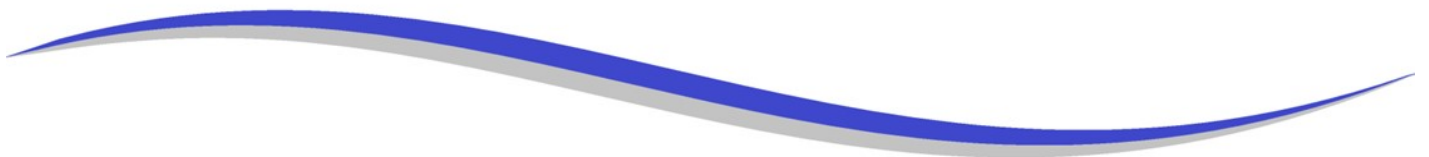




# **BAAL News**

**Issue 117**  
**Summer 2020**



***British Association for Applied Linguistics***

**Promoting understanding of language in use.**

<http://www.baal.org.uk>

Registered charity no. 264800



## Editorial

Dear BAAL members,

Welcome to number 117 of the BAAL newsletter. This edition reflects to some extent the changed circumstances we all found ourselves in these last few months. The Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown in the UK and countries around the world had a profound impact on the way we work and lead our daily lives.

For many member of our BAAL community this meant working from home with all the distractions (some welcome and others perhaps less appreciated) this may bring. It also meant moving to online platforms for many of our daily activities, such as teaching, lecturing, staff meetings, student support or data collection. The reports in this edition address some of these changes and show how these can be true challenges (as in Tae-Hee Cho's report on teaching minority students in Hong Kong) or opportunities (as in Sharon Hartle's contribution on teaching English in Verona). Others have unlocked new talents, like Paul Seedhouse who made prolific use of Linguacuisine to teach both languages and cooking.

The lockdown also meant that we had to move our events online. Most significantly, our annual conference, BAAL2020, which was supposed to be held at the University of Northumbria in Newcastle, has now been moved to 2021 (see Alex Ho-Cheong Leung's report). Instead, we will have a virtual event and AGM (more news about this will be distributed through our mailing list over the summer).

In addition, this newsletter also includes a report on how the New Media SIG moved their seminars online with a useful list of do and don'ts for anyone wishing to follow. This edition also, of course, includes two PhD reports to showcase the work currently being undertaken by our young talent.

With best wishes,

***Bettina Beinhoff***

Newsletter Editor



# From BAAL 2020 to BAAL 2021: Moving a conference

by Alex Ho-Cheong Leung (University of Northumbria)

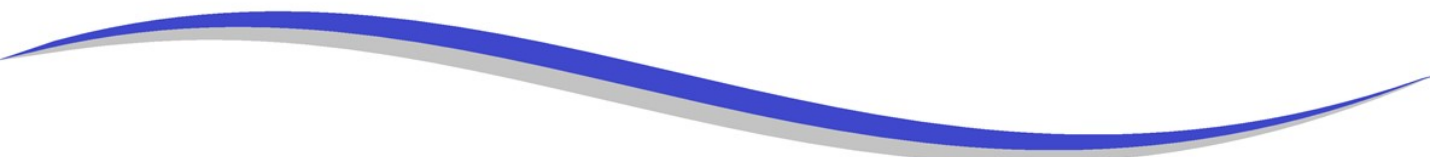
When our team at Northumbria bid to host the 2020 BAAL conference and decided on the theme of “Challenges and Opportunities in Applied Linguistics” about two and a half years ago, none of us knew or could have imagined the global challenges that the year 2020 had in store for us. Soon after we circulated our call for papers in November 2019, we became aware of the corona virus epidemic that was brewing in some parts of the world. We have been keeping a close eye on the development of COVID-19 since. In March 2020, the UK government finally acknowledged the severity of the situation and the deadly nature of the disease, which was by then classified as a pandemic. The local organising team made the difficult but important decision to postpone our conference after various discussions and consultation with the BAAL Executive Committee and similar learned societies in other countries.

Colleagues who have organised a conference will know that it often involves months if not years of planning. Any decision about a change or postponement is therefore not taken lightly. However, with the knowledge that BAAL’s annual conference attracts hundreds of delegates from all around the world every year, we could not see how we could carry on with the conference while ensuring the safety and wellbeing of everyone. Adding to concerns over delegates’ and our own safety, the uncertainty around aviation and the general ability for colleagues to travel locally and globally meant that we had to “pull the plug” on the conference, much to our own disappointment and to the dismay of many who had been eagerly waiting to interact with their friends and colleagues and to make new acquaintances at the conference.

We considered moving the conference online, only to then abandon the idea as members of our Local Organising Committee thought an online-only conference would not be entirely compatible with the vision we set for ourselves when we bid for the hosting right back in 2017/2018. Though we were fairly confident that a stimulating intellectual environment for academic exchanges could still be facilitated, we thought it would be much harder to do justice to the friendliness, hospitality, and breathtakingly stunning landscapes that the region has to offer without welcoming everyone to the North East physically.

All that said, we are incredibly thankful to our plenary and invited speakers who have agreed to continue taking part in our postponed conference now scheduled for summer 2021 (see details below). Our gratitude extends to all the publishers as well, who continue to support BAAL as well as the conference in these tough times. Of course, we have to thank you, our BAAL members, for your ongoing support and contributions to the organisation and the field.

COVID-19 has changed the way we interact and, frankly, the way we live our lives. To pretend that we can go on with business as usual (as some “leaders” in the world seem to want to do) is at the very least naïve, if not disingenuous. Colleagues have lived and breathed the initial excitement of having Zoom/Teams/other online meetings/teaching. We have also come to the inevitable realisation of the tremendous strain that this emergency mode of remote operation poses not just on us but on our students as well. The pandemic has undoubtedly presented us with numerous challenges, from the disproportionate health effect on those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, to the predicament of colleagues on precarious contracts and the very survival of many of the



organisations we hold dear. But the pandemic has also provided an opportunity for us to challenge the status quo, to ask tough questions about equality, diversity, and equal access, to call out injustice in our societies, and to attempt to close the divide between the “haves” and “have nots”. It has been wonderful to see how our field has come together to share resources and to tackle many of these challenges as witnessed through the various calls for collaborations and contributions to address real world problems on BAAL’s mailing list (see also Oskoz & Smith, 2020). As applied scientists, I believe it is our professional and moral duty to continue to engage with real world issues and play our part in creating a platform for the voice and stories of the under-privileged to be heard. On behalf of the Local Organising Committee, I cannot wait to welcome many of you once again to Northumbria and the North East of the UK in September 2021 where we can discuss many of these issues.

Before I close, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Bettina, BAAL’s newsletter editor, for inviting me to share my thoughts. A big thank you to all the key workers, my thoughts and well wishes also go to those who have lost loved ones during the pandemic.

Alex Ho-Cheong Leung

Chair of the LOC of BAAL2020/2021

**Plenary Speakers:** David Block (ICREA & Universitat Pompeu Fabra); Constant Leung (King’s College London); Zhu Hua (University of Birmingham)

**Pit Corder Lecture:** Emma Marsden (University of York)

**LOC Invited colloquium:** Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants: Policy and Practice

Speakers: Lorenzo Rocca (Università per gli Stranieri di Perugia); Rola Naeb (Northumbria University); Martha Young Scholten (Newcastle University); James Simpson (University of Leeds); Marcin Sosinski (Granada University)

Check out our website for the latest news and info for BAAL 2021.

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/news-events/events/2020/09/baal-2020/>

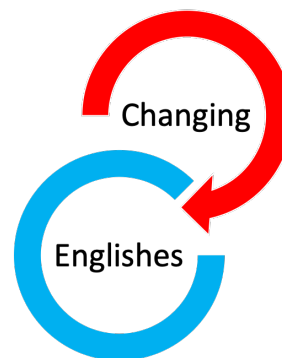
## Reference

Oskoz, A, & Smith, B. (2020). Unprecedented times. *CALICO Journal*, 37 (2). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1558/cj.41524>

# New version of the Changing Englishes online course for teachers

by Christopher J Hall and Rachel Wicaksono (York St John University)

The new version of the *Changing Englishes online course for teachers* was launched via the British Council/BBC TeachingEnglish website in May (<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/new-version-changing-englishes-online-course-teachers>). As an online platform for raising awareness of the pedagogical challenges and opportunities of Global Englishes, in which users can study at their own pace, this CPD resource may be especially useful to teachers around the world as they work from home. Its Creative Commons licence and guidelines for use in teacher training programmes also make it a useful resource for BAAL members planning online MA TESOL modules for the next academic year (<http://www.changingenglishes.online/about.php>).



The course, available at [www.changingenglishes.online](http://www.changingenglishes.online), was written by Chris Hall and Rachel Wicaksono of York St John University and originally released in 2013, with financial support from the British Council. Completely redeveloped and updated on a new platform and now with CPD certification, v.02.1 is packed with activities and opportunities for interaction with other users. It typically takes between 10 to 15 hours to complete and all content is free for users to incorporate into their own teaching or training.

The principal objectives of the course are:

- to help raise teachers' awareness of the variable and dynamic nature of global, local and individual Englishes and to reflect on implications for professional practice and policy formation;
- to engage teachers in the process of developing learning and teaching strategies which respond to the reality of global Englishes but which are relevant for local and individual contexts.

In pursuing these objectives, the course builds an argument for considering English to be 'plurilithic' in nature, rather than monolithic (Pennycook, 2009; Hall, 2013). This is done by taking a combined social and cognitive perspective, drawn from research in general and applied linguistics, including ontologies of English (e.g. Hall, 2020; Wicaksono, 2020), World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca, and Usage-based Linguistics.

