

Indika Liyanage and Tony Walker (Eds.): Multilingual Education Yearbook

(Bern: Springer Nature Switzerland AG. 2019. 209 p.)

Multilingualism is not a new feature of human social interaction in the sphere of education. Today “the use of multiple languages is distinct from the forms, patterns, and nature of multilingualism arrangements of the past” (Aronin, 2015: p. 3). Movements of people, products, and information have led to the spread of dominant language practices in education. The dispersal of multiple languages, creating complex and fluid classroom language ecologies are also outcomes of these factors (Aronin & Singleton, 2008). In such circumstances, a focus on the medium/media of instruction (MOI) is unavoidable. Classrooms in which the language of instruction differs from the language background of at least some of the students are not exceptions but increasingly usual (García & Kleyn, 2013). Although MOI itself does not determine the success or failure of individuals or educational programs, there is a consensus that it plays a crucial role in it (Cummins, 2009; Heugh, 2012). Therefore, it is evident that learning is most successful when a student is “taught and assessed in a language s/he understands and speaks well” (Benson, 2016: p. 3).

Many authors have contributed to writing the twelve chapters of the Multilingual Education Yearbook to describe language learning, development and use in a multilingual context. The Multilingual Education Yearbook also emphasizes how to shape language education policy and practices in multilingual societies.

The editors’ introductory chapter presents how prioritizing one language as the MOI affects all languages and their various stakeholders in multilingual contexts. As further stated, MOI is deployed as policy and promoted as a practice to pursue diverse objectives. However, enactment in classrooms often provokes unexpected outcomes and multilingual practices that illustrate the creativity and resourcefulness of the speakers.

The second chapter, written by Anna Filipi, expounds an overview of recent research in the Conversation Analytic (CA) tradition, which treats language alternation in the foreign language classroom as a social practice. It describes how the micro-analytic methods of CA have contributed to understanding language alternation through analysis of two samples from Australia: a secondary Italian foreign language classroom and a tertiary Japanese foreign language classroom. The analyses focus on the language alternation practices between teacher and learners and between learner and learner. The paper ends with considering the research implications for language teacher education concerning the medium of classroom interaction.

The following chapter by Kingsley Bolton and Werner Botha deals with the dynamics of language mixing among Singaporean university students. It highlights that such practices form an integral part of students' linguistic behavior at a university level, both inside and outside formal classroom contexts. The study draws on a large-scale language survey of undergraduate students and qualitative language data collected at one of the leading universities of Singapore. It reveals that the participants can shift between various languages in both contexts. The findings may also be relevant for a range of other multilingual contexts, particularly language use in higher education.

In Chapter 4, Francois Victor presents how media of instruction may value the other culture to the detriment of the local culture and develop identification processes that affect various stakeholders in terms of culture and identity capital. This comparative and international study focuses on three cases that illustrate how multilingual settings impacted the sense of identity of language teachers in Asian contexts. It also explores how cultural inclusion, immersion, and the transcultural phenomena are enmeshed in the creation of global identities.

The fifth chapter explores ethnic identity orientations of bilingual education (BE) students through investigating their expressed feelings and perceptions towards ethnically diverse 'others' before and after joining multiethnic BE classrooms. Using the Bourdieusian conceptual triad of habitus, capital, and field, Harsha Dulari Wijesekera and Jennifer Alford analyze data collected in two multiethnic schools in Sri Lanka. The findings reveal that during early socialization in ethnically exclusive institutions, such as family and monoethnic classrooms, students acquire insular, ethnocentric dispositions that undergo reorientation towards more supra-ethnic, inclusive ones. This process happens when students get to know each other and study together in multiethnic BE classes. Aside from learning in English as a lingua franca, cross-linguistic flexibility resulted in a growing positive inclination towards people of different ethnolinguistic backgrounds, recognition, respect, and increased acceptance of diversity and heterogeneity. The findings are highly relevant to post-conflict, ethnolinguistically heterogeneous societies, especially in how language in education could promote interethnic relations and, thereby, national solidarity.

Chapter 6 by Kayoko Hashimoto and Gregory Paul Glasgow examines how top Japanese universities have engaged in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). It analyses relevant documents published by the universities and government offices and identifies the problems and challenges in implementing CLIL or CLIL-influenced programs in Japan.

The seventh chapter explores interview data from international Higher Degree Research (HDR) students from language backgrounds other than English. It also explores several English-speaking HDR supervisors working with international HDR students to document their assumptions about translanguaging and transculturation practices that are regarded as regular for these participants. Both sets of participants agree that translanguaging and transculturation practices enhance the specificity of the communication, promote the expertise of the HDR student, provide two-way learning, and feed into new knowledge-generating practices. Translanguaging and transculturation practices are thus more than the reciprocal exchange of ideas. They are new forms of pedagogic processes whereby communicative work changes research processes, practices, and systems of knowledge production, transfer, and acquisition that benefit both the HDR student and his/her supervisor.

