

Foreword

Anna Mendoza's new book, *Translanguaging and English as a Lingua Franca in the Plurilingual Classroom*, concerns the lives and experiences of high school students living in Honolulu, whose first or heritage languages include Cantonese, Cebuano, Chuukese, Ilokano, Ilonggo, Mandarin, Marshallese, Samoan, Tagalog and Vietnamese. The teachers in the classrooms Mendoza observes encourage students to use their 'whole language repertoires', which presents the author with an opportunity to analyze the complexities of multilingual classroom interactions, drawing on rich sociolinguistic theory to inform and extend ongoing scholarly conversations about teaching and learning in multilingual settings.

Mendoza's book explores the theoretical contrasts between *translanguaging*, *plurilingualism*, *code-switching* and *stylization*, among other important constructs. She reminds us that *plurilingualism*, which has been more remote from the US context, offers a compelling conceptualization of the nature of bilingualism that is in some respects complementary to *translanguaging*, but also contrasts in important respects. Mendoza views plurilingualism as 'an integrated competence with resources from different named languages – yet interaction-wise, people can orient to language(s) as distinct or as an undifferentiated whole' (this book, p. 14).

Plurilingualism has much more in common with early translanguaging theory, but contrasts with late translanguaging theory. As Mendoza notes, Cen Williams (1994) originally conceptualized translanguaging as a pedagogical technique for bilingual teaching in the Welsh context. 'Translanguaging concerns effective communication, function rather than form, cognitive activity, as well as language production', as Lewis *et al.* (2012: 641) explain. When the term was re-introduced in Ofelia García's 2009 book *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*, which made *translanguaging* a household word in language education scholarship, its meaning had departed little from Williams' original intent: 'For us, translanguagings are *multiple discursive practices* in which bilinguals engage in order to *make sense of their bilingual worlds*' (García, 2009: 45, emphases in original). Importantly, García's

original use of translanguaging was in no way critical of similar constructs in sociolinguistics like code-switching. Indeed, García hastened to add: ‘Translanguaging therefore goes beyond what has been termed code-switching ... although it includes it, as well as other kinds of bilingual language use and bilingual contact’ (2009: 45). García’s original presentation not only fully accepts code-switching and other important sociolinguistic constructs, but even engages in detailed discussions of code-switching in both its theoretical and pedagogical domains (García, 2009: 48–50, 298–301).

However, García’s treatment of translanguaging theory morphed under the influence of Pennycook’s postmodernist proposals in the language planning and policy literature. ‘A postmodern (or postcolonial) approach to language policy ... suggests we no longer need to maintain the pernicious myth that languages exist’, conjectured Pennycook (2006: 67). This idea, sometimes called *deconstructivism* for Derrida’s (1967) theory of deconstruction, implies that ‘many of the treasured icons of liberal-linguistic thought ... such as language rights, mother tongues, multilingualism or code-switching’ similarly do not exist (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007: 22). Where there are no languages, there can be no multilingualism. Thus, taking on a skeptical disposition toward the ‘the ontological status of language’ (García *et al.*, 2017: 5), García similarly questioned ‘the very idea of multilingualism’ (García *et al.*, 2017: 8), and therefore viewed code-switching critically as well: ‘But no matter how broadly and positively conceived, the notion of code switching still constitutes a theoretical endorsement of the idea that what the bilingual manipulates, however masterfully, are two separate linguistic systems’ (Otheguy *et al.*, 2015: 282).

A number of scholars, including Mendoza, have rejected the deconstructivist turn in translanguaging in favor of a *multilingual perspective*, which, like early translanguaging theory, views multilingualism as socially significant and psychologically real (MacSwan, 2017). (For examples of critical discussions, see Block, 2018; Cummins, 2017, 2021; Edwards, 2012; Grin, 2018; Jaspers, 2018; King & Bigelow, 2020; Kubota, 2014; Mackenzie, 2014; Shi & Rolstad, 2022; and chapters in MacSwan & Faltis, 2020 and MacSwan, 2022.) As Mendoza notes and illustrates, ‘there is much evidence that distinct languages *are* real for people even if they are social constructions, and must be examined to explain domains of language acquisition and processes of identity negotiation’ (this book, p. 14).