Users are taken through five self-paced units which introduce new conceptualisations of English and explore their implications for learning, teaching and use. Unit 1, *Defining English*, introduces the idea of alternative monolithic and plurilithic conceptions of English. The status of 'Standard English' is subjected to critical scrutiny, and participants are invited to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of using it as the only target for learning/teaching. The unit then moves on to consider what exactly is meant by *rule* (as in 'the rules of English') and ends with a description of what we call the 'four dimensions of monolithism': *ontological*, *ethical*, *socio-economic* and *professional*. Participants are

encouraged to notice relevant features in four 'data prompts', give their immediate reactions, and then reflect on the implications for their own teaching contexts.

In Unit 2, *Using English*, we look at how English is actually used in its diverse contexts, starting out with its most frequent current use as a lingua franca. We discuss variety within and between L1 speakers of English and introduce Kachru's model of World Englishes, inviting participants to reflect on the idea of who 'owns' the language. The unit continues with a discussion of scenarios in which English is used as a lingua franca, and of how English users from different contexts of learning and use understand each other, including (from a translanguaging perspective) the involvement of the other languages they know.

Unit 3, *Learning English*, starts by considering the traditional 'language as subject' perspective on classroom-based learning and contrast this with evidence about the ways in which learners actually construct their own 'object language', in their individual minds, through usage. We provide a usage-based account of child first language acquisition to illustrate the diverse outcomes this leads to for English, and then apply it to adult SLA. Revisiting the concept of 'rules' from this cognitive perspective allows us to demonstrate how traditional concepts like interlanguage and fossilisation reflect a deficit perspective, in which SLA is governed by external models and targets rather than the needs of diverse local usage contexts.

Unit 4, *Teaching English*, invites participants to focus on the teaching and testing implications of the plurilithic view of English presented in the earlier units. We aim to challenge, to sensitise, to raise awareness and to provoke discussion, rather than to tell participants what the implications are for their classrooms. In Unit 5, *Changing English*, we make some practical suggestions about how the ideas presented in the course might be shared with learners and teaching colleagues, and with policy-makers and the general public. We acknowledge the challenge of changing other people's ideas about English, but stress the importance of attempting to do so.

The course has several features and tools to promote engagement and interaction:

- an online 'self-assessment tool' to gauge the extent of participants' plurilithic orientation on starting the course;
- activities which test and expand comprehension of new concepts and involve participants in reflection on their own beliefs and levels of awareness;
- generalised feedback after each activity;
- interactive 'discussion points' and 'reflective activities' on a dedicated Discussion Board;

### 1.3.1 The ambiguity of the word *rule*

The word *rule* is actually rather ambiguous, and can cause some confusion when used to describe language learning and use.

The video clip in Fig. 1.6 below explains the ambiguity.

Y ChEn Unit 1

Changing Englishes

Copy link

#### 'Rules of English'





Fig. 1.6 Rules of English

Rules viewed as **regulations** are external to those who abide by them; they mandate correct, authorised, acceptable behaviours. Rules viewed as **regularities**, on the other hand, capture actual patterns of behaviour, and can be inferred to operate in the personal histories of individuals, guiding what they do, but through *custom* rather than *obligation*.

Back

Next: Rules of English: The Monolithic View

- 
- ‘in depth’ sections which provide optional, more detailed, treatments of some issues;
  - video clips, including original presentations on the notions of *rule*, ELF, and learning vs acquiring English;
  - hover-over definitions of technical terms;
  - flashcard quizzes at the end of each unit;
  - a full bibliography and separate list of print and online resources.

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# Linguacuisine in Lockdown

**By Paul Seedhouse, Newcastle University**

If you had asked me a few years ago what the likelihood was of me cooking an Italian dish in my own kitchen in March 2020 whilst speaking Italian and live-streaming the whole thing to hundreds of people around the world via Facebook live, I would have told you this was a total impossibility: my Italian is beginners level, my cooking is intermediate level and anyway - I hate social media. Nonetheless, this is what happened in lockdown and it went reasonably well, apart from me breaking an egg onto the floor.

Why did I do this? We released the free Linguacuisine app in September 2018 and it has been used in 71 countries to help people learn aspects of a language and culture whilst cooking. However, when coronavirus lockdown started, we realised we had developed an educational app that works even better when children are stuck at home in lockdown, missing school and with supplies of food! Everybody was asking for educational activities to keep children occupied during lockdown and our app meant they could carry on learning at home, but also cook a meal and feed their family at the same time. So life became very hectic and I realised I needed to learn the dreaded social media to deal with the interest and did a live Italian (Tiramisu) recipe as Italy was having a bad time then and people needed a pick-me-up at the end of the week.

Then I was asked by Newcastle City Council to produce new budget recipes for Newcastle children in low income homes who had to learn to cook for themselves during coronavirus lockdown. So I made and uploaded 2 new video recipes (called TeenCook) for the app: French crêpes/pancakes and Spanish chilli con carne. These are our first ever bilingual recipes, made in English as well as the foreign language so they are easy for all to follow, and they use standard, budget ingredients which are on the council's recommended information sheets and available at local supermarkets.

Children can also record themselves with a tablet in their own kitchen at home making their own favourite recipe in their own language and upload it to the Linguacuisine system so others around the world can make their recipe. So that makes a project to keep them busy and develop their digital skills. Schools around the world have been getting children to make recipes and we have had several entries from schoolchildren for our annual LinguaChef prize.

This is also a good way of keeping international communication and understanding going in difficult times when we can't travel. We are also planning a live-streaming virtual exchange event in September in which we will be cooking a Catalan recipe in Newcastle, while a colleague in Barcelona cooks one of our recipes.





# Learning of linguistic minorities in the pandemic: Lessons from Hong Kong

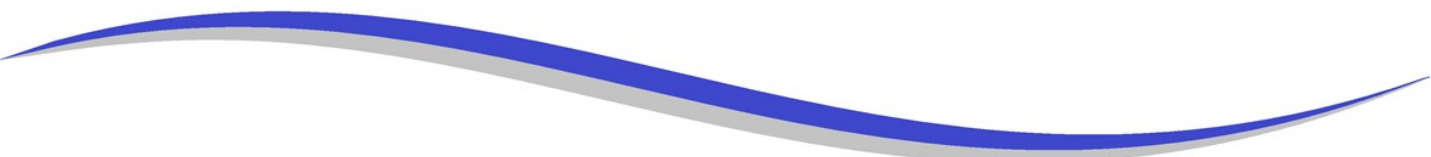
By Taehee Choi, The Education University of Hong Kong

*Yuri is in Year 8. Her school was suddenly shut down and she has been learning online since then. She receives multiple tasks online every day. Some teachers reach out to explain the tasks and hold a Q & A session. But other teachers simply ask that students visit the online classroom to learn about the tasks for the day. The tasks are described briefly and some online links are given for self-study as a preparation for those tasks. Yuri visits the links but they are too difficult to understand. She consults Mom, who tries to figure out what the task is about, but her limited English prevents her from supporting Yuri. She waits for her Dad to become free from his work online. In the evening, her Dad can spare some time. While explaining the tasks to Yuri, he finds that this is the first session for the unit on the relationship between electricity and the magnetic field, and she has not even learned the basics about electricity. Dad tries to explain related concepts, but his education was conducted in another language, so he cannot connect his knowledge with the lesson materials. Dad looks up information in his language and then watches the video to first understand it himself. Yuri's friend Miffy has already given up doing online assignments as her parents do not have time to help with her homework. On the first day of the resumption of schooling, a linguistic minority student living in Hong Kong committed suicide, pressured by the feeling of lagging behind academically arising from the suspension of after-school tutorials during the pandemic.*

Due to COVID-19, many schools around the globe have moved lessons online or at least part of schooling online. Debates have started on the impact of this online turn on student learning, however, how language minority students are affected by this pandemic and how best to support them, have received limited attention. Here are areas for possible difficulties for students from marginalised backgrounds, and some remedies for them.

## **Possible challenges in learning online as a linguistic minority**

When learning is conducted online, due to limited cues to assist understanding, students with lower proficiency in the medium of instruction find that their understanding is further constrained. In addition, the teachers cannot check the progress of all through live monitoring of students' facial looks and engagement, even with the recent technology. Whether all linguistic minority students have strong wi-fi and digital devices is another matter, as often their financial resources are limited. (In Hong Kong, some minority groups are also socioeconomically disadvantaged.) The digitally-mediated approach is further limiting young learners when they are still developing their abilities to deal with abstract ideas. When home learning requires far greater support as the vignette above illustrates, the cultural capital of the parents limits their support – they have to navigate and negotiate between dissimilar education systems and between languages. While many local organisations such as libraries, cultural



centres, and museums are providing extra resources to support learning at home, most resources are offered in the local language of Chinese, presenting another obstacle of limited breadth and depth of learning opportunities for the linguistic minority. Students' motivation is affected as a result of their limited understanding of the online teaching content, teachers' diminished capacity to convey knowledge online, the challenges of asynchronous interaction and language barriers. Being physically distanced also deprives students' opportunities for social activities and peer interaction and curtails their exposures to language learning opportunities outside the classroom settings. These challenges are disproportionate for the double minority group (linguistic minority and socioeconomically disadvantaged) which tends to have fewer educational opportunities outside school.