The following chapter by Ma Fu focuses on practices in schools in Qinghai Province, in Western China, where many ethnic minority languages are spoken. In particular, it investigates that the choice of medium of instruction in individual schools is a product of contextual factors, including the role and status of the different languages, beliefs about language learning, and the systemic support available. Two main models are identified: one uses the dominant local ethnic language as the medium of instruction, with Mandarin and English as curricular subjects; the other model involves the use of Mandarin as the medium of instruction, with the ethnic language and English as taught subjects. Finally, the study evaluates the achievements and shortcomings of each model and argues that the effective implementation of multilingual education in Qinghai Province is hampered by weak infrastructure and policy frameworks.

Maryanne Theobald, Gillian Busch, and Megan Laraghy in Chapter 9 explore children's strategies for making friends in settings characterized by linguistic diversity but where the medium of instruction is English. Child-friendly video interviews with 72 preschool-aged (3-4-year-old) children were conducted in a preschool at an inner-city center, and they were asked to talk and draw a picture about making friends when there are language differences. The responses revealed not only their competencies in using non-verbal strategies to communicate with each other but their inclusive attitudes, as well. The authors highlight the importance of using a variety of languages as media of instruction, such as including songs and words representative of the minority languages of the classroom, and having positive conversations with children about language difference.

The tenth chapter investigates the role and nature of English in the curriculum of a Mongolian minority primary school in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR). In their paper, Yayuan Yi and Bob Adamson focus on three aspects: 1)

policy decisions at the state and provincial levels, 2) the views and arrangements of the school leaders, and 3) the pedagogical decisions made by teachers in the classroom, with a particular focus on the medium of instruction. In addition, the authors discuss the relationship between English and the other two languages in terms of models of trilingual education.

In Chapter 11, Anhui Wang, Indika Liyanage, and Tony Walker analyze interview data from multilingual Chinese academics of diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds to scrutinize assumptions that Critical Thinking (CT) is neither recognized nor encouraged in Chinese Higher Education. Drawing on the responses of these academics, they also contest the essentialization of the character of Chinese HE as bounded by inflexible traditional knowledge practices. They also point to the experiences of these academics of English-medium education and collaboration as a source of dynamism in Chinese Higher Education. They conclude by reflecting on whether these institutions, in the context of rapid change, are gradually embracing a critical approach to the practices of CT.

The final chapter by Tony Walker, Indika Liyanage, Suwarsih Madya, and Sari Hidayati offers a brief overview of the current MOI policy situation and its background. It identifies and discusses issues that shape the outcomes and prospects of bi/multilingual education under the current MOI policy and considers implications for bi/multilingual education in Indonesia going forward.

The book is an excellent addition to promoting multilingual education and media of instruction in multilingual settings. Besides language learning, development, and use in multilingual contexts, it highlights some latest findings on language education policy and practices in multilingual societies. This book is highly recommended to teachers and researchers interested in questions regarding multilingualism in the classroom.

References

- Aronin, L.** (2015) Current multilingualism and new developments in multilingualism research. In Safont Jordá, M. P. & Portolés Falomir, L. (Eds.) *Learning and Using Multiple Languages. Current Findings from Research on Multilingualism*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 1-27.
- Aronin, L. & Singleton, D.** (2008) Multilingualism as a new linguistic dispensation. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 5(1), 1-16.
- Benson, C.** (2016) Addressing language of instruction issues in education: Recommendations for documenting progress. In *Background paper prepared for the 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report*. UNESCO. 1-29. <https://gcedclearinghouse.org/sites/default/files/resources/245575e.pdf> (Last download: 03. 03. 2021).
- Cummins, J.** (2009) Fundamental psycholinguistic and sociological principles underlying educational success for linguistic minority students. In Skutnabb-Kangas, T., Philipson, R., Mohanty, A. K. & Panda, M. (Eds.) *Social justice through multilingual education*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. 19-35.
- García, O. & Kleyn, T.** (2013) Teacher Education for Multilingual Education. In Chapelle, C. A. (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell. 1-6.

Heugh, K. (2012) Theory and practice – language education models in Africa: Research, design, decision-making and outcomes. In Ouane, A. & Glanz, C. (Eds.), *Optimising learning, education and publishing in Africa: the language factor: a review and analysis of theory and practice in mother-tongue and bilingual education in sub-Saharan Africa*. Hamburg: UNESCO. 105-156.

KERESA KUMERA CHALI
University of Pannonia, Multilingualism Doctoral School
keresa.kumera@phd.uni-pannon.hu

We acknowledge the financial support of Széchenyi 2020 under the **EFOP-3.6.1-16-2016-00015**.