The contribution of early translanguaging scholarship to bilingual pedagogy remains an important dimension of language education research, which Mendoza extends and develops in her book. While *translanguaging* and *plurilingualism* have different origins and tend to be used in different policy contexts, as Mendoza elucidates, the principal theoretical contrast relates to *deconstructivism*; late translanguaging and

plurilingualism contrast in this regard, but early translanguaging and plurilingualism are approximate synonyms. Both accept the social and psychological reality of linguistic diversity, and allow ‘students’ multilingual and multimodal practices to be seen from an *asset-based* rather than a deficit-oriented perspective’ (Mendoza, this book, p. 13).

Rejecting deconstructivism allows Mendoza to draw on a broad range of sociolinguistic concepts to engage in an analysis of her data. In a lucid presentation of the history, linguistic diversity and sociopolitical context of Hawai’i, Mendoza describes dynamic waves of language contact affecting the Hawaiian language, plantation Creole, Hawai’i Creole English, the languages brought to the Hawaiian islands by Cantonese, Portuguese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino and Micronesian immigrants, and the association of dialects and language diversity with racism and linguisticism toward and across communities of color. Mendoza’s analysis captures heritage language, first language, second language and language contact phenomena vividly, drawing on constructs now anathema to deconstructivists.

Code-switching, too, is an important component of Mendoza’s analytical toolkit. As she aptly notes, the repudiation of code-switching among deconstructivists is ‘sometimes fueled by a lack of understanding of what code-switching is’ (this book, p. 18). Mendoza relies on Peter Auer’s (1998) interactional theory, a sociolinguistic model of code-switching concerned not with the underlying grammatical structure of language alternation, but with the conversational contribution of the switch itself, from one language to another. (Also see Auer, 2022 for a discussion specifically focused on code-switching as it relates to deconstructivism.) *Stylization* is another important construct for Mendoza; she defines it based on the work of sociolinguists like Nikolas Coupland, Christina Higgins and Priti Sandhu as a knowing and somewhat exaggerated use of linguistic resources which deviate from what would normally be expected in a specific social context.

An important theme of Mendoza’s work throughout is the need to create environments which validate the home language resources of children to create more inclusive teaching and learning for all. ‘Teachers and students must not only celebrate linguistic diversity, but also raise awareness about systemic inequalities that privilege some language and literacy practices over others which are *equally* skilled and adept ...’ Mendoza reminds us (this book, p. 161). Language powerfully expresses identity, and serves as an instrument of racial (or *raciolinguistic*) oppression (Alim *et al.*, 2016). Language ideology may thus serve as a strategy to ‘indoctrinate the people in a mythified version of reality’, as Freire (1985: 86) put it. Critical language awareness involves students directly in the task of ‘denouncing the mythos created by the right’ (Freire, 1985: 86), a mythos that equates national unity with linguistic homogeneity. Mendoza not only rejects this mythos, but forcefully argues that practically

implementing a translanguaging classroom – in which people are not only *told* they can translanguage but are *convinced* to translanguage – requires more than promoting linguistic diversity and hybridity. She uses interactional sociolinguistic analyses to demonstrate that teachers must create pragmatically appropriate bi/multilingual norms for the linguistic landscape of their classrooms, which reframe and position every student's language repertoire in an asset-oriented light.

On the other hand, another important theme of Mendoza's book is that it is not enough for the teacher to validate students' language repertoires. Students must do the same for one another, in a class that is not only linguistically diverse but where students from the same ethnolinguistic group may have dissimilar plurilingual repertoires. She critically discusses linguistic and cultural hegemonies at the neighborhood and school level, the interactional dominance of classroom language majorities, the researcher's impact when they promote their specific forms of bi/multilingualism with academic authority, and the power of individual students with formidable amounts of cultural capital in the dominant societal language, the classroom majority home language and peer group codes. Drawing on the pedagogical principles of *joinfostering* (Faltis, 2001), Mendoza highlights the need for teachers to socialize students into a culture of 'reciprocity and accountability' to positively shape one another's learning environment. 'When all the languages in one's repertoire are legitimized, and one's ways of speaking those languages are legitimized, and one's ways of translanguaging are legitimized, only then would one be comfortable drawing on one's whole language repertoire (i.e. translanguaging) in any situation, including a classroom situation' (this book, p. 177). It is Mendoza's rejection of deconstructivism that allows her to argue that social justice in classrooms and schools can only be achieved through a recognition of named languages in the emic perspectives of participants on the ground.

