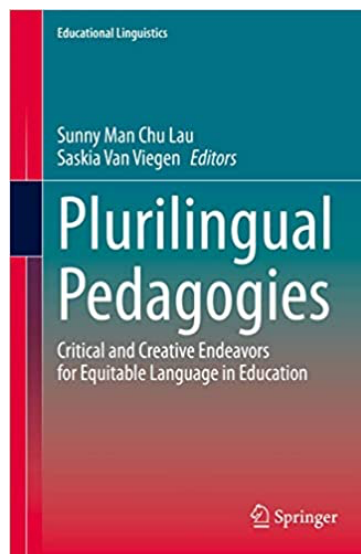


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Review of *Plurilingual Pedagogies: Critical and Creative Endeavors for Equitable Language in Education*
Edited by Lau S. M. C., & Van Viegen S.

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In the fields of bilingual education, applied linguistics, and other related disciplines, translanguaging is seen as an equitable solution for educational challenges in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms (Canagarajah, 2013; García, 2009). Translanguaging is the dynamic process of communication in which multilingual speakers use their full linguistic repertoires. Due to its applicability in diverse academic disciplines, there has been a dramatic increase in translanguaging research in the last decade. However, navigating the field of translanguaging can be quite perplexing for researchers and practitioners new to this concept. Confusing terminology and overlapping concepts can seem, as the editors of this book note, like “diving into murky waters” (Lau & Van Viegen, 2020, p. 7).

Plurilingual Pedagogies: Critical and Creative Endeavors for Equitable Language in Education edited by Sunny Man Chu Lau and Saskia Van Viegen is a helpful introduction to translanguaging pedagogies for educators, graduate students, and veteran researchers alike. This volume includes contributions from a range of prominent researchers. The publication of the book is timely and necessary for broadening understandings of language in education in an evolving post-globalized world marked by superdiversity. The authors provide a comprehensive overview of the fast-developing area. The aims of this book are (a) addressing the evolving complexities around categorizing everyday language practices pertaining to bi/multilingual communities; (b) calling attention to fieldwork as methodology and onto-epistemology as well as encouraging collaboration between researchers and teachers; and lastly (c) suggesting translanguaging approaches to learning, teaching, and assessing across different educational contexts.

There are various alternative terms for translanguaging such as translingualism

(Canagarajah, 2013) and polylinguaging (Jørgensen, 2008) that look at translanguaging with a slightly different lens. To encompass all these lenses, the editors of this book use the word “*plurilingualism*” (p. 5) as an umbrella term. They acknowledge the term’s insufficiency to fully capture the various terminologies used, and use it as a word under erasure (Derrida, 1976, as cited in Lau and Van Viegen, 2020) to unbind authors from having to use one single label. I will use the word translanguaging in this review, but in summarizing the book chapters, I will use the terminologies used by the author(s).

Book Overview

The book is organized into five sections. Part 1 examines the theoretical debates around the concept of plurilingualism. Part 2-4 consist of case studies on plurilingual pedagogies, each addressing different contexts and purposes— respectively pedagogical practices related to critical literacy; language and literacy teaching; and higher education. Each part is followed by a commentary written by a translanguaging expert, which summarizes and links concepts discussed in each chapter to wider concepts. The final part discusses future directions for policy and practice. I now briefly summarize each chapter in turn.

Part 1: Conceptual Shifts in Language Teaching and Learning

In part 1, the evolving concept and theory of plurilingualism is examined in depth through various conversations among researchers. The introductory chapter, written by the editors, unpacks terminologies and concepts as well as ongoing theoretical debates on plurilingualism. Those new to the concepts are introduced to the history of plurilingualism research and how terms such as code-switching and code-mixing might bring a deficit orientation of plurilingualism. Through conversations with Dr. Danièle Moore, an

expert on plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC), the editors orchestrate discussions about the theoretical underpinnings of PPC and how plurilingual perspectives resonate with other concepts. In another chapter, authors discuss *translanguaging and flows* as a process ontological view of translanguaging theory.

Part 2: Plurilingual Engagements for Critical Literacy

This section presents three different case studies of plurilingual approaches to fostering critical literacy in the classroom. Each case shows how students reflect on their histories, question power relations, and challenge the monolingual status quo. This first case involves consideration of how plurilingual pedagogies are used in the First Nations communities in Canada as students create dual-language identity texts. The second case includes a critical-ethnographic, action-research study conducted by three student teachers of English in Oaxaca, Mexico toward decolonizing the monolingual primary English language teaching. Lastly, the third case involves two primary co-teachers in Quebec, Canada attempting cross-language collaborations in English and French in a school where language separation is the norm.

Part 3: Plurilingual Engagements for Language and Literacy

Part 3 includes chapters on teaching language and content in different K-12 educational contexts. For childhood language education, *Awakening to Languages (AtL)*, an approach to expose children to plurilingual practices at an early age is suggested. Another study in the elementary school context describes how ESL teachers use plurilingual pedagogies to engage their students into literary activities. The last chapter of this section details an ethnographic classroom study conducted in a linguistically diverse high school where students read translingual mentor texts and explored their

translingual sensibility through their writing process.

Part 4 Plurilingual Engagements for Higher Education

The first two chapters of this section discuss translanguaging in the TESOL teacher education. The first chapter of the section explores how a monolingual teacher educator implements translanguaging into the curriculum and how the student teachers integrate what they learned into their teaching. In the next chapter, the author critically reflects on her own experiences as a TESOL teacher educator in Canada. She problematizes the monolingual and monocultural TESOL field and urges the field to adopt a plurilingual approach. The last chapter includes an ethnographic study of the applied science courses at a linguistically diverse university in Vancouver where the author discusses plurilingualism as both an asset and a hindrance.

Part 5 Future Directions for Policy and Practice

This final section of the volume discusses issues that need further research, such as assessment and policy for application of plurilingual pedagogies. This includes suggestions such as updating the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) to incorporate new descriptors for concepts like mediation and plurilingual competence, and a critical examination of plurilingualism in light of real-world demands. In the final chapter, the editors synthesize the key ideas stated in the book and create a framework, the “3P’s of plurilingual pedagogy,” which refers to philosophy, principle, and practice.

Critique and Conclusion

Canagarajah (2011) once raised concerns that pedagogical studies in translanguaging research are underdeveloped. A decade has since passed, and

volumes like this one have certainly addressed this call, contributing to creating equitable language practices in education. Reading about these studies certainly provided me with a comprehensive lay of the land and examples of why and how I can implement translanguaging into my research and future teaching.

However, there were some lingering questions that were not directly addressed in this book that educators may be curious about. What about the students in diverse classrooms that don't share the same home language with their peers? How can they participate in a translanguaging classroom?

What happens if bilingual students are too reliant on their home languages, consequently tuning out the “academic” language used in the class? Wouldn't this lead to further marginalization? Who does translanguaging benefit the most? Are we idealizing translanguaging? Hopefully these questions will be addressed in future research. On a similar note, Kubota's chapter on the future directions section discussed the gap between the theoretical ideal and social reality. Translanguaging is full of potential, but it is not a one-size-fit all approach in creating linguistic justice. It should be implemented through careful reflection and critical examination of students' social realities.

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