### **Some remedies**

One effective strategy for government and schools is to connect with diverse bodies such as linguistic minority associations, NGOs, and parents, and develop infrastructure to provide crucial information in the linguistic minority's home language, including an overview of the curriculum. The network can be used to provide extra learning support. Some grassroots self-support movements are already in place in Hong Kong and outside. It is a matter for schools to become a liaising partner for these groups and minority student families. Students can also be used as resources and helpers. Some teachers are using good samples of work to illustrate key lessons and steps. Interactive channels should be open, and the schools can monitor whether the channels are actively used through quick surveys of students and parents. The responses to these surveys need to be monitored to see the representation, and targeted surveys may need to be conducted. Teacher awareness education allows teachers to use language-sensitive pedagogy. Social workers can monitor learning in the crisis situation and the emotional well-being of students. These measures in Hong Kong can be reviewed and localized to make them more relevant to individual contexts, so that linguistic diversity will not become a significant barrier to learning.

Tae-Hee CHOI is an Associate Professor working at the Education University of Hong Kong. She researches the interrelationship between languages and educational policy. For more about her research, see [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tae\\_Hee\\_Choi](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tae_Hee_Choi)



# Coronavirus: from emergency to opportunity at the University of Verona

**By Sharon Hartle, University of Verona, Italy**

In Italy the universities closed down as a precautionary measure the last week in February, which was the second week of teaching last term. At the end of that week an announcement was made to the effect that all teaching, starting the following Monday, would move online. This plunged many of us into a state of panic, especially those who previously had little or no experience of remote teaching. The university provided us with access to Pandoro, a platform where videos could be created and then streamed to the student e-learning spaces on Moodle courses and there was also the option of using videoconferencing by means of Zoom. Many of my colleagues opted to stream videos of their lessons but in the English Language Department quite a few of us began to adapt the Blended Learning model we were already using by supplementing work done on Moodle by Zoom lessons, which were face to face (albeit not physically). The blended model, in this way, shifted somewhat to become a blend of synchronous with the asynchronous rather than the digital with the physical which could perhaps herald a new trend for the future. This created a considerable amount of extra work as peers supported each other and materials and teaching strategies were adapted to meet the new circumstances. The experience with Zoom, however, was on the whole extremely positive. This was not limited to the course work either. Students from all over the country, who were locked down, appreciated the opportunity to socialize by video-conferencing and the task of providing a degree of pastoral support could be carried out by simple chatbox discussions at the beginning of lessons. In one lesson, for instance, simply asking students to describe a positive moment from their weekend, whilst waiting for other students to arrive, actually boosted the mood of the group and learners brought their own worlds into the classroom by sharing art work they had been doing. Another advantage of working in Zoom was that students who are often intimidated in large groups felt less inhibited and contributed more in the chat. Group work and project work could also be carried out a synchronously and synchronously and discussions held in the breakout rooms proved both effective and popular with students.

This entailed a tremendous amount of work and was a steep learning curve for many but in the words of one course participant:

*"I enjoyed this course a lot and it moved quickly. Each period was well organized. Teaching methods varied several times which kept the class both interesting and challenging. In particular I liked the partner/group work interaction. I love meeting new people. Usually, I learn better when I am socially connected because I am more willing to take learning risks (to ask a classmate for help, admit that I am struggling, etc.). I got the opportunity to practice and listen to the language and that was most useful for me. I really felt like all of you were interested in our needs and cared about our learning process. I consider my expectations here regarding my English development fulfilled, and I'd like to thank you for that."*



## PhD research report:

# Modern Foreign Language Learning: Exploring the impact of parental orientations on student motivation

By Chris Martin (University of Wolverhampton)

### Context

The decline in motivation to learn a modern foreign language in English secondary schools has been well-documented (Coleman et al., 2007; Lanvers et al., 2016; Martin, 2019) and several national strategies have been implemented by different governments to raise the status of MFL in secondary schools but to no avail as the decline is ever-present.

It is important first to delineate the relationship between *motivation* and *attitude* as they are often used synonymously. Bartram (2010) makes a clear distinction between motivation and attitude, defining motivation as behavioural and goal-oriented, be that intrinsic pleasure or extrinsic reward, whereas attitude is related to the cognitive and emotional aspects of completing a task. This study draws extensively on Self-Determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) which places motivation on a continuum as an individual could shift between different forms of motivation dependent on the task at hand. Three key forms of motivation are suggested: amotivation, extrinsic and intrinsic.

Parental engagement in education is conceptualised by Johnson and Hull (2014) into three core areas: home-based involvement, school-based involvement and parents' educational aspirations. It is well-documented that children's educational achievements are not solely from their ability or cognitive styles, but from engagement with the wider society and most importantly, their parents. Parents who display positive attitudes and high expectations of the school, their children are more likely to have favourable outcomes compared to those who have negative views towards the school (Bubić & Tošić, 2016). Whilst it may be that a parent does not have significant levels of capital to transmit to their child, they may still engage with the investment of emotional capital, particularly mothers (Reay, 2000).

### Methodology

The research objectives that underpinned the current study were three-fold:

- To examine the orientations of Year 8 students towards MFL learning
- To examine those of their parents
- To explore any possible associations between parent and student data

The present study adopted a sequential mixed-methods research design which afforded the opportunity to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative phase provided the initial description of the questionnaire survey data collected from students (n=495) and their parents (n=107) from four different schools across the West Midlands conurbation. The questionnaires explored six motivational constructs: general motivation, sense of achievement in MFL, internal attribution of achievement, external attribution of achievement, intrinsic and extrinsic

motivations. Percentage frequency distribution gave an initial overview of the findings with further exploration of data being conducted using inferential statistical analyses. This phase was followed by semi-structured interviews conducted with six parent-student dyads (n=12) from the same four schools in order to add a further layer of rich description of language learning experiences. Dyads were also chosen in order to observe any possible power dynamic between the student and parent participants. The interviews were analysed thematically by the researcher and were coded inductively.

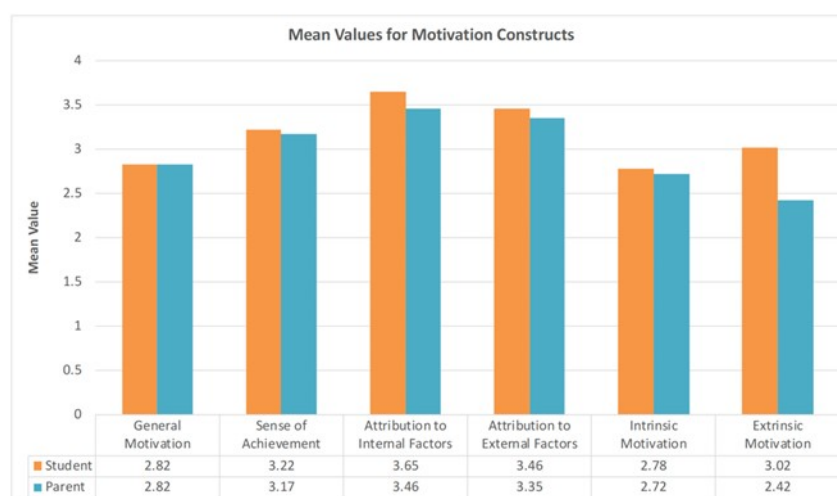
## Findings

The initial description provided by the percentage frequency distribution revealed that most participants in the present sample were not highly motivated by studying MFL with a large proportion of students (60.2%) reporting that the subject is challenging and that they see very little value and relevance beyond the classroom. Confoundingly, almost half of the students (48.4%) indicated that they would be happy to live permanently in the target language country. A significant percentage of students (61.6%) also reported deprioritising their language homework over other subjects. Students were, however, more cognisant of the fact that greater effort leads to better outcomes.

Parent survey data revealed generally lukewarm views on MFL with very few overtly negative or positive indications. A significant percentage (71%) reported that they did not continue their language learning beyond the requirements of the school and 44.9% of parents stated that languages were a difficult subject for them. Interestingly, nearly two thirds (64.5%) of parents indicated having very little encouragement from their parents to do well in foreign language learning at school.

Graph 1 displays the collated data for mean scores for each motivation construct. Initial appraisal of the graph revealed equal or lower parent mean scores for each of the constructs compared to students.

Graph 1. Collated means for motivation constructs



Inferential statistical analyses yielded noteworthy findings. Correlation analysis of central tendency (mean) using Pearson's  $r$  revealed moderate to strong associations for five of the six motivation constructs (Table 1) which were statistically significant.

Table 1 Pearson's *r* correlation outcomes

Motivation construct	Pearson's <i>r</i>
General Motivation	+0.824 ( $p < 0.01$ )
Sense of Achievement	+0.444 ( $p < 0.01$ )
Internal Attribution	+0.533 ( $p < 0.01$ )
External Attribution	+0.059 (not statistically significant)
Intrinsic Motivation	+0.730 ( $p < 0.01$ )
Extrinsic Motivation	+0.890 ( $p < 0.01$ )

Regression analysis yielded statistically significant results with parent level of education having an effect on student sense of achievement (eta squared = 0.141), intrinsic motivation (eta squared = 0.107) and extrinsic motivation (eta squared = 0.108). Parental level of language learning had a medium effect on intrinsic motivation (eta squared = 0.158) and similarly on extrinsic motivation (eta squared = 0.158). Parental ethnicity had the largest effect on student extrinsic motivation (eta squared = 0.296).

Interview participants were able to articulate the instrumental value of learning a language, often citing job prospects and travel as two key reasons to study a language. Despite being cognisant of the benefits, these views were tainted by the perceived difficulty of languages as a subject. It became clear that parents played a pivotal role in the children's options process where students choose which qualifications to study at GCSE level. Students were choosing languages which had been previously studied by their parents in order to secure parental support and engagement rather than studying a language that they would prefer.