References

- Alim, H.S., Rickford, J.R. and Ball, A.F. (eds) (2016) *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes Our Ideas About Race*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Auer, P. (ed.) (1998) *Code-switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction, and Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Auer, P. (2022) 'Translanguaging' or 'doing languages'? Multilingual practices and the notion of 'codes'. In J. MacSwan (ed.) *Multilingual Perspectives on Translanguaging* (pp. 126–153). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Block, D. (2018) The political economy of language education research (or the lack thereof): Nancy Fraser and the case of translanguaging. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies* 15 (4), 237–257. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2018.1466300>
- Cummins, J. (2017) Teaching minoritized students: Are additive approaches legitimate? *Harvard Educational Review* 87 (3), 404–425. <https://doi.org/10.17763/1943-5045-87.3.404>
- Cummins, J. (2021) Translanguaging: A critical analysis of theoretical claims. In P. Juvonen and M. Källkvist (eds) *Pedagogical Translanguaging: Theoretical, Methodological and Empirical Perspectives* (pp. 7–36). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

- Derrida, J. (1967) *De la grammatologie*. Paris: Minuit.
- Edwards, J. (2012) *Multilingualism: Understanding Linguistic Diversity*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Faltis, C. (2001) *Joinfostering: Teaching and Learning in Multilingual Classrooms* (3rd edn). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Freire, P. (1985) *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation*. New York: Bergin and Garvey.
- García, O. (2009) *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*. Malden, MA: Basil/Blackwell.
- García, O., Flores, N. and Spotti, M. (2017) Language and society: A critical poststructuralist perspective. In O. García, N. Flores and M. Spotti (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Language and Society* (pp. 1–16). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Grin, F. (2018) On some fashionable terms in multilingualism research: Critical assessment and implications for language policy. In P.A. Kraus and F. Grin (eds) *The Politics of Multilingualism: Europeanisation, Globalization and Linguistic Governance* (pp. 247–273). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Jaspers, J. (2018) The transformative limits of translanguaging. *Language and Communication* 58, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2017.12.001>
- King, K.A. and Bigelow, M. (2020) The hyper-local development of translanguaging pedagogies. In E. Moore, J. Bradley and J. Simpson (eds) *Translanguaging as Transformation: The Collaborative Construction of New Linguistic Realities* (pp. 199–215). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Kubota, R. (2014) The multi/plural turn, postcolonial theory, and neoliberal multiculturalism: Complicities and implications for Applied Linguistics. *Applied Linguistics* 37 (4), 474–494. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amu045>
- Lewis, G., Jones, B. and Baker, C. (2012) Translanguaging: Origins and development from school to street and beyond. *Educational Research and Evaluation: An International Journal on Theory and Practice* 18 (7), 641–654. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2012.718488>
- Mackenzie, I. (2014) *English as a Lingua Franca: Theorizing and Teaching English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- MacSwan, J. (2017) A multilingual perspective on translanguaging. *American Educational Research Journal* 54 (1), 167–201. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216683935>
- MacSwan, J. (ed.) (2022) *Multilingual Perspectives on Translanguaging*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- MacSwan, J. and Faltis, C.J. (eds) (2020) *Codeswitching in the Classroom: Critical Perspectives on Teaching, Learning, Policy, and Ideology*. Language Education Tensions in Global and Local Contexts series. Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics; New York: Routledge.
- Makoni, S. and Pennycook, A. (2007) Disinventing and reconstituting languages. In S. Makoni and A. Pennycook (eds) *Disinventing and Reconstituting Languages* (pp. 1–41). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Otheguy, R., García, O. and Reid, W. (2015) Clarifying translanguaging and deconstructing named languages: A perspective from linguistics. *Applied Linguistics Review* 6 (3), 281–307. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2015-0014>
- Pennycook, A. (2006) Postmodernism in language policy. In T. Ricento (ed.) *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*. London: Blackwell.
- Shi, L. and Rolstad, K. (2022) ‘I don’t let what I don’t know stop what I can do’ – How monolingual English teachers constructed a translanguaging English program in China. *TESOL Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3204>
- Williams, C. (1994) Arfarniad o ddulliau dysgu ac addysgu yng nghyd-destun addysgu uwchradd ddwyieithog [An evaluation of teaching and learning methods in the context of bilingual secondary education]. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Wales, Bangor, UK.

