic awareness. López et al's chapter presents an ethnographic study concerning three student teachers' efforts to implement plurilingual and translanguaging approaches in Oaxaca, Mexico. The project not only helped contesting the use of Standardized English as the only appropriate linguistic practice, it also accentuated students' understanding of health issues linked to the social reality where they live. Lau's research in Quebec, Canada, focuses on the strategic collaboration between English and French language teachers in building bridges across content and language to facilitate students' social inquiry of race issues and strengthen their biliteracy development. Guided by a materialist perspective, Toohey's commentary at the end of the section strengthens the idea of collaboration between researchers and teachers to engage in critical literacy, respecting the communities from which students come. Here, the notion of agency also includes the production of material objects.

The third section compiles works related to pluralistic approaches in classroom settings. Coelho and Ortega's study,

which was carried out in Portugal, Colombia, Canada and the United States, advocates for pluralistic approaches such as *Awakening to Languages (AtL)* (p.145) which promote children's curiosity about linguistic and cultural diversity in early childhood education. Van Viegen's chapter describes teachers' use of plurilingual pedagogies with multilingual children at the elementary level, showing a range of multilingual tasks and activities developed by teachers that encourage students' translanguaging practices. Findings support the value of engaging students' linguistic repertoire for scaffolding purposes and as a learning resource. Seltzer's ethnographic study, which took place in secondary education in the United States, illustrates the way minoritized students working with translingual texts can demonstrate their linguistic expertise, creativity and criticality, which can be further enhanced when working with translingual mentors. In his commentary, Cummins remarks on the value of the knowledge generated by teachers through their instructional practice as a way to embrace and use their students' linguistic repertoires positively against the coercive power relations operating at schools and the wider society. This would mean positioning teachers as knowledge generators (p.206) who would then inform theoretical insights.

Section four outlines plurilingual engagement in post-secondary institutions and portrays the need for a situated understanding of these pedagogies. Tian's qualitative study examined how one teacher educator adopted a critically reflexive stance, challenging the dominance of English and creating translanguaging spaces in her TESOL teacher preparation course. Her modelling intentionally cultivated her students' language awareness, interculturalism and tolerance towards linguistic and cultural diversity. In Galante's work, Freire's concept of *conscientização* (critical consciousness) is used when introducing plurilingualism along with a critical perspective in two case studies in the Canadian setting involving immigrant and international students. The author addresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to exert agency in their own plurilingual choices, challenging monolingual standards. Next, Marshall's ethnographic work on plurilingualism as an asset for learning across disciplines at a Canadian University suggests the importance of avoiding idealization of plurilingual practices, respecting contextual differences, finding nuanced representations of plurilingualism through interdisciplinary collaborations, and

always helping students succeed academically. Li's autobiographical commentary on this section exemplifies the way plurilingual pedagogies can be promoted by embracing critical engagement, understanding our own situated, background linguistic histories, going beyond restrictions created by existing structures and systems and transforming them.

The last section of the book discusses future directions for policy and practice. Piccardo and North present the development, validation and calibration of new Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages descriptors for plurilingual and pluricultural competence, going beyond utilitarian language use and giving value to language and cultural diversity (p.292). Kubota's work emphasizes the adoption of a critical lens in our engagements with the multilingual turn in the field of second language education, contributing to social change and exploring inequalities related to colonialism, imperialism and capitalism. In the concluding chapter, Van Viegen and Lau offer suggestions for implementing plurilingual pedagogies within a philosophy, principle, and practice (3 Ps) framework.

The editors of this comprehensive and thought-provoking volume successfully accomplish the three aims of their work: firstly, they critically engage with theoretical shifts marked by the multilingual turn, recognizing that theories are continuously evolving and changing. Secondly, they frame fieldwork as ways of being and doing by offering a wide range of contexts where the collaboration between university researchers and teachers is key to address teaching and learning needs. Thirdly, the book provides pedagogical approaches and assessment strategies for teaching and learning languages and subject matter across educational settings. This book is a noteworthy resource which will appeal to graduate students, pre-service and in-service teachers, teacher educators and researchers on an international level. It will certainly serve as a valuable tool to make plurilingual theories and approaches come alive amidst the multilingual classrooms of today's world.