

**Indika Liyanage & Tony Walker (editors): Multilingual
Education Yearbook 2019; Media of Instruction and
Multilingual Settings**

(Switzerland: Springer Nature. 2019. 232 p.)

The growing intensity of human mobility, product distribution, and information transfer have led to the emergence of language education challenges in at least two areas. Firstly, the dominant language that a multilingual speaker is more proficient at, and uses in education more often, will influence their performance. Furthermore, language dispersal will generate complex and fluid classroom language ecologies (Linayage & Walker, 2019). It is a common fact that students can fluently speak the dominant language in their class, which can be different from their mother tongue or home languages. Accordingly, the government should develop a language education policy to deal with this multilingual classroom situation, while, at the same time, emergent problems should also be resolved.

Multilingual education yearbook 2019 is published to describe some significant issues of language learning, language development, and language use in multilingual contexts with twelve empirical studies on education in multilingual societies. They discuss the effects of multilingual education and literacy education on the maintenance and the development of multilingualism, of the introduction of English as a curriculum subject, and of the medium of instruction upon multilingual and literacy education. The book focuses on the respective role(s) of vernacular or 'local' languages, national languages, and English. It also discusses the challenges and complexity experienced by teaching practitioners and their students as language users concerning choices, implementations, and enactments of the medium of instruction (MOI) in a multilingual setting.

The first article, titled "*Medium of Instruction and Multilingual Context: Unravelling the Questions and Unpacking the Challenges*," shows how MOI impacts educational processes, students' development and outcomes, and broader social and (geo)-political agendas at specific contexts in different countries. The researchers discuss MOI policy, English as Medium of Instruction (EMI), EMI policy in school education, EMI policy in higher education, and MOI in multilingual classrooms. Enactment of language policy or pedagogical approach in institutions and classrooms often provokes unexpected results. It affects multilingual practices that portray language users' creativity and resourcefulness. As language users, teaching practitioners and their students show their response to the fluidity and complexity in the "current multilingualism" (Aronin, 2015). Researchers are responding by investigating and analysing rich sources of data revealing the

moment-to-moment realities of practices, which can offer new or alternative approaches and responses to the needs of diverse stakeholders.

The second article, written by Anna Filipi, entitled "*Language Alternation as an Interactional Practice in the Foreign Language Classroom*," presents an overview of research in the Conversation Analytic (CA) tradition. The article treats language alternation in the foreign language classroom as a social practice. It uncovers three critical systems in interaction (turn-taking, sequence organization, and epistemic) between teacher and learners and between learner and learner. The researcher offers the implications of the research to language teacher education regarding the medium of classroom interaction. The research highlights the need to give students adequate time to build their responses and allow for moments of reflection and discussion when second language instruction is ineffective. When done well, this practice can also contribute to the development of metacognitive skills achieved through interaction.

Kingsley Bolton and Werner Botha contribute with the third article, "*Multilingualism and Language Mixing among Singapore University Students*," discussing language use patterns among Singaporean university students in a multilingual context. The research involves a large-scale sociolinguistic survey at a university in Singapore and ethnographic fieldwork that captures the sociolinguistic realities of full-time undergraduate students' language use. They discuss an important and underexplored dimension of language use at universities, which is documented to implement English as a medium of instruction successfully. They compare the realities with the ideals of the official English-medium policy of the government and Singaporean higher education institutions. The article reveals that Singaporean university students typically come from homes where more than one language or language variety is spoken. While English is almost entirely used in the teaching context, multiple languages and language varieties are observed in students' informal communication, including Colloquial Singapore English (or 'Singlish').

The next article discusses multilingual classroom phenomena in Asia, such as cultural inclusion, immersion, and cross-cultural education, enmeshed in creating global identities. In the article entitled "*Educational Globalization and the Creation of Split Identities*," Francois Victor Tochon compares three cases experienced by teachers. The article illustrates how multilingual settings influence the sense of identity of language teachers in Asia. The participants in their idiosyncratic positions experience those due to their cultural substrates, life experiences, and locations, as expressed in their conversations. The writer provides anecdotal data, which prove that curriculum policy decisions regarding language experiences and instructional

media have obliged teachers to use a language as the priority over other languages. These prime concerns impact educators' identities.

A similar context of identity is presented in the fifth article, '*Bilingual Education Classroom in Sri Lankan Schools: A Social Space for Ethno-linguistic Reconciliation*,' written by Harsha Dulari Wijesekera and Jennifer Alford. Nevertheless, in this article, the researchers present how ethnic exclusivity begins to weaken. The writers reveal that ethnic identity reorients towards more supra-ethnic or less ethnocentric inclusive identities in certain conditions, such as in a post-conflict multi-ethnic country. They explore bilingual education (English and Singhala/Tamil) and students' ethnic identity orientations by analysing their perceptions towards ethnically diverse peers. The results show that ethnicity may create unique social spaces (including classrooms) and may promote ethnocentric dispositions in young people's minds. Conversely, students' classrooms in multi-ethnic schools can bring different groups together. They also promote mutual understanding and emotional reciprocity between peers, triggering the transformation of ethnocentric dispositions towards inclusive dispositions within the socially situated condition.