### Conclusions & Implications for Practice

This study has gone some way to highlighting the role that parents play in their child's language learning at school. Motivation studies in MFL have previously been centred around the student (Williams et al., 2002; Bartram, 2010); however, the present study aimed to shift the focus to also include the views of parents, which have been seldom researched. A significant argument that has been brought to the fore through engagement with interview participants is the need to create a meaningful dialogue between schools and parents on the importance and benefits of learning a language. Parents who do not feel equipped to help with their child's language learning could be better supported by schools through the sharing of course and assessment information in a transparent and clear way. This could make some progress towards demystifying the often-complex requirements of examination boards. Although parents may feel ill-equipped linguistically, they would be in a better position to support emotionally especially during stressful assessments periods, by having a clearer understanding of the examination requirements. The OfSTED inspection framework (2019) states that school leaders should 'engage effectively with learners and others in their community including, where relevant, parents [...]'. A clear, transparent explanation of the school curriculum, course content and teaching, shared with the relevant stakeholders, could make some progress in improving this dialogue.



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## PhD research report:

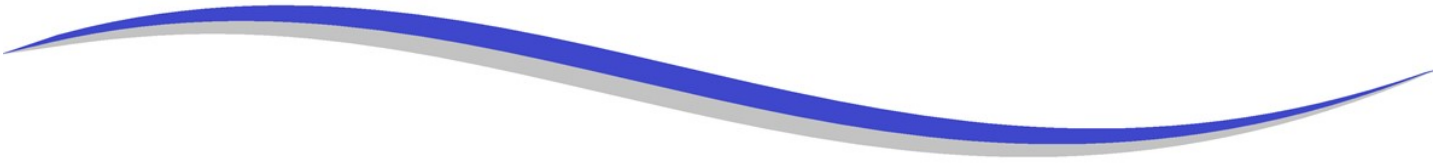
# Learning how to mentor in-service teachers to do research: a collaborative action research project

**By Claudia Bustos-Moraga (University of Warwick)**

Learning mentoring is similar to learning a second language (Orland-Barak, 2001). When I began mentoring teachers doing classroom-based research, I questioned my training or how well I spoke 'mentoring'. Mentoring in language teacher education has been studied in depth (for example, Tomlinson, Hobson, & Malderez, 2010; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). However, little has been referenced about mentoring more experienced language teachers and particularly teachers who engage in doing research. In 2014, I started mentoring in the Champion Teachers (CT) programme, a continuous professional development (CPD) initiative supported by the British Council and the Ministry of Education. The CT programme has since expanded to other countries in Latin-America, with an increasing number of teachers doing research, and consequently more mentors involved in the project.

The CT represent a change in the type of CPD initiatives in Chile, where I focus my attention for now. Despite the return to democracy 30 years ago, the educational reforms during the dictatorship (1973-1990), still affect the school structure. Ávalos (2004), states that the rigid vertical structure implemented in schools has remained largely unchanged, adding that teachers have slowly come to terms with the fact that the changes they expected would arrive alongside democracy were not going to happen. This state of resignation shifted dramatically as suggested by the recent uprising in Chile. The uprising itself goes beyond the scope of this study; however, I would argue that its origin resides, at least partially, in the lack of dialogue between the Government and the 'people'. Consequently, connecting these events with the dialogic approach of mentoring teaches doing research seems worth mentioning. First, because one of the mentors' roles is to prompt a discussion inviting the CT to reflect upon and question their practice, process that has been considered extremely difficult by the mentors (Bustos, 2017). Second, because this dialogue aims at giving the teacher power over its pedagogical decisions, democratising knowledge (Freire, 1993). This dialogic approach has meant a shift from a more instructional tradition, and it one of the themes the data hints. The impact of learning mentoring in this context directly affects mentors, but it also has a larger impact on the teachers they work with and ultimately their students. For this study I draw on my own experience with the CT, as well as on my masters' dissertation, where I first studied mentors' perception of their role and one of whose findings was the need for appropriate training.

The aim of this study is the creation of a course that supports the learning of the mentors working with teachers doing research. It has an interventionist nature and it is grounded in a constructivist paradigm. I follow an action research (AR) workplan, which has allowed me to integrate my *practitioner-self*, working in the design and implementation of this mentoring course, and my *researcher-self*, working to answer my research questions. Thus, I have become a 'critical participant(s) in the action and researcher(s) of the action.' (Burns, 2010:82). The highly collaborative nature of this study, incorporates the experiences of the participants involved in different stages of the



research process, with a dialogic connection between theory and praxis (Golombek & Johnson, 2019). By investigating how would be an appropriate design for this course, participants evaluate the impact of this course in their practice, as well as define appropriacy; which brings into play Holliday's social context' (1994) as the reference for this conceptualisation.

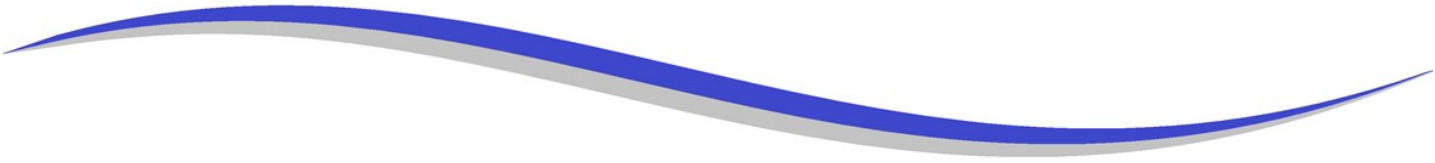
There have been advantages and challenges in the process of being a practitioner researcher. One advantage has been the access to participants who are, or have been, mentors in the project. They participated in the creation, development, and evaluation of the course and they are part of all the data sources. The data corresponds to about 90 hours of video-recorded interviews, video-recordings of the course, and audio or video-recording of mentor-mentee conferences, which also allowed for stimulated recall interviews. Another benefit of being a practitioner researcher is that it has provided me with a rich insider perspective, which in turn represents some challenges. A first challenge is my dual role as practitioner-researcher, that I have addressed through reflexivity as I often step back from the data and check if my actions respond to either one of those roles. I keep detailed notes in a research journal. This dual role also calls for extra attention and awareness of the pros and cons in the researcher-participant relationship. This awareness of for example, power dynamics or participant confidentiality has greatly contributed to the process. Another challenge is the AR cycle and the overlapping layers that demand a constant reflection over what is being discussed. Besides, on this study, AR is featured at a meta-level as well: on the one hand, as researcher; on the other, AR was one of the component of the course and also, the teachers who are being mentored are doing AR projects themselves.

From the several steps taken to enhance quality, I will only mention two in this report. First, the interviews have provided multiple perspectives (Mann, 2002) on the process in general and in specific aspects of the course. Thus, the collaborative nature of the creation and evaluation of the course has offered an in-depth and wider perspective for the analysis. Second, respondent validation (Bryman, 2016) has been an important process to not only enhance quality but to give voice to the participants. I have sent summaries of their interviews to all participants; not only they have validated their interviews, but they have also added further reflections and elaborated on some ideas.

As the process of AR is far from linear, the analysis has been an iterative process all throughout the cycle. The findings are still at a preliminary stage; however, I could highlight three main areas. First, the rich descriptions of the mentor's appraisal of the course stress the value of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). Second, since mentoring happens entirely online (there is one closing meeting), the data provides thorough accounts of the affordances and constraints of 'distance' mentoring. This online feature is particularly relevant in the current state of affairs in pandemic times, as the analysis of online mentoring experiences can greatly contribute to the field of distant CPD. Finally, the interactional data from the mentor-mentee conferences show not only how this interaction is realised, most importantly, how the many steps mentees go through in their research become artifacts for dialogic reflection (Mann & Walsh, 2017) in which mentors and mentees grow.

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# BAAL SIG Language & New Media Summer Virtual Talk Series: A sort of story

(Sumin Zhao, University of Edinburgh)

Since April 2020, the BAAL Language and New Media SIG has run a series of online talks which I organised as SIG Events Coordinator on the University of Edinburgh's Collaborate platform. The two talks so far, by Jack Grieve and Jannis Androutsopoulos, have been stimulating and cutting edge in their respective fields (big data and digital ethnography), attracting over 50 participants each and generating interesting discussion (albeit typed). Here is the story of how we came to organise this series.

As a sociable introvert, organising a conference is a socially acceptable (i.e. least awkward) way for one to strike a conversation with a new colleague. So, when I took up my current post at the Edinburgh University, I immediately put my hands up for organising the 2020 SIG annual seminar. In my imagination, there would be stimulating intellectual exchanges, convivial conversations and some quirky Harry Potter themed tours, all set against the glorious skyline of Edinburgh's old town. Alas, it ended up like a story from Calvino's *If Upon a Winter's Night a Traveller*, one that had a beginning but not an ending.


Shortly after we sent out all the acceptance emails and opened registration at the beginning of March, the pandemic situation escalated. All face-to-face events had to be cancelled. We decided to move the seminar online. In order to keep things simple for everyone, we decided to invite Jack Grieve, one of our plenary speakers, to give an online talk, rather than running all the presentations online. I was initially wary of more virtual meetings, which seemed to consume a lot more cognitive energy than in-person meetings. These early experiences of the pandemic shaped my understandings of why and how we can organise virtual meetings.

Onto the all-important question of why our SIG has organised the summer virtual talk series. First of all, as wisely pointed out by our convenor Caroline Tagg, our SIG does have "new media" in its title, so we better make full use of them. We hope these talks will create an intellectual space where we can keep updated with the latest developments in our field as well as a social space for colleagues in this difficult time. As the pandemic will impact more significantly on our early career colleagues in multiple ways, we hope this will be an opportunity for them share and promote their research.

