Foreword

Exclusive English-medium instruction (EMI), especially one that also takes its norms for the ‘E’ exogenously, is an aberration in those countries that lie outside of the ‘inner circle’ of the UK, USA, Anglophone Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and parts of the Caribbean in Kachru’s (1992) World Englishes model. Aberration is also arguably apt as a description for the practice of EMI in certain communities in these inner circle countries. Exclusive EMI in ‘outer or expanding circle’ countries and communities is a cultural travesty, one that highlights the hegemonic slant and reach of either or both colonial cultural politics and contemporary political economy.

On this view, then, EMI in content area pedagogy, even when it is initiated locally, is cut from the same ideological fabric of ‘linguistic imperialism’ as the ‘monolingual fallacy’ in the teaching of English in outer/expanding circle environments which Phillipson (1992) criticises. In both content and English language pedagogy, EMI guarantees that the inner circle has a huge market for educational resources and services, as well as a cheap and readily usable workforce. Because language, as critical language awareness reminds us, is more than a means of communication, EMI in outer/expanding circle contexts is easily able to shape local aspirations and serve as a local system of social selection for a global marketplace that is tied to the apron strings of the inner circle.

To take on the ‘E’ in EMI, as this collection does, is therefore much more than an exercise in documenting pedagogical practices. Taking on the ‘E’ is a major intervention in the ordinary course of colonial cultural politics and contemporary political economy in the classroom. The editors, BethAnne Paulsrud, Zhongfeng Tian and Jeanette Toth, as well as their authors are to be applauded for tackling this question through the lens of translanguaging. Obviously, translanguaging has by now established itself as, among others, theory, pedagogy and political action. It is therefore well suited to challenge the pride of place that has been traditionally accorded the ‘E’ in content or language pedagogy in multilingual outer circle contexts, or to push back on, and temper the influence of, an increasingly important ‘E’ in expanding circle countries and communities.

Contributors to this book provide accounts of translanguaging in primary, secondary and tertiary education, and do so from a breathtakingly impressive array of peripheral contexts in Hong Kong, Turkey, Malawi, Kenya, Japan, South Africa, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Italy and Cambodia. We learn about how school proprietors, teachers and students continue to go against the grain of micro- and macro-level policies to prise open spaces in which the hegemony of English is challenged.

There have been and there will be other ways of challenging English hegemony, but translanguaging has emerged as an important tool for semiotic glocalisation in the classroom. Glocalisation of meaning-making resources in the classroom allows a powerful language like English with global reach to interact symbiotically with local languages in the education of students, and in such a way that all that goes in lockstep with local languages and local meaning-making (e.g. embedded knowledge, perspectives, environment, workers) is not sacrificed on the altar of globalism.

On the other hand, translanguaging is caught up in something of a quandary. We know now that contemporary, neoliberal power works best, in Foucauldian terms, by concealing the dynamics of its exercise; in other words, ‘when it is exercised through productive constraints [that enable] subjects to act *in order* to constrain them’ (Tremain, 2005: 4, original emphasis). We also know now that multilingualism, even while being feted globally, is increasingly being pressed into the service of monoculturalism and other centre interests (Piller, 2016). In whatever flavour (such as translating, code-switching, or normalised and boundary-defying heteroglossic practice), translanguaging will not mount a serious challenge to the ‘E’ if it is merely an ancillary or a pathway to the ‘E’, operating largely within a ‘flexible convergence’ model of multilingual education (García, 2009a). The ‘E’ is not challenged when local languages are called to do duty only in ratified or unratified peer talk, in the teacher’s explanation or simplification of content presented in ‘E’ or in the teacher’s regulation of classroom behaviour. What these practices do in fact is to enact an ideology of language hierarchy in which features enregistered as ‘non-E’ are inferior to ‘E’.

To correct the aberration that the ‘E’ in EMI represents in outer/expanding circle contexts, what the lens of cultural politics and political economy suggests is that, in the multiple ways it is understood, translanguaging go beyond ephemeral teacher-talk or notes on the board. It will have to set itself objectives that transcend enhanced understanding of lessons or the reconfiguring of power in interpersonal relations in the classroom. In some contexts, for translanguaging to serve as a rejoinder to a politicised ‘E’ in EMI, features enregistered as named local languages must be valued enough to become integral parts of the repertoire employed in presenting core content across subjects on offer, in writing course material and in providing assessment tasks (Antia & Dyers, 2019). Translanguaging must support a local educational material development

industry. In all contexts, it will have to be generative of discourses and practices that stave off convergence, promoting ‘flexible multiplicity’ (García, 2009a) instead.

Without a doubt, this book is a treasure trove of material for reflecting on translanguaging as a project in theory construction, in pedagogical practice and in the political economy of languaging in a clearly circumscribed context.

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