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Marie-Françoise Narcy-Combes, Jean-Paul Narcy-Combes, Julie McAllister, Malory Leclère and Grégory Miras. 2019. *Language Learning and Teaching in a Multilingual World*. Series New Perspectives on Language and Education: 65. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. ISBN 978-1-78892-297-5 (204 pages)

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This volume is intended for students and professionals in the field of language education and especially for researchers keen to understand in depth the factors that need to be considered when conducting empirical research in multilingual contexts. It is also potentially of use as reference material for teacher training courses.

It provides a current review of research on language learning and teaching in the complex scenario of multilingual education and proposes a theoretical framework based on a holistic and intrinsically dynamic approach to the implementation of Language Learning Environments (LLEs). This is perhaps one of its main advantages over previous studies and handbooks on second language acquisition and learning (Ellis, 2003; Nunan & Choi, 2010; Hinkel, 2011; Ortega, Tyler, Park & Uno, 2016).

The book is divided into three parts and opens with an introductory section in which the authors state their main purpose and their epistemological stance, along with the definitions of key terms and context, plus a description of each chapter.

Part 1 comprises Chapters 1 to 7; it is here that the main theoretical foundations for Parts 2 and 3 are set out. Taking neurophysiology as a starting point, the focus of these chapters then narrows down, looking at different aspects of plurilingualism, as well as at important constructs of monolingual research. In the final chapters, the discussion moves onto various sociocultural elements affecting language learning. Not only do the authors skillfully draw on numerous well-known recent theories and research here, but they also combine this with older studies, resulting in a commendable, condensed assessment of the field.

Chapter 1 presents a number of theories from cognitive neuroscience which explain the importance of the internal and external conditions that affect language acquisition. The authors comment on the complexity of language modules in plurilingual speakers, on the role of age, music and drama in language development, on the advantages of prior disciplinary knowledge to learning new languages and on the role of context and attention in learning.

Chapter 2 turns to neurophysiological studies on plurilingual subjects and the concepts of *codeswitching*, *codemeshing* and *translanguaging*. The latter is favored by the authors as a tool “to foster motivation, capacity, and the confidence to face a new language experience...” (Narcy-Combes, Narcy-Combes, McAllister, Leclère & Miras, 2019: 13). The last three sections of this chapter focus on the policies of educational institutions and research, the

concepts of additive, subtractive and dynamic bilingualism and the benefits of plurilingual competence, along with a discussion of the use of local languages as part of learners' identity.

Chapter 3 examines different multilingual practices, including the use of translation, the necessity for a coordinated holistic approach in multilingual educational settings, the complexities of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) courses, the importance of multimodality in teaching, as well as the central role of teachers, their multilingual competence and training and the weakening of "ideal native competence as a goal..." which implies that teachers should "adapt their objectives to learners' proficiency" (Narcy et al., 2019: 25).

An important point regarding CLIL courses should be considered here. Although "CLIL has often been argued to be a powerful motivation factor" (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2016: 6), teachers' competences and preparation, particularly their linguistic competence, should not be underestimated as it "becomes an important factor in the successful implementation of CLIL courses" (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2016: 7). Such competences may have a notable impact in as much as they can hamper the success of a project, as seen in Case Study 7 (Part 2) and might even prevent teachers from initiating action in any form.

In terms of monolingual research, Chapter 4 presents a review of different psycholinguistic theories: the Interactionist Model, the Information Processing Model, the Dual System of Language Production Model, the Connectionist Models, the Emergentism and the Dynamic Systems Theory later completed by the Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), plus the internal criteria required for attention to be present in language learning, the focus on form-focus on meaning dichotomy as a teaching option and the importance of mediation and metareflection.

Chapter 5 comprises a variety of arguments regarding the cultural, affective and identity components which impact language development and the behavior of learners. The elements of perception and transculturing are first presented, followed by a more in-depth look at emotions and motivation and the different ways in which they relate to language learning. The chapter closes with a number of important observations on learners' agency, autonomy and identity.

Within the area of affect, as addressed in this chapter, a more extensive treatment of learners' Individual Differences (IDs), particularly personality traits, might have complemented the constructs of motivation and agency presented here (Narcy et al., 2019: 40-45). A description of the Willingness to Communicate Model (McIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998), for instance, would have helped to account for "the voluntary nature of student engagement" (1998: 107) as an important element that results in differences between the two projects; this will be described in Case Studies 18 and 19 in Part 2 of the volume. As acknowledged by Benson and Nunan, "learners are individuals and (...) their individuality may have significant consequences for their learning" (2004: 5).

In Chapter 6 the benefits of Information Communication Technology (ICT) for language learning are reviewed and the authors acknowledge the importance of informal learning "to set up learning environments that remain relevant in a context where the learner can interact in the private sphere with other users of the languages learnt..." (Narcy et al., 2019: 49) and also that "multilingual environments provide great opportunities for informal learning that can be connected to work at school..." (Narcy et al., 2019: 50). The following sections in the chapter deal with Open Educational Practice (OEP), different teaching practices using ICTs and Computer-Mediated Communication and telecollaboration.

Chapter 7 is devoted to "highlight the complexity of defining and analysing context" (Narcy et al., 2019: 55). The definitions and importance of context are explained and summaries of research into the benefits of context adjustment for teaching and learning, as well as context indicators, are offered. Towards the end of the chapter, the factors of validity

of context, the links between universal values and local contexts, plus understanding contexts and analyzing them objectively (acknowledged as a challenge for teachers and researchers), are all discussed.

