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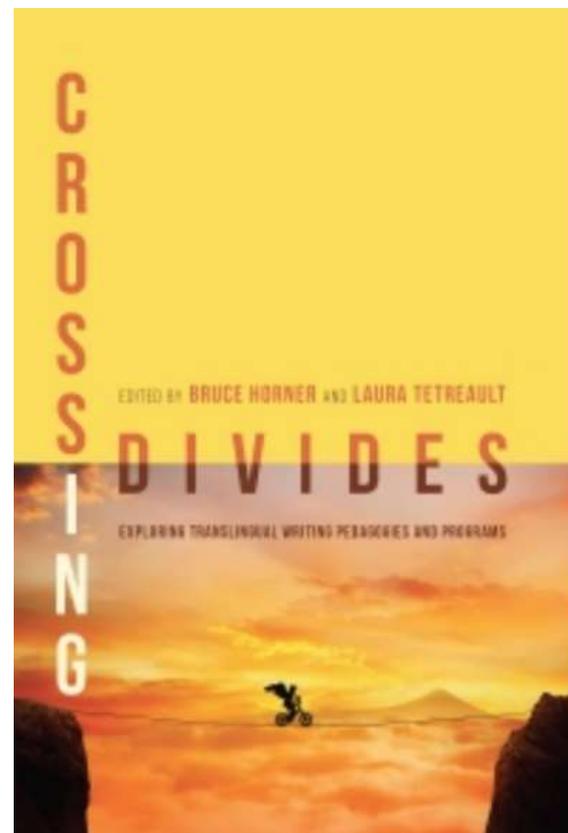
Horner, B., & Tetreault, L. (2017). *Crossing Divides. Exploring translingual writing pedagogies and programs*. Utah State University Press.

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Translingual practices are emerging worldwide, especially since the global push for English as a Foreign Language, yet the practice is viewed as a bastardization of communication within most educational spaces. In their edited volume, *Crossing Divides: Exploring Translingual Writing Pedagogies and Programs*, Horner & Tetreault tackle this dilemma by presenting translingualism from three different perspectives: theorizing translinguality in writing and teaching, pedagogical interventions, and, lastly, institutional and pragmatic interventions. In Part 1, Juan C. Guerra & Anne Shivers-McNair examine the rationale for translingual praxis by delving into the theoretical frameworks and historic placement of language pedagogies. They first explain the monolingual (colonial) approaches, the multilingual (neocolonial) approaches, and the translingual, or decolonial, approaches to language instruction, as well as cultural differences. By doing so, they place pedagogies



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within a historic framework that is easy to comprehend, making it easier for the reader who may not be familiar with the ways in which globally dominant powers construct language policy to benefit their agendas (Phillipson, 1992).

The theoretical foci of *Crossing Divides* include the ontological constructs of current language practices, with respect to post-humanistic approaches to applied linguistics that acknowledge multilingual practices as organically emergent and sociologically beneficial. To elaborate, instead of focusing on monolingual notions of perfection in language use, Guerra & Shivers-McNair emphasize “generative vocabulary” (Barad, 2007) as emergent language utterances because language should be perceived as temporal. Thus, the authors propose that language variance is the only actual normative “rule” of languages, that is, the only certainty concerning language. This notion of generative vocabulary is timely in the 21st century, given the linguistic repertoires of transnationals, immigrants, and multiethnic people, as well as the socioeconomic and sociopolitical demands of globalization and international affairs. Generative vocabulary is also forward thinking, as it encourages educators to move beyond the humanist notion that the brain is the linguistic center of the human being and that Western human beings are at the globally and culturally dominant center. It instead places the communicative awareness on the external results and actual linguistic features of language in use.

These theories may be easier to grasp, however, if the authors situated language pedagogy more firmly within historical and political contexts. For example, discussions on heritage language issues that have emerged from English language and bilingual instruction that have omitted Native American tongues would have been helpful. *Crossing Divides* could have also made specific references to sociopolitical influences on

language instruction and the global dominance of English (Pennycook, 1998). Given that linguistic imperialism, or national language policy and praxis, is the hegemonic tool that controls education policies and monoculturalism in settler pedagogies, further examination of how settler pedagogies have colonized and re-colonized language use would have reinforced the book’s translingual agenda.

However, critical pedagogy (Canagarajah, 1999) and culturally sustainable pedagogy (Paris, 2012) in the chapter on multiethnic learner identity through language use were vital inclusions. In their chapter, Alvarez, Canagarajah, Lee, Lee, and Rabbi posit that while ethnicity itself may be a construct for political purposes, heritage may give the learner resources for hybrid identities and even in-group identities that learners may be seeking. This chapter serves as a good introduction to the governing concept of the interrelatedness of language and ethnic identity, and these two components as vital to understanding learners and educators alike. However, as mentioned before, these points would have had more impact if preceding sections of *Cross Divides* foregrounded this discussion.

