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Review of M. Bigelow and J. Ennser-Kananen (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Educational Linguistics*

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BOOK REVIEW

To appear in *Language and Education*

The Routledge Handbook of Educational Linguistics

M. Bigelow and J. Enns-Kananen, eds.

New York

Routledge

2015

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True to the advocacy articulated by editors Bigelow and Enns-Kananen, authors herein pinpoint compelling core issues and critical forward-looking agendas on topics from language teacher education to Indigenous language revitalization, from second language acquisition research methodologies to the ethics of researcher positionality in ethnography and discourse analysis. Well-structured chapters (covering historical perspectives, research findings and approaches, new debates and implications), comprehensive and relevant bibliographies, and diversity of experiential, geographical, and disciplinary author expertise make the volume an enjoyable and informative read and a valuable reference. A book for both novice and expert in educational linguistics, it succeeds admirably in the editors' goal of 'expanding the community of scholars' to embrace those 'doing the work of educational linguistics ... without claiming the label' (p. 2), an enterprise I heartily applaud.

Organized in 33 chapters grouped in seven parts, the table of contents works well to highlight equity and priority areas of concern in educational linguistics such as persistent and worldwide linguistic marginalization of students, native speakerism and the harm it does to 'non-native' language teachers, and the complexities of implementing critical pedagogy. Only a handful of chapters explicitly situate themselves in educational linguistics, but the research cited and issues addressed fall squarely within the concerns and purview of educational linguistics as it has emerged and gathered momentum in the past 40 years -- a problem-oriented, research-based, and transdisciplinary field that focuses on language learning and teaching, and more broadly, the role of language in learning and teaching (Hornberger 2001).

Parts One and Two provide framing chapters addressing *Ways of Knowing in Educational Linguistics* and *Advocacy in Educational Linguistics*, respectively. A stunning pair of overview chapters by Gass (ch. 1) on second language acquisition research methodologies and McCarty (2) on ethnography in educational linguistics provide authoritative accounts of the evolution and continual honing of those ways of knowing and point to emerging technologies and processes that bear further research attention, such as eye-tracking and brain activity measures to shed light on the cognitive processing of language, or the implications of simultaneous 21st

century forces of super-diversity and language endangerment for the ways we understand language, speakerhood, language fluency, and speech communities. Common themes emerging from Johnson & Ricento's (3) review of language policy research methodologies and Higgins & Sandhu's (4) consideration of narrative approaches to researching identity include researchers' increasing attention to the agency of individuals in shaping their own narratives/policies (often in resistance to larger forces and/or top-down policies) and, equally, researchers' growing critical awareness and consideration of their own positionality in all phases of the research process.

Part Two leads off with Faltis (5) calling on US teacher educators and classroom teachers to reflect on where they stand on advocacy for language diversity in their school policies/practices. Authors of the next three chapters bring international perspectives and experiences to riveting discussions of linguistic marginalization and educational inequity for students in global northern and southern contexts (Liddicoat & Heugh, 6), the culpability of language discrimination and a rigid literacy-orality paradigm in producing school failure for Brazilian low income students (Rocha-Schmid, 7), and the delegitimizing of non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) now being overturned by research moving beyond comparing native and non-native speaking teachers and instead approaching and contributing to redefinitions of language, language learning, and language teaching through a 'NNEST lens' (Llurda, 8).

Part Three, *Contexts of Multilingual Education*, and Part Four, *Critical Pedagogy and Language Education*, offer a panorama of thematic and programmatic treatments promoting multilingualism and heteroglossic practices in education, 11 chapters about evenly divided between US and international viewpoints. Björklund & Mård-Miettinen (9) highlight essential features of immersion education as gleaned from its origins in Quebec and subsequent 50 years of implementation in diverse contexts worldwide. García & Woodley (10) underline the necessity of a move from traditional monoglossic to contemporary heteroglossic perspectives on bilingualism in their overview of models, research findings, and current debates on bilingual education in the US and internationally. Gonzalez, Tefera & Artilles (11) highlight the continued struggles of emergent bilingual students with learning disabilities in the US educational system, identifying inclusive education and 'Response to Intervention' initiatives as positive indicators of a growing awareness that the system, not the child, needs fixing. Emphasizing that the US is a settler colonial nation whose structural logic tends toward elimination of Indigenous languages, Hermes & Bang (12) focus their chapter on developing a counter-narrative of language revitalization that challenges the ideology of 'language death', adopts and adapts immersion-like methods as catalyst for developing truly self-determined Indigenous pedagogies to restore oral Indigenous language, and calls on scholars and Indigenous groups to collaborate 'not to *save* ... but rather to *engage* Indigenous languages' (p. 168). Focusing mainly on German and English foreign language teaching in secondary and higher education, Hecke (13) argues for and provides examples of the value of visual literacy-- a learned competence defined as the ability

to understand visual communication, i.e. to analyze in context, interact with, question and evaluate visual messages -- for foreign language teaching and learning. Richardson (14) advocates eloquently for African American language as 'repository of Black culture, history, and identity' (p. 193) and strongly refutes Labov's bidialectalism which on the one hand recognizes AAVE as an expressive resource but on the other advocates standardized language as the path to economic opportunity, erasing the fact that poor Black people are trapped by structural racism, not phonology.