Thus, Part 1 offers a condensed account of the rich theoretical foundations of the field and serves as both a general overview of research results here and as an ideal starting point for new researchers seeking greater insight into each theory or author, this reinforced through an extensive reference section at the end of the volume. The relevance and usefulness of the arguments chosen is clearly evidenced in the case studies included, as well as in the framework presented in the subsequent parts of the book.

Part 2 comprises 15 chapters which together contain accounts of 37 small, medium and large-scale qualitative research projects from different regions of the world. Chapter 8 sets out the organization of these by suggesting alternative ways of reading this part and by presenting a summary table including the page, keywords and region of each case study. Remarks on the presence of plurilingualism and the methodologies used are also included.

In Chapters 9 to 13, the authors present varied projects from different geographical regions or countries and accompany these with their own comments. Chapter 14 is an overview of the case studies arranged into various categories: contexts, level of education and training of teachers, plus the effects which result from variation in these two former elements. This is followed by assessments and evaluations of the learning systems implemented in the different projects and a discussion of the advantages and constraints for implementing a plurilingual program. The chapter concludes by returning to the theoretical foundations presented in Part 1 and their connections to the case studies.

Chapter 15 closes Part 2 with an exhaustive list of the elements to consider when constructing a language learning environment or designing a task. This list reflects the different theoretical constructs previously presented and, as the authors state, it “is just as relevant for so-called ‘monolingual settings’ as for multilingual classes” (Narcy et al., 2019: 147).

Taken as a whole, Part 2 is very informative with regard to those examples of agency by practitioners and specialists around the world which can be taken as exemplary models in areas with similar teaching-learning environments. The evidence and opinions voiced by the authors about the effectiveness of implementing bottom-up projects have an encouraging effect here. We might note in particular Case study 5, which is very interesting as regards the use of *translanguaging* to develop academic English at a time when “research into ELFA is likely marginalized or (...) completely ignored in the mainstream literature” (Jenkins, 2014: 42).

This collection of case studies, however, might usefully have been expanded with more projects from regions such as the Basque Country in Spain where, for instance, a project was implemented based on “pedagogical translanguaging” with “a focus on multilingualism” (Leonet, Cenoz & Gorter, 2017: 219) to deal with the isolation of Basque as a minority language.

Part 3 comprises three chapters, 16 to 18, which serve to close the book. The first of these looks at blended learning, focusing on the use of ICT resources as an element relying on context and it offers alternatives for the lack of such resources here. Although the authors argue that “what matters is not the tools, but the way the work is organized...” (Narcy et al., 2019: 154), an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of a rich list of tools, systems and tasks, plus further suggestions, is presented.

Chapter 17 discusses several important issues that need to be considered when arranging multilingual LLEs, two of which are indeed the main stages in this process: a) investigation and, b) implementation. The authors stress the importance of context, suggesting that “learning should be less based on performances and more co-constructed with

participants” (Narcy et al., 2019: 157), where the learner is a participant and the teacher a mediator, where variability accounts for increased meaningful and socially situated learning and where assessment should be multidimensional and formative. Important aspects of curriculum design are then discussed, including CLIL, language use, learning activities and social situations. A concluding table summarizes the key parameters of the authors’ approach here.

The final chapter suggests a system of orbiting planets as a means of illustrating the framework which they have sought to present. This system has the teacher-learner relations as the main *planet*, around which macro-(social) and mini-(training) tasks are developed. In its dynamics, the validation of macro-tasks leads to the emergence of in-tandem new tasks, whereas non-validation gives ways to remedial micro-tasks which require the identification of the root of the problems and “knowing who the learners are...” (Narcy et al., 2019: 168). A summary table showing different forms of task design and implementation is also presented, followed by an interesting discussion of teachers’ roles. In addition, the discontinuities of the model due to the individual character of language learning are addressed. The chapter closes with a solid reflection on the strengths and challenges of the model, including more recommendations.

The core of the model, that is, *teacher-learner relations*, is seen as central in fostering learner autonomy, as presented by the Dynamic Interrelational Space or DIS (La Ganza, 2004). This theory highlights the fact that “learner autonomy is an achievement, attained interrelationally between the learner and the teacher” (La Ganza, 2008: 65).

In that they are inherent to the social context, linguistic ideologies and beliefs could also interfere with the implementation of projects. This might happen, for instance, when translanguaging is not well understood and is perceived as something to be avoided by the learners and other members of the community, such as parents, a point illustrated in the study of seven university subjects by Alzahrani (2019) in Saudi Arabia.

Part 3, then, presents an eminently useful framework, the flexibility of which allows for effective adaptation to learners’ needs and for the monitoring of the learning process. The flexibility of the model permits constant reflection on -and readjustment of- tasks and as such constitutes a very practical and easy-to-use system.

An extensive section of references plus an index completes the book. Broadly speaking, then, the volume as a whole is a useful, updated tool for teachers, researchers and institutions, towards the further assessment of educational contexts and proactive responses to the teaching-learning process. All in all, the book is a highly recommended reading and comes at a very opportune moment, when rapid global changes impose many strains on education in bilingual and multilingual environments.

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