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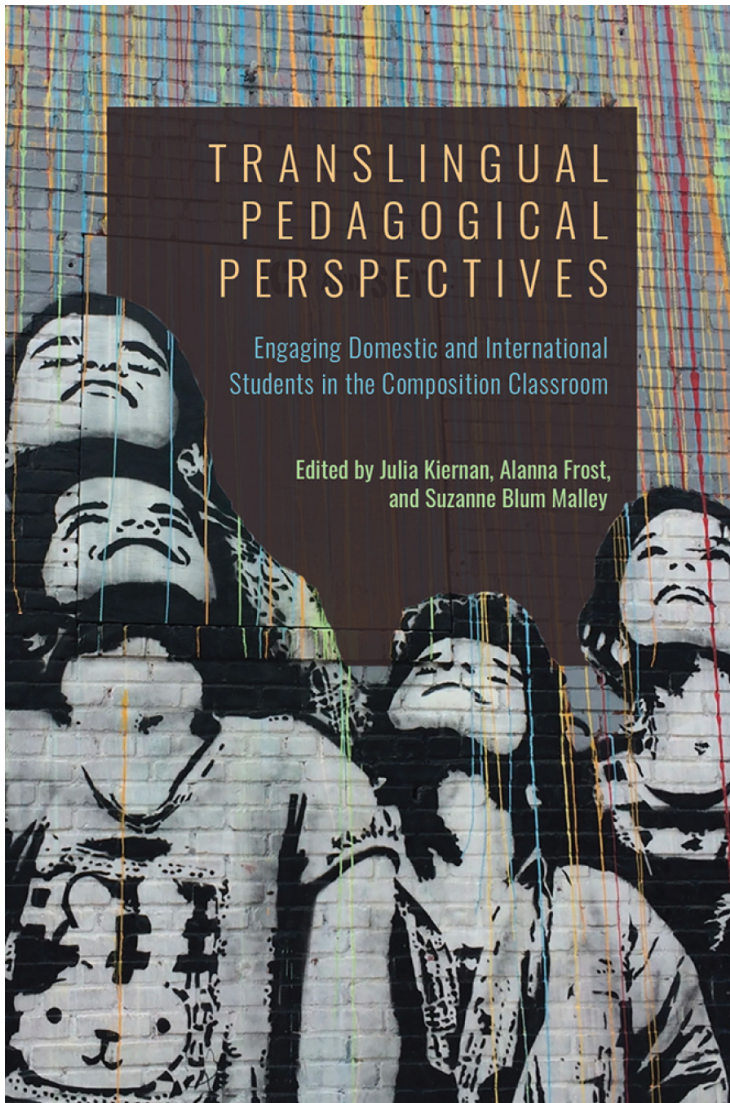
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Review of Julia Kiernan, Alanna Frost, and Suzanne Blum Malley's *Translingual Pedagogical Perspectives: Engaging Domestic and International Students in the Composition Classroom*

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My first encounter with the concept of



translingualism was in a graduate seminar where Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and John Trimbur's "Language Difference in Writing: Toward a Translingual Approach" was assigned. As a transnational student and long-time English as a Second Language teacher, I had always accepted the assumption that languages are discrete, bounded, and rule-governed systems that my students and I needed to master in order to become successful writers. My own education, teacher training, and current practice was steeped in monolingual, "English Only" ideology that manifested itself in a prescriptive approach to teaching English as a Second Language. I was immediately drawn to Horner et al.'s argument that language is a socially situated, emergent practice. In terms of practical application, however, I

had so many questions, which I continued to wrestle with, including: *How can I teach translingualism effectively, and how does it work in different locations and types of classrooms (i.e. multilingual, mainstream, mixed)? How can I anticipate different student responses to translingualism ranging from openness to rejection? How can a translingual pedagogy go beyond performative codemixing and foster critical language awareness?*

In *Translingual Pedagogical Perspectives: Engaging Domestic and International Students in the Composition Classroom*, editors and writing scholars Julia Kieran, Alanna Frost, and Suzanne Blum Malley take up these and many more questions that practitioners in the field of rhetoric and composition continue to grapple with. As cited by multiple contributors in the collection, A. Suresh Canagarajah has asserted there is "a general feeling [among practitioners] that the theorization of translingual literacy has far outpaced pedagogical practice for advancing proficiency in the classroom" (41). Kieran et al. fill this gap and address

the uncertainty of practitioners who acknowledge the exigency of the translingual turn, but who lack the pedagogical tools and strategies to implement it in the classroom.

The book begins with a “Foreword” by Ellen Cushman and ends with an “Afterword” by Thomas Laval. Cushman’s “Foreword” addresses the importance of challenging monolingual ideologies and attendant power structures while starting with students’ lived experiences and beliefs about language. Frost et al.’s “Introduction” further elaborates on the ongoing need for pedagogies, curricula, and programs that respond to the lived, translingual reality of multilingual and monolingual students in which linguistic, semiotic, multimodal, multisensory communication is the norm. One overarching goal of the book is to foster a translingual disposition among students and teachers, which has been characterized by Horner et al. as “openness and inquiry that people take to language and language differences” (311).

The eleven theoretically grounded, research-based chapters are divided into two parts: Part I, “Enacting Translingual Pedagogies in First-Year Composition,” focuses on specific pedagogical innovations and assignments in first-year composition, while Part II, “Enacting Translingual Dispositions in Interdisciplinary Spaces,” expands the scope of translingual possibilities in other writing contexts, such as writing centers and classrooms outside the U.S. One strength of the collection is that the authors provide suggestions for adaptations for other contexts beyond their single case study. For example, while Mark Bratner’s chapter on a linguistic landscape assignment sequence from his writing classroom in Singapore is not immediately translatable to a U.S. context, Bratner offers ideas and ignites plenty of thinking on how it could be implemented in a U.S. composition classroom.