Situating her innovative pedagogy in a framework aligned to ecological theory and to Freirean humanizing pedagogy, Salazar (15) opens Part Four on critical pedagogy by describing a language submersion lesson for pre-service teachers in a language and on a topic unfamiliar to them as a disruptive learning experience that serves as catalyst for them to reflect on and transform the ways they think about their future practice with English language learners. Leeman & King (16) demonstrate how heritage language education arose in the US as a fall-back response to the closing down of spaces for mother tongue and bilingual education, while still leaving the English-only educational paradigm largely intact; they argue for educational linguists' continued vigilance in improving the quantity and quality of heritage language programming while at the same time challenging the linguistic hierarchy that reifies monolingualism in the national language as the normal state of things. Sugiharto (17) analyzes recent Indonesian language education policies and curricula along with data from classroom observations as a case of English linguistic imperialism, showing that the widespread introduction of English-only medium of instruction in local state-run schools exacerbates social stratification and inequality of access to education and poses a serious threat to Indonesian Indigenous languages. Reviewing especially the contributions of linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists in the study of immigrant education since the 1970s, Bartlett & Koyama (18) applaud the shift from assimilationist and additive approaches to more complex and nuanced understandings of immigrant families' communicative practices situated in broader ideologies and discourses, and argue for more research on the pedagogical uses of codeswitching and translanguaging, on immigrant education contexts beyond the US, and on especially vulnerable immigrant groups such as undocumented immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. Sarroub & Quadros (19) explore the use of critical pedagogy in classroom discourse in two contexts -- international English language teaching classrooms and family literacy programs, highlighting positive aspects while calling for more systematic research across multiple socioeconomic and sociocultural contexts addressing questions such as whether critical pedagogy makes a material difference to students and their families, whether educators are capable of distancing themselves from their own ideologies enough to relinquish control of classroom discourse, and which voices end up silenced in critical pedagogy classrooms.

A few years ago as I put together a set of critical readings in educational linguistics, I reflected on the thematic range of the field as follows:

Language Acquisition (and socialization) and Language Teaching (and assessment) represent perhaps the most enduring core concerns, but because the field arose at a time of acute awareness of educational inequality and disadvantage for ... African American and Latino children in the US, educational linguistics has from its very beginnings also foregrounded concerns around Language Diversity (and inequality) and Language Policy (and its implementation in classrooms). In recent decades, as the field – and the world – have become ever more globally oriented and connected through technologies of communication and fluid movements of people and their languages across borders, concerns around Language Ecology (and multimodality) and Language Identity (and minority language rights) have become ever more salient in the field. (Hornberger 2011, 2)

The *Routledge Handbook* is similarly focused on these themes, with concerns around diversity, policy, ecology and identity highlighted in Parts Two-Four, while Parts Five-Six take up the ‘enduring core themes’ of language acquisition, instruction and assessment and especially the role of the teacher and teacher education in these.

In Part Five, on *Language Teacher Education*, Song (20) and Martel & Wang (22), though writing from very different research traditions, provide rich and complex evidence of the ways teachers’ beliefs and identities, respectively, shape their professional practice and vice versa; and they each call for teacher educators and researchers to explore strategies and experiences that support teachers in reflecting on their beliefs and identities towards continuously transforming and improving their practice. The three other chapters of Part Five explore specific instructional practices. Shen (21) offers research-based guidance on controversies in the teaching of Chinese reading and writing in US colleges and universities, and outlines questions for further research around realistic goals for character acquisition, use of digital literacies, and the incorporation of critical pedagogy in Chinese language instruction. Boulton & Tyne (23) discuss benefits and debates around the use of corpora and corpus-based approaches in language teaching, arguing strongly that corpora and associated software and techniques are a powerful set of tools for teachers that, because of their perceived daunting and time-consuming nature, might best be introduced as part of pre-service teacher education. Horii (24) traces research-practice connections in second language acquisition from quantitative to qualitative to action research to exploratory practice approaches, and calls for SLA research to include actual classroom data, attention to the researcher-language teacher relationship, and most importantly, to ask how language teachers construct their own knowledge about language teaching (rather than only whether and how SLA has an impact on teachers’ knowledge).

Debates around the use of the primary language in foreign language classrooms (Dailey-O’Cain & Liebscher, 25), pedagogical and theoretical influences on content and language integrated learning or CLIL (Do Coyle, 27), and pressures on Chinese heritage language education in the US (Xiao, 28) come under scrutiny in Part Six, *Language Instruction and Assessment*. Tsagari & Banerjee (26) issue a strong call for assessment reform, with a particular focus on moving away from summative large-

scale standardized testing to formative classroom-based assessment, on providing professional development opportunities to strengthen teacher literacy in assessment, and on involving learners in assessment. The theme of the learner continues in Brunni & Jantunen's (29) review of research on learner language, e.g. the development of language accuracy, fluency, complexity, and factors affecting both the product and process of language learning; they underline the relevance of this research for second language pedagogy.

Part Seven, *Ethics and Politics in Educational Linguistics*, returns to overall framing questions of advocacy and equity with tour de force considerations of perhaps the 'big four' issues in the field – research ethics (Perry & Mallozzi, 30), Indigenous and minoritized languages (Hinton, 31), multilingualism (Torres-Guzmán & de Jong, 32), and dialect diversity (Sweetland & Wheeler, 33). These final chapters, and indeed the volume as a whole, powerfully depict how every kind of linguistic diversity has been persistently ignored, evaded, undermined, and even eradicated by educational research, policy, and practice. Herein is a call for educational linguists to redouble our efforts in sustained and transformative collaborations with stakeholders to shape teacher education, pedagogy, curriculum, classroom discourse, assessment practices, and policy in ways that first and foremost consider and respect what languages mean and do for the people who use them and how schools can best support those meanings and uses.

Hornberger, Nancy H. (2001). Educational linguistics as a field: A view from Penn's program on the occasion of its 25th anniversary. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 17(1-2), 1-26.

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