Drawing from global research on Korea and the United States, in Part 2 the authors review pedagogic interventions for the instruction of English as well as the benefits of learner agency. For example, Bizzel interviewed expat teachers in Korea and found that Koreans prefer hiring White native speakers from North America as their English instructors. Bizzel describes Cho’s (2012) “white man theory,” in which Koreans believe that Americans speak English better than Korean Americans residing in Korea. This reliance on “race-language-nation identity” is in turn sharply contrasted with the “plurilingualism” that is in the Council of Europe’s progressive model and the US prevalent English-only model. These issues

underscore how race is perceived in both Western and Eastern countries in relationship to English language teacher hiring practices. Furthermore, this section describes writing pedagogies implemented in various nations such as China and Korea in order to improve writing in two languages, the native one in a non-English speaking country and English. A reader versed in critical race theory, however, is left wondering how this information relates to translingual pedagogies. For the sake of this emerging practice, it may have been helpful to examine the translingual lens with the theoretical assumption that race is a social construct. Further examination of how race is situated to the benefit of the white hegemonic globally dominant powers that use curriculum and, specifically, language as a tool would have made this chapter a vital read for anyone in TESOL.

The connection to learner agency and sociocultural nuances is examined in the last chapter in this section by Horner. The relationship between the eradicationist approach (directed at translingual practices) to the learner's identity, agency, and authority is made evident. Horner describes some intriguing mixed-language approaches to writing in which the students are asked to address their perceived issues of language difference by reading texts written in multiple languages while resisting expectations that monolingual writing is superior. Horner asserts that this practice improved students' linguistic comprehension because they conducted considerably different research than do students in usual writing classrooms. In order for students to produce their own written responses to these multilingual texts, they had to research etymologies of any new words, cultural metaphors, or urban expressions that they encountered.

Part 3 of the book outlines interventions intended to disrupt monolingual pedagogies of English programs at institutions of higher education within the United States. Malcom

describes one such intervention that highlights the sociocultural problems with the COMPASS test, a reading and writing placement exam for non-native English speakers that focuses mainly on grammatical conventions. The intervention pointed out institutional and societal prejudices concerning Standard English norms and demonstrated that content feedback, writing organizational strategies, and classroom discussions about writing in the language of the learners' choice was just as beneficial to skill acquisition. This brave intervention was followed by an enlightening critique of assessment tests in the U.S. education system by Inoue, who asserts that translingual pedagogies must culminate in fair conditions of assessment that complement the translingual pedagogies used. As Inoue notes, "the absence of standard creates the conditions for more student agency and control in the ecology – that is more fairness" (p. 122). Since translingual pedagogy is not static but organic, these contributions add much to our understanding of translingual communication.

Crossing Divides also explores some education policy dimensions of translingual pedagogies, with specific emphases on sociocultural ideologies such as race, authority, and learner identity. However, the interventions and research presented in the chapters mostly came from the United States and Asia. Throughout the book, the interconnection with discourse and power was assumed, but more discussion of corresponding critical theories would have helped to make the connections more explicit. For example, beyond references to the work on decentralization by Canagarajah (1999) and Paris (2012), the chapters contain no mention of Africa or other locations with recently colonized education systems and their multiethnic and multilingual identities. Given that it is widely known among linguists that hundreds of languages are spoken in Africa and India, yet English has emerged as the common language, a translingual pedagogy

chapter focused on such regions would have been intriguing. Revealing how these nations are coping with translingual practices and pedagogies without placing English at the periphery of the instruction would have helped *Crossing Divides* to further the work of critical pedagogies and theories that seek to decolonize educational praxis. The decentralizing concepts around language could have better set up the argument for translingual pedagogic practices that do not strive for certain standards, and thus may appear radical or ineffective.

Aside from this critique, the interventions and studies of translingual practices presented in this edited volume are bold and worth deeper contemplation. Furthermore Horner & Tetreault have made efforts to decentralize the

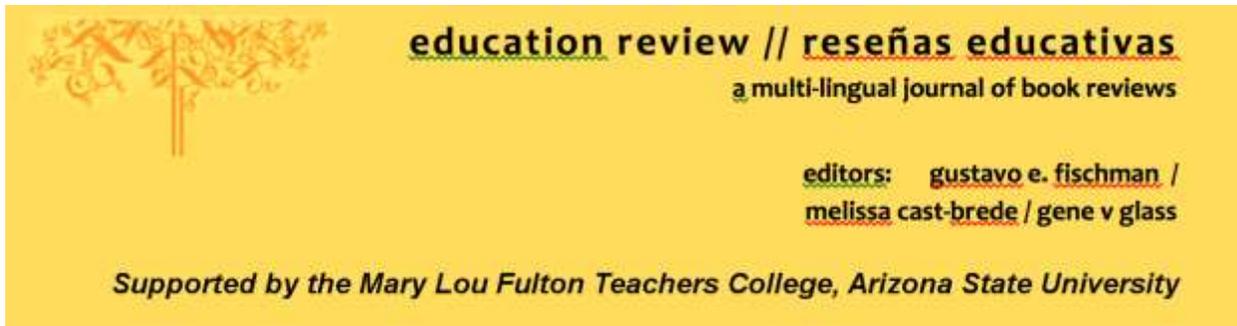
power of English by discussing concepts about race and presenting global, albeit limited, examples. Overall, the book is a vital step in the right direction and demonstrates how teachers take matters into their own hands, often at the expense of expending more time and energy to recreate archaic curricula. The responses to globalization and immigration in language learning pedagogy included in the book are fresh and energizing. Many chapters include lesson plans, references and examples, so educators can replicate or adapt them to their own coursework. As such, *Crossing Divides* is an important book for any 21st century language teacher, linguist, or literacy educator, in any nation, because it serves as a good basis for conversations around language, policy, and identity.

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About the Reviewer

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