Cultural Globalization and Language Education (review)

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In the last part of the book, Leclercq closes the description of the interlanguage systems of L2 learners by examining the manner in which language transfer influences the expression of simultaneity in the discourse of near-native French learners of English.

Throughout the book, the authors contribute to the field of second language acquisition providing detailed accounts of the interlanguage systems of (young) adult advanced learners of French. Although several chapters focus on the morphosyntactic elements of the interlanguage of advanced learners, the editors make a major contribution to the second language acquisition field by including chapters on lexical and pragmatic features of learner language. The richness and variety of learner language corpora exhibited throughout constitute one of the strengths of the book, as the corpora include oral and written production of L2 learners from diverse L1 profiles in instructed and naturalistic language learning contexts. Moreover, the wide array of learner language elicitation techniques used to build the corpora and the various methodology designs of the chapters support the validity of the universal and particular interlanguage aspects discussed in the book. Undoubtedly, this work is a valuable addition to the resource collection of graduate students and researchers in the field of French second language acquisition.

References

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B. Kumaravadivelu (2007). *Cultural Globalization and Language Education*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Pp. 288, US$48.00 (paper).

Kumaravadivelu offers an in-depth analysis of culture, globalization, and the pedagogical implications of the complexities of cultural identity formation, an area he contends has been neglected in language education. He develops the concept of cultural realism and critiques previous conceptualizations that try to address cultural globalization,

namely cultural assimilation, cultural pluralism, and cultural hybridity. His project is to provide a guide to the development of 'global cultural consciousness,' which he asserts is needed in order for language learners, teachers, and teacher educators to deal with contemporary cultural realities (p. 169).

Kumaravadivelu's critique of the concept of cultural assimilation builds on his discussion of cultural stereotyping. Such a reductive view of culture results in teaching 'fragmented cultural tidbits' that distort the dynamism of cultures and reinforce dominant perceptions of the 'Other' (p. 93). His critique of cultural assimilation and cultural pluralism uses examples from the United States; he equates cultural pluralism with multiculturalism. This approach is limiting, but his critique is valuable in showing how a liberal position, by reinforcing ethnocentrism and commodifying cultures, can hide behind cultural pluralism/multiculturalism. He acknowledges that critical multiculturalism points out these flaws, deals with the complexities of cultural formations, and works towards a 'less informative and more performative' education, informed by an ethics of everyday life (p. 107). Kumaravadivelu also shows how in language education, multiculturalism/cultural pluralism tends to focus on training L2 learners to use language in cultural appropriate ways, assuming a homogeneous target culture and mistakenly conflating national identity with cultural identity (while falsely unifying both 'nation' and 'culture').

Kumaravadivelu provides a very useful analysis of theories of hybridity, arguing that although these theories do not adequately address the everyday realities of globalization, the postcolonial view of hybridity as a continual, unfinished process can be useful in language education to raise awareness of the intricate nature of cross-cultural encounters and to better understand interculturality.

Cultural realism, the author contends, can more adequately address contemporary global, national, social, and individual realities, which he sees as interrelated. Globally, processes of economic and cultural globalization stimulated by information technology result in a tension between heterogeneity and homogenization that generates the creativity of 'glocalization,' or localizing the global and globalizing the local (p. 147). On a national level, we see a revival of local nationalisms, or sub-nationalisms, demonstrating the appeal of the idea of 'nation' even as borders are undermined. Social reality is the arena of ethnic and linguistic affiliations and communities; individual reality is where the self makes sense of

the multiple, dynamic possibilities and contradictions for identity formation.

In setting out pedagogical principles and instructional strategies for implementing cultural realism in the classroom, the author contrasts two leaders, Nehru and Gandhi. Nehru, on the one hand, embodies a story of ambivalence, of being between cultures, neither 'East nor West.' Gandhi, on the other hand, demonstrates a deep cultural rooted-ness, along with openness to other cultures: he embodies cultural growth—the 'global cultural consciousness' that Kumaravadivelu hopes language educators will begin to develop in themselves and their students (p. 169). Some of the principles Kumaravadivelu suggests are to acknowledge the global in the local and to move away from a focus on a singular target language community and towards cultural communities (p. 174). Rather than giving cultural information, teachers should be aware of the processes of cultural transformation in their students' lives (as demonstrated in Rampton's 1995 work on crossing). It is also important to see students as 'cultural informants,' acknowledging the knowledge they bring with them (p. 182). Kumaravadivelu offers some instructional strategies that involve familiar dichotomies (e.g., individual/collective) and popular themes (e.g., dating, sports, music) and two examples of exploratory projects, using auto-ethnography (towards critical self-reflection) and critical ethnography. These practical strategies show how teachers might begin to grapple concretely with more complex interpretations of culture, nation, and identity.

Kumaravadivelu demonstrates the impact of cultural globaliza-tion on English as a second/foreign language learning, teaching, and teacher education. This book is useful as a text in a second language classroom as it is reader friendly and provides a wide-ranging, interdisciplinary background on ideas. It will also be useful for teachers, not only because it addresses the need for the language teaching profession to gain an understanding of cultural globalization but also because it includes pedagogical principles and classroom strategies. While Kumaravadivelu explains cultural realism quite well, this concept is not likely to displace other ideas in circulation, especially critical multiculturalism and cultural hybridity. What he does offer is a way to understand the limits of those ideas and a complementary view that is geared towards the development of an open and rooted cultural identity. This, Kumaravadivelu believes, better addresses the need for critical global consciousness today.

Reference

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C. Denos, **K. Toohey**, **K. Neilson**, & **B. Waterstone** (2009). *Collaborative Research in Multilingual Classrooms*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters. Pp. 125, £44.95 (paper).

What happens when a group of university researchers collaborates with a group of school teachers in a community of practice that promotes horizontal relations of mutual respect and support, inclusion, and participation? The result should be mutual enrichment, empowerment, and expansion of each other's intellectual horizons, knowledge, skills, and capacity for creating new educational possibilities. This seems to be precisely what transpired in the collaborative research engaged in by the Teacher Action Research Group (TARG), a five-year study in multilingual elementary classrooms in a province in Canada. In *Collaborative Research in Multilingual Classrooms*, TARG activities and findings are reported through teacher-friendly classroom vignettes and narrative observations by school teacher-researchers and university scholar-researchers, and the intended audience consists of teachers, school personnel, parents, and education researchers. The narratives and analyses are organized under four central themes in separate but closely related chapters: identity, community and community practices, help, and possibilities.

   Under the theme of identity, the authors illustrate, with detailed ethnographic observations, what happens to students when they are subjected to the classifying, categorizing, fixing, and labelling practices that form part of the nexus of schooling practices widespread in the schools we work in. For instance, in 'Assigning Marginality: The Case of an ESL/LD Student' (pp. 31–35), Toohey illustrates with both theoretical rigour and concrete examples how a child, Surjeet, is subjected to the repeated testing of the school and is 'acquired by' and entrapped within the restrictive identity category of 'ESL student.'

   However, Toohey and her co-authors did not stop their analysis there, ending merely on a note of critical deconstruction. Under the