For readers interested in translingual pedagogical strategies, this focus is most apparent in Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. These chapters offer standalone and sequenced assignments that help students explore, interrogate, play with, and wrestle with communication across languages (and, in some instances, modalities). Ghanashyam Sharma’s chapter (Ch. 1) “Addressing Monolingual Dispositions with Translingual Pedagogy” discusses the practical potentials of a translingual pedagogy. Sharma acknowledges the widespread preference for monolingual language practices among students and other stakeholders across the institution and the public. As a pragmatic response, Sharma provides a convincing rationale for how translingual competences and dispositions “have practical benefits” and also “cultivate global citizenship” in students (32), which is an advantage “inside and outside academe” (22). Other chapters that were especially powerful to me centered on language-in-action outside the

classroom because they provided students with opportunities for sustained inquiry and transformative labor. For example, in Ch. 7 “Writing on the Wall: Teaching Translingualism through Linguistic Landscapes,” Mark Bratner describes a series of assignments from his composition classroom in Singapore. In the assignments, the students draw from critical literacy studies to conduct analyses of linguistic landscapes to understand how language is highly regulated in public spaces via “visual cues” (186), which in turn impacts and constrains the “choices” (174) individuals make. Bratner’s assignments help students analyze material culture and bring critical awareness to how their own situated language practices may be impacted by policies and ideologies, but also “bottom up” communal language and literacy practices (184). Bryce Nordquist’s chapter (Ch.8) “Following Labors of Recontextualization: Towards a Pedagogy of Translingual Mapping” presents a methodology and pedagogy for students to map their linguistic and literacy activities across time and space in their everyday lives. These mapping activities bring light to resources, such as translingual practice, that are often either invisible or undesirable vis-à-vis institutional definitions of literacy. Students develop agency by bringing awareness to how they can deploy their resources to either “accommodate or transform conventions of discourse, genre, and disciplines as well as social relations within and across places” (207). Bratner and Nordquist’s chapters guide students to reflect on how individuals negotiate language difference and how language practices are policed and circumscribed in contexts in which power dynamics are at play.

Expanding the lens to capture other sites for translingual innovation, Chapters 3, 10, and 11 focus on curricular and programmatic strategies. Naomi Silver’s chapter “Translingualism as Pedagogical Methodology for Preservice Teachers and Peer Writing Consultants in Training” (Ch. 10) is unique in its focus on teacher and tutor training. Silver provides insight into how students, who are both students and future practitioners, grapple with translingual pedagogy in their own practice. Other chapters, too, incorporate student responses and testimony, but Silver’s chapter attends to how novice teachers and tutors must balance their own commitments to social justice with their relative lack of power in institutions that tend to prioritize Standard Written English. Silver proposes a translingual pedagogy as an intervention for “reshaping the landscape of learning” (237). Julia Kiernan’s chapter “A Framework for Linguistically Inclusive Course Design” (Ch.11) is different from all the other chapters in that the curriculum she describes is transnationally themed and fully grounded in translingual pedagogy. The entire assignment sequence is centered around mono- and multilingual students engaging with and reflecting on translingual and transcultural literacies, while

developing rhetorical awareness and agency in deploying their resources. This chapter provides the most useful and comprehensive guidance for programs that aspire to fully embracing translingualism. That said, Kieran's activities and assignments (including memoir, translation narrative, and translocal artifact essay) could also be adapted and used as standalone projects.

Another strength of the book is that all contributors carefully consider “the affordances and constraints” of a translingual approach (6). This consideration is apparent not only in the authors' own critical reflection and evaluation of their methods and artifacts, but also in the myriad samples of student writing, which help readers get a sense of students' responses to translingual work. Overall, the chapters document the potential of the translingual approach to be transformative by engaging students in creatively and critically examining their language practices and fostering a translingual disposition. However, as Thomas Lavalley points out in the “Afterword”, translingualism is a “troublesome” (288) concept in the classroom because it pushes against beliefs about language that students have been socialized to hold throughout their lives. These were the beliefs I was socialized into as a student and teacher. Encountering translingualism, some students will insist on aiming for the mastery of Standardized English because of the power and currency it holds. Yet, as Sharma argues, this itself may constitute translingual labor because the insistence can be an act of “exercising agency,” especially if the decision is undergirded by critical language awareness (21). The trouble Lavalley highlights can be good trouble when a thoughtful, flexible translingual approach invites students to reflect and act on their communicative needs across rhetorical situations.

I recommend *Translingual Pedagogical Perspectives* to readers who are curious about the following: pedagogical application of translingual theory; different models, sites, and levels of translingual education; or multilingual and monolingual students' responses to this pedagogy. I developed many ideas for my own practice from individual chapters and from cross-pollinating ideas across chapters. However, I would caution that for translingual education to be effective and transformative, it needs to be sustained through iterative work. I agree with Lavalley that if an introduction to translingualism is “simplified” or “superficial,” it will fall flat rather than ignite change (289). Paul Kei Matsuda and others have also identified the pitfalls and “lures” of translingual pedagogy (482). It is easy to do a one-stop overview of translingualism or to get students to mix languages and call it a day. It is easy to fall back to prescriptive approaches (even if they are softened by lessons on rhetorical thinking about expectations across genres and audiences). It is easy to give into the uncertainty about how to respond to language

difference if it is not simply “error” or “unusual” and to avoid examining that difference. It is easy to conflate translingual approaches with other tenets of language diversity and not examine historical, racial, and social influences on language and attitudes to language. As noted earlier, the chapters that anchor pedagogy and curricula in translingual theory are most effective, but—taken together— this book presents a convincing case for why and how teachers should and can support the transformative work that we need in our classrooms today.

Works Cited

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