If you are thinking about organising something similar, here are some personal tips:

**Dream Big:** One advantage of virtual talk is that you can invite speakers from any corner of the globe. We came up with a dream-speaker list and sent the invite. Voilà, they all came back with a yes. Plus, it is wonderful to find out how generous people are!

**Keep it Simple:** I run the seminar on Collaborate, which is not as fancy and edgy as Zoom. But I have managed to "master" it, so there is less last-minute panic. It also does not require the speaker to do "tech rehearsal" before the talk and create less distraction during the talk (speakers only need to turn the slides, while the chair can manage the interaction). You can also record the talk (while being GDPR compliant).



**Share it:** The two talks we held so far were well attended, doubling and tripling the size of our regular talks. But many colleagues won't be able to attend due to personal and professional commitments, or simply living in a different time zone. We have started a YouTube channel to share the recordings. We are not influencers yet, but we are getting there! [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaQwVCPPMxgELJfwa3Ugw9A?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaQwVCPPMxgELJfwa3Ugw9A?view_as=subscriber)

We have four talks to come including:

Michele Zappavigna on AMSR videos (July 16<sup>th</sup>);

Susan Herring on Emojis Syntax (July 30<sup>th</sup>);

Dorottya Cserzo on Interaction on Video Call (August 6<sup>th</sup>) and

Christian Ilbury (August 13<sup>th</sup>) on language variation and social media.

Find out more about these talks here [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1my3HmIQrVF\\_xEsPK3odeWoKJraDsW4jG/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1my3HmIQrVF_xEsPK3odeWoKJraDsW4jG/view), and join our SIG here <https://langnewmedia.weebly.com/> and here <https://www.facebook.com/languageandnewmedia/>

We look forward to seeing you at one of our seminars and look forward to attending one of yours!



## Book Reviews

**Blackledge A. and Creese A. (2019). *Voices of a city market: an ethnography*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. ISBN 9781788925082. 199 pages.**

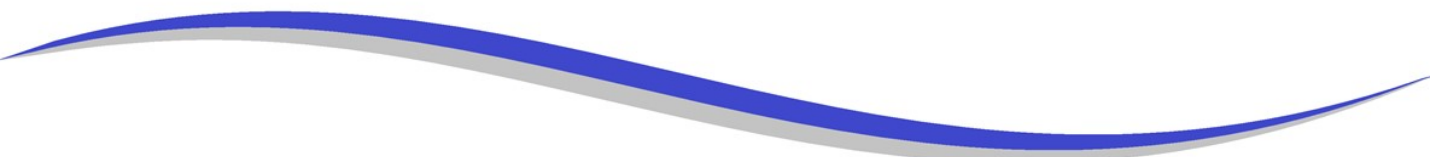
Developed out of the discipline of anthropology, ethnography as a distinctive approach to social and cultural research prevails in current qualitative research world. The duality of ethnographic research as represented by its fieldwork and textual interpretation is reflected in both data collection and literary writing. Apart from traditional participant observation and field notes, current data collection has included modern techniques such as photography, film and video for minute observations. Ethnographic research has shifted its focus from the processes of field work to diverse ethnographic writing since the publication of Clifford and Marcus' (1986) *Writing Culture*. This new book is a timely dedication to the new trend in ethnographic research.

The book locates itself in an indoor market of a superdiverse city where focal ethnographic observations are made on a Chinese butcher's stall. Voices of people from their everyday encounters in the market are made audible via field notes, video-recording, audio-recording, interviews, photographs, digital files and through the researchers' unique literary representation. As Hornberger puts it on the cover of the book, "human diversity and common humanity" are brought back to readers through "ethnographic eyes and poetic sensibility". Three parts are arranged in this book, each part consisting of sections entitled with the produce sold in the market.

In Part 1, Section "Meat" serves to demystify the way of presenting the current research in the ensuing part with recourse to a scene where eight participant characters are seated discussing key issues related to ethnographic research. As to data collecting and data presenting, the researcher proposes no intervention with recording research participants and giving authentic voices, while the professor suggests ethnographic reconstruction of the voices via "recontextualization" other than "recording what's there" (p. 6), pointing to the assemblage of raw materials and a process of labour-intensive examination and checks to generate meaning. In terms of selecting transcripts and episodes, both the photographer and the documentary novelist propose to "call attention to the mundane" (p. 12) and listen to little people's voices speaking in their own right. As regards ethnographic writing, the documentary novelist aligns documentary novels with ethnography if writing is constructed with "multiple perspectives" (p. 17). The poet proposes that poetry, a natural product under "emotional urgency and temporal constraint" (p. 27), can be complementary to other ways of constructing meanings of social life because it has the potential to reveal the rhythms that dominate narratives and episodes. The entrepreneur suggests taking what already exists and making it original. The dramaturg emphasizes incorporating "the political and the critical" to transform the material into literary form (p. 41). In interpreting migrants' voices in a superdiverse city market, the genial butcher strongly disagrees on being categorized as a permanent migrant and using their harsh life experiences as "a theatre of contradiction" for the audience. Reflection is left to readers when Part 1 puts a halt to the discussion by drawing on the pragmatic butcher, the genial butcher's husband's reporting of his hard life journey as a migrant in the form of a repeated sentence structure.

Following Part 1, Part 2 is divided into six sections, each entitled with produce mentioned in the beginning narrative. Section "Tea" mainly presents traders' narratives on their life story with the market, among which are units of scattered fleeting encounters between stall holders and customers, of chunks of advertising texts appearing in





uppercase letters, of descriptions of silent produce organized in lines for linguistic ethnographic presentation. Themes emerge as the narratives go on. The loyalty of the traders to the market is evidenced by their longevity with the market, with the shellfish stall for instance, being “in the fifth generation now” (p. 50) and by their identity with the market that “the market is the heart and soul of the city” (p. 56). Their positive attitudes toward the ongoing influx and the increased diversity of new customers are reflective of the language ideology that “you use whatever it takes” to get across (p. 52), which lends support to the conclusion that superdiversity is the norm of social life in the market (Blackledge, Creese & Hu, 2014). The positioning of self as a “corollary of the discourse of the market” (p. 6) is mirrored in their concern for the role of the city council in the management of the market and their roles as “representing the market” (p. 51).

Sections “Blood”, “Intestine”, “Fish” and “Milk” constitute a narrative of becoming and an ideological becoming of the couple as proprietors of the butcher stall in particular. Their becoming is gradually forged through the stories of their early years of hardships in obtaining legal status and setting up business, of their learning to make and offering free blood curd to establish a niche market, of their selling intestine, colon and fish balls to attract regular customers, of their keeping prices low to push business, of their fighting bullies to get established, of their learning to cut pork and learning English lessons, and of their looking for other possible business opportunities for the future such as baby milk exporting and property purchasing. When the butcher stall-holder draws on his past and attributes his position of self at present to his “really being determined” (p. 120), the book alerts readers to the emergence of the protagonist’s ideological becoming, which is also nurtured by his encounters in three realms (Lofland, 1998), viz. with family members in private realms, with customers and wholesale dealers in public realms, and with colleagues in parochial realms. The literary presentation of the ideological becoming is realized through the assemblage of myriad scenes of buying and selling between traders and customers, through the description of fleeting moments of transactions, through the attention to gesture and mime to evidence the conviviality and willingness to “oil the wheels of human interaction”, and through the highlighting of translanguaging and translation practices to reveal the alignment among the voices. In the voices of the superdiverse city market, people also find their voices “speaking in their own right” (p. 16).

Section “Eel” is committed to the form of lines reorganized based on prosodic patterns in narratives as an independent unit in Part 2. By telling a story “with minimal linguistic resources” (Blommaert, 2006, p. 182), this section tries on Hymesian ethnopoetics to “re-articulate the voices of those whose speech in the language of the narrative is heavily accented, hesitant, or lacking confidence” (Blackledge, Creese and Hu, 2014, p. 97).

In Part 3 Section “Bread” serves as the coda of the book by returning to the scene of discussion in Part 1. “Leaving the original material intact” without “explanation and analysis” (p. 194) is agreed on as a successful form of ethnographic presentation because this kind of treatment allows for a critical view to examine the social life in the market.

This piece of work researching on voices of the market has informed the current ethnographic research from at least two perspectives. Firstly it exhausts all the modern research techniques available, researching out for details of social life to reveal the complexity and superdiversity of the city market. The way the data are collected and presented has also shed some light on both ethnographic research method and ethnographic writing. It can be hailed as the cornerstone of twenty-first century ethnography.





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**Aihui Wu, Jiangsu University and Birkbeck, University of London**

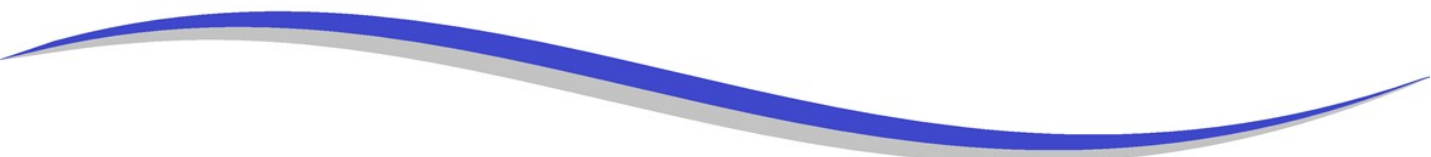
**Kiesling, S. F. (2019). *Language, Gender and Sexuality: An Introduction*. London: Routledge. ISBN: 9781138487727. 187 pages.**

At the time of writing, issues of gender and sexuality continue to explode in the news headlines and in the Twittersphere. Arguments about the use of pronouns, for example, or about whether male-to-female Trans folk can be considered women are commonplace and everyone has an opinion to offer. Understanding how language is often implicitly involved in these discussions is essential and so this introduction arrives at a timely juncture, and is a useful guide for students and interested lay readers alike.