The sixth article, titled '*CLIL for Who? Commodification of English-Medium Courses in Japan's Higher Education*,' is written by Kayoko Hashimoto and Gregory Paul Glasgow. It focuses on how the Top Global University Project engages in the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Japan's higher education. Motivated by the fact that CLIL-related practices are rarely documented in Japan, the researchers analyse relevant documents published by universities and government offices. The researchers also investigate the problems and challenges in implementing CLIL or CLIL-influenced programs in Japan. They find that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) for primary, secondary, and tertiary programs have ambiguously deployed English as a medium of instruction (MOI), which motivates the tertiary sector to interpret and execute the government initiative to promote the 'English courses' in their own ways. The paper has implications for how CLIL is perceived and implemented in Japanese higher education.

Next, the article titled '*Benefits of Translanguaging and Transculturation Exchanges Between International Higher Degree Research Students and English Medium Research Supervisors*' analyses interview data from international Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidates with Asian backgrounds whose first language is not English. The English speaking HDR supervisors work with international HDR students within a large city-based Australian university. The researchers, Minglin Li and Beryl Exley, reveal that the participants agree that translanguaging and transculturation practices help them in a variety of ways. They (i) enhance the

specificity of the communication, (ii) improve the expertise of the HDR student, (iii) provide two-way learning, and (iv) feed into new knowledge-generating practices. They believe that there are some potential educational advantages to translanguaging, such as promoting a more in-depth and fuller understanding of the subject matter (Baker, 2001).

Ma Fu's '*Trilingualism and Medium of Instruction Models in Minority Schools in Qinghai Province, China*,' is the eighth article. It presents a different perspective of MOI. Starting with the policy study of language-in-education practices in Qinghai Province schools, the researcher establishes two models of MOI implementation in the schools. One uses the dominant local ethnic language as the medium of instruction, with Mandarin and English as curricular subjects. At the same time, the other model involves the use of Mandarin as the medium of instruction, with the ethnic language and English being taught as academic subjects. To follow, the writer evaluates the achievements and shortcomings of each model. He argues that the effective implementation of multilingual education in Qinghai Province is hampered by weak infrastructure and policy frameworks.

Next, in the article titled '*Children's Views and Strategies for Making Friends in Linguistically Diverse English Medium Instruction Settings*,' Maryanne Theobald, Gillian Busch, and Megan Laraghy discuss how they explore pre-school children's strategies for making friends in settings characterized by linguistic diversity, while at the same time, at schools, they are exposed to English as the medium of instruction. They believe that children learn to communicate, talk to others, and share their ideas through friendships. However, only a few studies invite children to share their views on making friends, or on the concept of friendships in settings with linguistic diversity, the research interestingly claims that children are willing to overcome potential barriers of language differences as they attempt to make friends. The results demonstrate that even when English is applied as the medium of instruction, interjected with other languages it can facilitate communication between children from diverse backgrounds.

Despite the merits of utilizing children's local languages and English as the medium of instruction, Yayuan Yi and Bob Adamson prove that the occasional use of the local language, Chinese, in English lessons can be seen as a pragmatic gain for a variety of reasons. In their article, '*English in a Mongolian Ethnic Minority Primary School*,' the researchers review the role and nature of English in the curriculum of a Mongolian minority primary school in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR). They centre the study around three aspects: policy decisions at the state and provincial levels, the views and arrangements of the school leaders, and classroom teachers' pedagogical decisions concerning the medium of instruction.

'Scrutinising Critical Thinking (CT) in Chinese Higher Education: Perceptions of Chinese Academics' is written by Anhui Wang, Indika Liyanage, and Tony Walker. The article examines how critical thinking (CT) – a much preferred graduate attribute in western higher education, where English is typically used as a medium of instruction – is perceived by multilingual Chinese academics of diverse ethno-linguistic backgrounds. The researchers analyse Chinese students' critical thinking skills from the perspective of a dynamic relation between the conventions and practices of academic literacies in two different MOIs mediated by Global Mobility and Communication. The responses suggest that learning through the medium of additional language/s can nurture the authentic development of a richer, more cognitively complex, and comprehensive CT.

The last article titled *'Media of Instruction in Indonesia: Implications for Bi/Multilingual Education'* by Tony Walker, Indika Liyanage, Suwarsih Madya, and Sari Hidayati, provides an overview of the current MOI policy situation and its background. It also identifies and discusses issues that have shaped the outcomes and prospects of bi/multilingual education under the current MOI policy, and considers the implications for bi/multilingual education in Indonesia. The writers discuss the Indonesian regulation changes considering MOI in the educational context and its complexity regarding the Indonesian linguistic diversity background. The article also shows that the problems emerging from learning English both as a subject and as a medium of instruction for other contents are also related to the inadequate language proficiencies of the teachers and the students, and the materials.

In summary, the book presents essential information on the challenges and complexities related to the medium of instruction (MOI) and on its impact on educational processes, developments, and outcomes. Empirical studies and discussions present critical evaluations of language policies and of their implementation in several multilingual contexts. Stakeholder attitudes towards multilingualism and related notions of linguistic proficiency, standards, models, and varieties are scrutinized. The publication is highly recommended as reference material to researchers in language and education, to language education professionals, and to policymakers.

References

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