The book starts with setting out the scope of the volume, a word on terminology and also a section where Kiesling 'checks his privilege'. Here he allows the reader to know his stance and reminds us that no writer can be completely disinterested. In the second chapter, he works through foundational issues about what linguists study and highlights some key ideas in the field which may not be obvious to a non-specialist readership: 'everyone speaks a dialect' (p. 11) and 'language change is normal' (p. 13). Then in Chapter 3 he writes what he describes as 'a very short introduction to a very big topic' (p. 21). Though short, he successfully condenses a lot of theory and research into gender and sexuality, and takes care to inform the reader where space limits what he writes.

Chapter 4 answers the question of 'How we got here' by summarising the essential ideas and referring to the key researchers to give a history of the field. As in Chapter 3, Kiesling covers an impressive amount of ground in a relatively short chapter without allowing the reader to feel overwhelmed. Throughout the book, he includes subtle asides that help to break down the professor-novice relationship. For example, at the beginning of Chapter 4 he contrasts a standard pronunciation of *working* against his own pronunciation as a way of introducing an early study into 'how gender affects language use' (p. 35). This stylistic choice eliminates the sense that the reader is being lectured and makes the reading experience more enjoyable.

The book is at its most contemporary in Chapter 5, where Kiesling discusses insults, names for genitals and '[t]he politics of pronouns and binarity' (p. 77). In this latter section, 'the initialization of non-hegemonic sexualities' and the words 'queer' and 'trans' are both treated to short, but clear, discussions. The chapter ends with the suggestion



that the reader can do their own further reflection as to how language allows or obliges language users to categorise people and objects. Such invitations are common throughout the book and make it clear that the writer is providing the reader only with an introduction.

This reader found one of the strengths of the book to be the way it introduces a range of key concepts in linguistics through the lens of gender and sexuality. A novice student would not feel out of their depth, therefore, when Chapter 6 opens with a section on discourse analysis and then continues through the idea of *face* in politeness theory and onto *stance*. Key terms are indicated in bold and explained carefully; sometimes through parenthetical comments which can be ignored by the more knowledgeable reader, but can reassure beginners to the field.

Where Chapter 5 is arguably the most contemporary, Chapter 7 is perhaps the most dense and difficult for the non-specialist. Like the other chapters, it begins with an introduction that orients the reader with the necessary ideas before continuing with a discussion of the main points in more detail. Here, this means the research into sociolinguistic variation and how this interacts with gender and sexuality. Despite a plethora of graphs and references to studies, the prose gently takes the reader through evidence from research about how gender norms seem to exist in speech before problematising the search for “gay voice”.

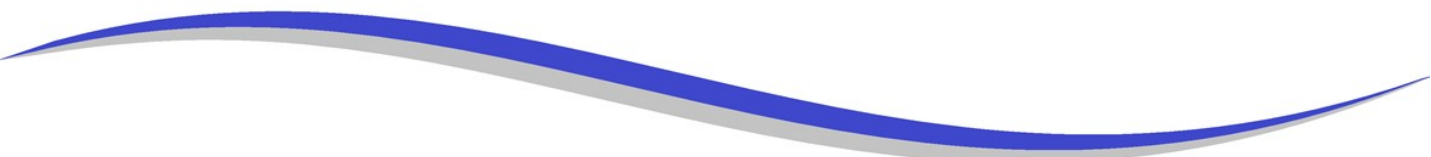
Although gender and sexuality are closely related concepts, they are also both large and independent topics of their own. Kiesling weaves the two together seamlessly and his concluding remarks in Chapter 8 suggest where the reader can find more information and where the field still has work to do: language use in the workplace, for example, as well as the legal and medical domains. He also highlights the paucity of work addressing how language interacts with Trans issues, including how the body and language connect.

Throughout, the style is engaging and conversational and makes this an accessible introduction to a complex, varied and difficult area. It assumes no background knowledge of the area and discusses both established theory and contemporary emergent trends and ideas. The notes at the end of each chapter provide suggestions for relevant further reading, useful contextual information or explain typographical choices used for potentially pejorative language. Bibliographical information is provided per chapter allowing the reader to peruse further reading thematically, and a brief index of ideas and researchers is given at the end. Therefore, this volume is considered by the reviewer to be essential reading for students at the beginning of a linguistics course or any general reader with an interest in the topic.

**Chris Richards, Open University**

**Phipps, A. (2019). *Decolonising multilingualism. Struggles to decreate*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. ISBN: 9781788924047. 101 pages.**

*Decolonising Multilingualism* is defined by its author as offering ‘a series of autoethnographic narratives, fragments, poems, interludes, critical reflections and some theoretical engagement’ (p. 2). It starts from the position that many existing critiques of the colonality of knowledge production have not always explicitly dealt with the centrality of language to the decolonising process. This slim volume is not a compendium of practical advice or even theoretical

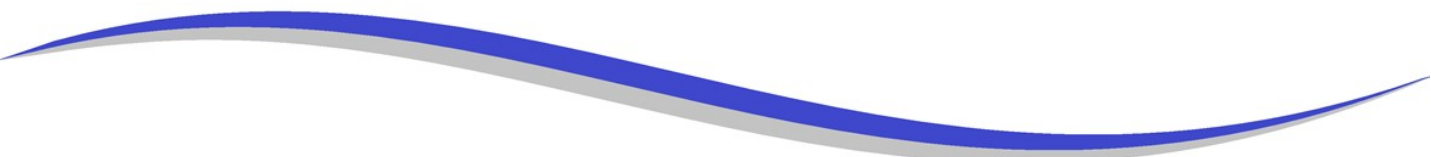


guidelines; rather, it is a series of reflections across seventeen chapters divided in three parts, where the author blends personal and professional stories with photographs and her own poetry, crediting Naa Densua Tordzro, Gameli Tordzro, Jabaru and the Noyam Institute for African Dance (Dodowa, Ghana) for Part 1 and Piki Diamond, Chaz Doherty, Sophie Nock and Tawona Sitholé as co-authors for Part 3.

The first (unnumbered) chapter after the introduction takes the shape of a manifesto, suggesting nine principles which could be used as a basis for reflection and action. These include transforming citing practices, the way we define what constitutes “knowledge” and the way we share that knowledge, especially in writing. These principles are complemented by suggestions peppered through the book, ranging from learning non-European, non-well-resourced languages, to taking the body into account and “putting English last” if working multilingually. Phipps then summarises these principles and suggestions in the conclusion (Chapter 14) under five ‘key elements which [...] are necessary for us to make a beginning’ (p. 89): doing it, knowingly mischievous, representing the multilingual speaker, acoustic and kinaesthetics, and the spiritual/ritual/ceremonial dimensions.

In Part 1 (Chapters 1-2), Phipps takes a severe injury happening as part of an international “development” workshop in Accra to question how decolonising multilingualism can happen through loss of language and through the body. She proposes a definition of decolonising as ‘the changing of relationships of power, control and dependency into ones where there can be a shift towards an equality that was not possible under the previous arrangement’ (p. 23): while categories and structures of power might still be in operation after these changes, these gaps and re-arrangements nonetheless allow for ‘new sets of relation [to] come into being’ (p. 23). Connecting her loss of language due to physical pain to Fanon and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s calls for decolonising the mind, she presents the anecdote as a moment of reshaping of relations through risking “decreation”, and mentions the practical example of a research project ‘working multilingually, with English last’ (p. 29), although no further details are offered.

Part 2 (Chapters 3-10 and a Coda) draws on Phipps’ experience working in partnership with refugees, in her research and presumably her role as the UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts. In those chapters she describes the lives of women waiting and sharing in an unnamed East African city and focuses on “decreation”, the process of making ‘something created pass into the uncreated’, as conceptualised by Simone Weil (p. 43). Decreation goes beyond the notion of vulnerability and connects decolonisation to the question of loss discussed in the first part: loss of language, loss of words, loss of understanding, loss of references, loss of competence, loss of capacity, loss of “middle people” (translators, “assistants”, so often unnamed and unacknowledged in research). Instead, she highlights the importance of not reproducing known ways of working, with the researcher in control, in a situation where she could not make a decision, because her making one would endanger the entire group. In such a short book, there is unfortunately not enough space to go further into the theoretical and practical questions this poses: what does this mean for researchers in other settings? What exactly is “ontological decreation” and how does it differ from other concepts? In chapter 10, Phipps goes back to much repeated (because very necessary) advice regarding sharing the space, although does not expand on the practicalities as ‘that’s for another short book’ (p. 69). In this particular volume, she focuses on the ‘provocative, disturbing and disquieting’ effects of the sharing as a way of unsettling the colonial legacies: it is learning through bodies, not through words, it is learning through muteness, not through talking, it is learning through loss of control, not through doing.



In Part 3 (Chapters 11-13), Phipps discusses her learning of te reo Māori and upending her relation to herself and others through language learning. She highlights the ‘queasiness’ of being a White scholar in Aotearoa, and how language learning required her to question what she had previously held as learning and sharing knowledge (p. 78), in other words ‘decolonising my own cosmology’ (p. 83). She concludes by suggesting that through this experience of language learning, she ‘was offering a mind that could be, for a moment, stripped bare of the words which give it global power, and the potential for even greater theft, as Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o describes it, and letting others choose how to teach me, how to decolonise my own mind’ (p. 86).

Although Phipps advocates working multilingually and ‘putting English last’, *Decolonising Multilingualism* is almost entirely in English. This may be a testament to the difficulties of transposing multilingualism in writing for an unknown audience whose repertoires vary hugely; however, there could have been scope for more unsettling and questioning of the genre and format of academic structure: is the inclusion of poetry and the recognition of co-authors on title pages (but not on the front cover) enough to break the boundaries of colonial knowledge? Nonetheless, this collection of chapters and musings represents excellent material to prompt discussions with colleagues (both linguists and non-linguists) and with students, in order to keep questioning Whiteness in research, how to unlearn the ways of the academy, how to decreate when we work in classrooms and share knowledge in writing, and how to bridge our learning and teaching selves.


**Camille Jacob, University of Portsmouth**

**Kohn, M. (2019). *Four words for friend. Why using more than one language matters now more than ever*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. ISBN: 9780300231083. 256 pages.**

When this book first came out in February 2019, one review asked whether the British reluctance to learn languages might be partly to blame for Brexit (Poole, 2019). Is this book relevant for professional applied linguists as well as generalists with an interest in language? This review will argue that it is.

Marek Kohn has written widely on the implications of scientific thinking for our ideas about human nature and society. He makes no claims to be a teacher, but rather a storyteller finding a path between the different domains of language. The book is organised into nine chapters of between 25 and 37 pages. Most chapters are driven by a key question. Each chapter is supported by footnotes, often exceeding forty. There is an extensive bibliography and a somewhat shorter index. The choice of chapter titles is important and each title is supported by a brief comment.

In Chapter 1, ‘Other Words Are Possible’, the writer introduces himself as a ‘typical heritage speaker’ of both Polish and English. ‘My vocabulary is limited, my grammar impoverished. . . Yet the language is mine and it is part of me’ (p.1). In Chapter 2, ‘Babel: The Conspiracy Theory’, Kohn pursues the theory started in Chapter 1 that language ‘exists as much to prevent communication as to make it happen’ (p.8). He asks why so many different languages (between six and eight thousand) exist today and he quotes the biologist Mark Pagel as estimating that, at one time, twelve to twenty thousand may have been spoken around the world (p. 28). Kohn also draws upon the work of linguist/anthropologist Donald Laycock (2001) in Papua New Guinea to claim that some of the observed isolation



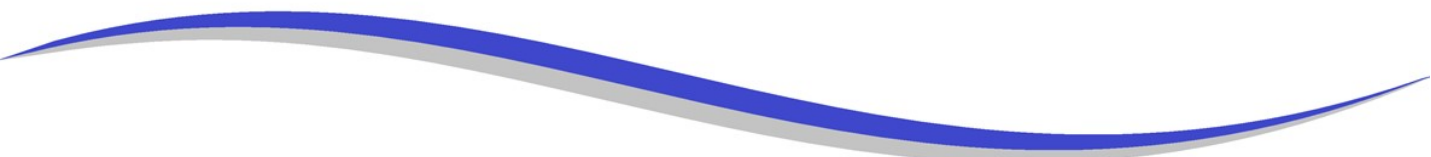
and divergence between languages may be due to human agency. Kohn disputes the Babel myth of ‘top-down’ divide-and-rule, arguing instead that ‘humankind was divided [...] by small groups of separatist conspirators’ (p. 38). Chapter 3, ‘The Rising Din’, starts with an anecdote from Stephen Krashen (1983) about an American scholar working in a monolingual Russian-speaking environment who has to adapt to the ‘rising din’ of another language. Kohn then asks ‘is this what it’s like for infants when first exposed to language outside the womb?’ His answer consists of an extended survey of over thirty pieces of research into infant language acquisition. Kohn draws three tentative conclusions about developing child bilingualism. Firstly, it can encourage openness to different possibilities; secondly it may raise awareness of others; and, thirdly, it may enhance conversational competence as measured by the Gricean maxims (1989).

Chapter 4, ‘It Must Still Be In There Somewhere’, covers adults and children who move from one language environment to another and asks, if the standard timeframe for the survival of a heritage language in a USA/UK family is three generations, then what are the benefits of maintaining a language beyond this timeframe? Chapter 5, ‘Two Languages In One Head’, confronts the ongoing dispute about the possible cognitive benefits of bilingualism, including delaying the onset of dementia. Kohn offers a balanced overview of both sides. Chapter 6, ‘Speakers In Search Of An End Point’, asks whether differences between languages lead to differences in how their respective speakers apprehend and communicate the world. Kohn’s argument is that, if you believe that you think differently in different languages then you do. Chapter 7, ‘Being Somebody Else’ then follows. Chapter 8, ‘One Nation, One Language’, asks about the influence of nationalism on people’s use of language, whilst Chapter 9, ‘Possible Words’, deals with future trends. Finally Kohn reiterates the purpose of his book to spread an ‘understanding that different languages are not the same language in different codes: that each has its own way of organising thought and communication, and therefore that other words are always possible’ (p. 214).

One of great pluses of this book is that it exists outside the Anglophone bubble. Many familiar applied linguists receive no mention. Instead, less familiar authorities and sources are drawn upon. Kohn is good at asking and answering the questions *how?* and *why?* How does multilingualism work and why does it matter? Applied linguists are particularly equipped to ask a third question: *So what?* One of our roles is to enhance the English aspect of our students’ multilingualism/multidialectalism so that they can better meet the academic and professional challenges they face. The more we understand multilingualism, the better we can learn to work with it for the benefit of all. More research is needed. Applied linguists and their students are particularly well-placed to do this.

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**Christina Healey, Independent Practitioner**


**Evers-Vermeul, J. and Tribushinina, E. (Eds). (2017). *Usage-based approaches to language acquisition and language teaching*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. ISBN 9781501514562. 307 pages.**

Setting out to explore what usage-based approaches (UBA) are like and approaching them with the volume edited by Ever-Vermeul and Tribushinina is a gradual discovery. The editors' clear and detailed introduction allows the reader, who might not be familiar with this line of research, to get a first contact with it.

The volume is divided into three parts. According to the "general spirit of the usage-based enterprise" (p. 2), this three-tier structure is not based upon the language type of acquisition (L1, L2 and FL); rather, the organizing principle is given by the intention that informs the single articles. Thus (and as the titles evince), the four essays that compose the first part—*Theoretical and methodological foundations of language acquisition from a usage-based perspective*—are informed by a theoretical stance. *Driving forces of language development*, the second part, groups together 5 essays of a more empirical nature. Whereas in Part 3, *Implications for language teaching and translation*, the overarching issue deals with the significance of the usage-based line of research for teaching and translation practices. The deriving first impression of the volume is accordingly one of a many-sided, all-round as well as ambitious enterprise that aims at exploring various facets and implications of UBA—not least by supporting what seems to be intended as a standard-setting procedure. That is, to deal with language acquisition in an integrative manner, regardless of whether the discussion is about L1, L2 or FL.

" 'Usage-based' is an umbrella label for a variety of approaches" (Wulff and Ellis, 2018:3) that share some common traits. Roughly, on the one side is the view of linguistic input as a primary source for language acquisition and learning. On the other, is the assumption that the cognitive mechanisms involved in language learning are the same also for other cognitive activities. This common basis expectedly leads to the use of some shared key concepts as for instance, *input*, *frequency*, *prototypicality*, *intention reading*, etc., to mention but a few. It is precisely with the discussion of some of them that the book opens, with Tribushinina and Gillis analysing the basic tenets of cognitive linguistics. Notions such as *input*, *type* and *token frequency* though are not taken at their face value. The authors question UBAs' state of the art, the assumptions, implications as well as the flaws that underlie their usage in relation to L1 acquisition. This critical attitude underlies also the following essays of the section, although in a different manner, that is, by dealing specifically with single, more circumscribed issues. Namely, in the second chapter by Gilquin, by investigating L2/FL learning from a cognitive perspective. The scholar relies in fact on the concepts of *learner's psychotypology* and *prototypicality* for the analysis of two case studies: one regarding the use of *indeed* by French learners of English, the other concerning the blended construction *discuss about* often found in some New Englishes. In the following two chapters, the critical stance turns instead to methodological issues. In





Chapter 3 the focus is on the situational context. Beekhuizen et al. argue for a more comprehensive analysis of its features and develop a new, accurate encoding system that considers visual cues and utterances (basing it on 32 video fragments concerning mother-daughter interaction) at the same time. Validity issues, such as attrition, measurement invariance and density of measurements, are instead the core matter van den Bergh and Evers-Vermeul concentrate on, given the important role of longitudinal studies for UBA.

The articles in Part 2 of the volume, as hinted above, are of a more empirical nature. Altogether they tend to highlight the importance of the role played by some aspects of the language acquisition process that have been accorded less consideration in previous UBA, while stressing the specificities of the learner's experience. They rely on different methodologies and the insight they offer is quite varied, ranging from Steinkrauss' analysis of the acquisition of *wh*-interrogative constructions in German—which brings to the fore the importance of children's previous linguistic knowledge as well as of their communicative interest—to Maria Mos' MultiRep Model, which investigates how children's representations of morphemes are built up. Or again, from Elma Nap-Kolhoff's study of L2 acquisition in bilingual Turkish-Dutch children, to the acquisition order of referential and relational connectives in Dutch L1 and L2 by Anne Vermeer. The acquisition of connectives, and more precisely additive connectives, by Russian- German bilinguals, is also the topic of the following chapter by Tribushinina et al.

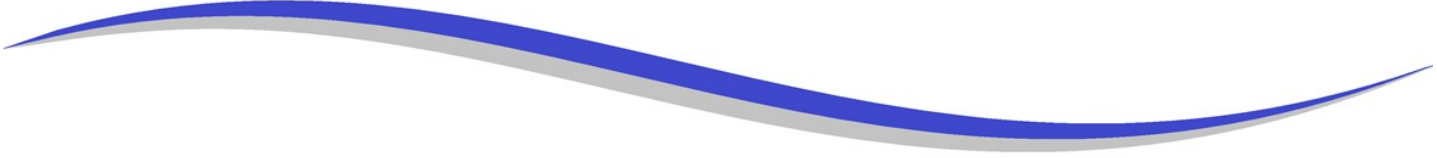
As far as the third part of the book is concerned, the content of the last three articles could be roughly summarized under the question "How can usage-based data be relevant and improve language teaching?" In fact, Gustafsson and Verspoor's longitudinal study presents a UBA to chunks in Dutch L2 learners of English. Their study focuses on the differences between two groups of learners, one in high- and the other in low-input conditions, in an attempt to capture significant differences in the development of each group over time. Input frequency is a central issue also in Nizonkisa's investigation of productive collocation knowledge by L2 learners in relation to their general language proficiency. With Sullivan and Valenzuela, the focus finally shifts from the classroom to translation studies and, more precisely, to bilingual comparable corpora and their application in cognitive linguistics. The process is illustrated on the basis of four adjectives: the English *smooth* and *soft* and the Spanish *suave* and *blando*.

From the foregoing, rough outline of the book content, one definitely gets an idea of the impact of the volume, and of the many ways the explanatory power of the usage-based paradigm has been used in order to analyse different aspects of LA—be it L1 or L2/FL. Thought-provoking and insightful as the articles in the volume may be on their own, they offer some added value in their being part of a collection. Their interplay, in fact, discloses further information on UBA altogether, giving life to a sort of implicit meta-discourse. A discourse that points to the reassessment in progress of the role of some of the basic tenets of the UBA (most notably that of *input frequency*: see Tribushinina and Gillis, Gilquin, Steinkrauss). It is a discourse that—aware of its limits—is capable of synergies (particularly with corpus linguistics) and of a critical self-assessment (Beekhuizen et al., van den Bergh and Evers-Vermeul). Finally, it is a discourse that reveals the fragmented, puzzle-like nature of the usage-based theory of language acquisition, perhaps because, as one of the authors states, "the goal of a usage-based model is not to achieve mathematical elegance, but to depict the complexity of language use" (p. 166).

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Rothman, J. and Serratrice, L. (eds), *Bilingual cognition and language: the state of the science across its subfields* (pp. 2-56). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

**M. Cristina Boscolo, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano**

**Chua Siew Kheng, C. (Ed.) (2018). *Un(intended) language planning in a globalising world: Multiple levels of players at work*. Berlin: De Gruyter. ISBN 9783110518238, 372 pages.**

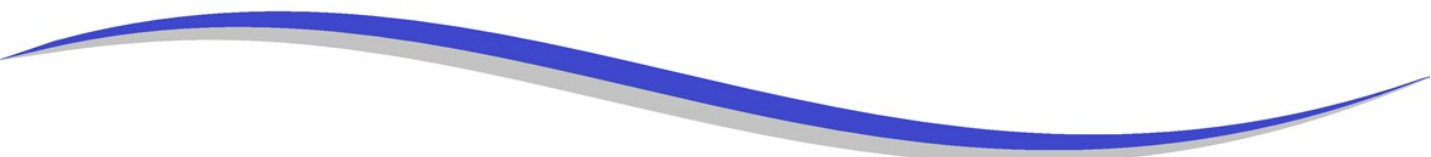
A book aiming to cover language planning on a global scale at multiple policy levels is ambitious, and Chua Siew Kheng does a valiant job of collating articles from an impressive range of international contexts, though her bias towards Europe and, particularly, East Asia is noticeable. The background here is globalisation and how countries are dealing with the challenges posed by an ever-increasing pressure to adopt the English language in some form. All chapters utilise the Language Policy and Planning (LPP) framework developed by the recently deceased Richard (Dick) Baldauf Jr, who spent his life progressing the field from descriptions of government policy to a dynamic and flexible multi-layered model. As the book is so reliant on this model, it is worth describing both the LPP model and the resultant organisation of chapters.

This book is roughly divided into four sections directly reflecting levels of LPP, beginning with a broad, international focus (the supra macro level, such as institutions like the EU), before gently descending through macro (national organisation), micro (local organisation) and infra micro (practitioner) levels. Assuming such a structure makes this book a good introduction to LPP, as its explanations of national language policy history (macro) are extensive and its explorations of teacher engagement with language policy (infra-micro) are instructive. However, the book is held back by a tendency to favour banal description over critical exploration.

The first four chapters on the supra macro level of LPP are demonstrative of this. The first chapter (Chapter 2—Chapter 1 is an introduction) is a strong indication of the book's direction, providing an overview of the issues of globalisation and the development of English as a Lingua Franca. However, it then moves on to a historical outline of LPP developments in Japan, the Soviet Union, and North Korea. These are comprehensive and interesting in their own right, but they are neither comparable nor evenly related to the purpose of the chapter. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) certainly encouraged such description of LPP, but only in the interest of cross-comparison through carefully considered presentation.

Chapters 3 and 4 are similarly problematic, as they each focus on LPP in the EU yet overlap in remarkably few places; even if their purposes are different (Chapter 3 focuses on minority language policy and Chapter 4 on higher education), their disparate summaries of policy history are bemusing. Of the two, Chapter 4 provides a much more helpful consideration of LPP at a Swiss university on the border with France and Germany and is a compelling read. Chapter 5 also presents the effect of English LPP on minority languages (but in the Philippines), and forms an interesting but simplistic account whose lack of discussion or consideration of other contexts makes critical comparison and judgement needlessly difficult.

Next are three chapters on Macro-level LPP, beginning with Chapter 6's account of Arabic and English LPP



development in the UAE. The discussion of the country's quasi-colonial history proved eye-opening, but it is ultimately as inconsequential as Chapter 7's comparison of the role of religion in Malaysian and Singaporean LPP. In both cases, the effective conclusion is that LPP fails to counter a rapidly growing reliance on English. A standout moment can be found in Chapter 7, which utilises descriptions of LPP in the USA and Turkey to discuss issues of national security. This is the first chapter in which the juxtaposition of contexts becomes more than the sum of its parts, proving both timely and insightful.


The book becomes significantly more interesting in its three chapters on the micro level, as it begins to deal with the practical realities of LPP. Chapter 9 provides insight into how one Spanish business adopted Basque using local pro-minority language policies, but while the chapter's outline of the policy framework is potentially useful, the ensuing case study is not. Chapter 10 promises a similarly novel LPP context, showing how Swiss news reporters deal with translation in multilingual settings, but this amounts to a description of what a small number of journalists do rather than organisation-level policy. Both chapters are weakened by participants who are clearly not trained to be making judgements on LPP, though neither chapter raises it as an issue. Chapter 11, however, is a dense discussion of LPP and race in South African universities. This is one of the few chapters which is positive about English, ironically presenting it as a more decolonial option than the failing policy of using Afrikaans as a Medium of Instruction.

The final section on infra micro LPP is fascinating but ultimately let down by the authors' unfamiliarity with English education literatures. Both Chapter 12, a well-balanced description of the complexities of implementing English as a Medium of Instruction policy in Vietnamese universities, and Chapter 14, a piece on Chinese early-years education in Singapore, rely on research which has a high citation-rating thanks to widespread derision (e.g. Krashen's Input Hypothesis: Krashen, 1985). Chapter 14 is particularly poor, citing the opinions of a certain major educational materials publisher and spending two thirds of its word count espousing the virtues of the Singaporean education system.

Chapter 13, however, is a much more even-handed critical description of how English as a Medium of Instruction educators in Malaysia engage (or not) with official policy, providing an interesting reinterpretation of well-supported research. Chapter 15 is a very similar piece in the Chinese context and is perhaps the best of the book: it offers useful description and a depth of analysis of teacher agency which encourages the reader to engage intellectually. This is refreshing after the rest of the book almost reads like an LPP tourist guidebook, each describing a country or context without passing any useful judgement.

Two final chapters are ideological and open-ended. Chapter 16 naïvely suggests that peace might be taught explicitly through language education, failing to engage with the clear sub-theme of the book of how (English) language education in a time of globalisation is often symbolically violent, spreading social division and colonising minority groups. This chapter is not promoting peace, but docility. Chapter 17 completes the book more inquisitively, helpfully asking if the field might benefit from a shift towards discussing a more flexible language "management" rather than planning.

I feel I've been somewhat harsh. This book goes a long way towards meeting its lofty ambitions, with all but a few contributors providing relevant and interesting details of a variety of LPP contexts and levels. My complaint is that it could have meant a lot more if the descriptions were purposeful and critically engaging, or at least if there were



more dialogue and comparison between authors. As it stands, the book is symptomatic of its field and therefore forms an excellent introductory text.

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**Thomas S. Avery, University of Bath**



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Rheindorf, M. and Wodak, R. (Eds). (2020). *Sociolinguistic perspectives on migration control: language policy, identity and belonging*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. [eBook]

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Unless there is a very special reason, please submit material in Times New Roman, 12pt, left aligned (not justified). Please do not use text boxes, or try to format your contribution in any other way, as this complicates the reformatting. Contributions are limited to a maximum of 1000 words. Thank you.





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