

書評

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PEARCE Daniel Roy

With the upswing of globalization in the 21st century, humanity is experiencing a mobility in its populations on a scale hitherto unseen. Simultaneously, advances in communication technology have allowed diverse migrant communities to maintain stronger cultural and linguistic ties to their heritage communities, while also interacting with their local communities – resulting in a phenomenon occasionally labeled ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec, 2007). Superdiversity poses certain problems in that increasingly diverse immigrant communities can no longer necessarily be relied upon to assimilate linguistically or culturally into the broader (local) society. Nevertheless, such individuals participate in their geographically local communities, as consumers of goods and services (including education and healthcare), in various strata of the labor market, and so on. The new challenges that such linguistic and cultural diversity poses have produced a new field of inquiry: Language Management (see Fairbrother, Nekvapil & Sloboda, 2018).

Managing Plurilingual and Intercultural Practices in the Workplace is a timely addition to the language management literature. Compiled from several ethnographical research projects conducted primarily in Switzerland, this volume examines representations and discourse on languages and their role in the multilingual workforce and society at large, and how these representations influence, and are influenced by, language practice in a variety of different contexts and mediums. It is the first attempt at comprehensively contrasting linguistic data of individuals’ language use in practice against policy (national or corporate), assessing the reality of multilingual societies against the sometimes naïve ideals of overarching policy, and thus grounding the literature on language management as a concept, primarily through its introductory chapter.

Chapter 1, the introduction, outlines the research background and methodological underpinnings of the book, primarily based on the DYLAN Project ¹⁾ and supplemented by several smaller research projects. Unlike the previous literature, the authors clearly delineate between the macro-, meso-, and

micro levels of plurilingual and intercultural practice, increasing accessibility to readers with little background in language management research²⁾. In this volume, the term “language management” refers to the meso-level (i.e. the corporate level), whereas the actual language practice of individuals (micro-level) are labeled “language strategies”. The macro-level, or language policies of nation-states, are not a major focus of the book, which is primarily interested in language management and the plurilingual language strategies employed by individuals within their multilingual contexts. As such, the authors “did not concentrate on institutions’ (companies, armed forces, hospitals, etc.) corporate culture, *neither* on actors’ language representations *nor* on their actual language use, but tried to relate these three dimensions” (p. 5). The remainder of the book examines the interplay between these dimensions in over twenty different contexts ranging from department stores to the armed forces.

Chapter 2, *Power in the Implementation of Plurilingual Repertoires* examines manifestations of top-down linguistic policy (at both macro- and meso-levels) in interaction at the micro level. Through examination of interaction in various meeting contexts (research, editorial, general staff meetings) in a number of different industries (from pharmaceutical companies to department stores), and of self-reporting by individuals on the language strategies they employ, tension between language choice and company philosophy are illuminated. Conclusions drawn from the data include that formal hierarchy in corporate language does not necessarily mean that language choices are imposed, as individuals tend to adapt their language use to the linguistic repertoires of their interlocutors where possible (or necessary). In the Swiss context, for instance, an area of tension between the existence of the rule, “everyone speaks his or her own language” (p.65), and the linguistic reality (German and French tend to dominate, while Italian and Romansch are barely represented) demonstrates that even meso-level language management policy often does not reflect the actual linguistic landscape, which is usually negotiated between individuals.

Chapter 3, *From language regimes to multilingual practices in different settings*, consists of several subchapters that examine plurilingual practices of individuals, as well as how heterogeneity in language is negotiated and managed primarily at the micro-level in various contexts, from multinational companies to hotel service encounters and healthcare. It is the longest chapter in the book, and contains the most interactional data. Each subchapter draws its own context-sensitive conclusions, which will likely be of interest to both researchers and practitioners in each particular field.

Chapter 4, *Visual manifestations of institutional multilingualism* examines language choices in the semiotic landscapes of various companies, in cyberspace (what information is displayed in which languages on websites), as well as signage within physical locations. Of interest in this chapter was

how the use of English operated within physical environments – one example being the choice of English over local languages in signage in the marketing department of a Swiss factory, which showed a clear tension “between a local, work-force oriented, and a global, client-oriented perspective” (p. 185).

Finally, Chapter 5 functions to summarize the difficulties in managing cultural and linguistic diversity in the workplace, informed by the data of the previous chapters, while Chapter 6 introduces a number of vocational traineeships and resources for the development of plurilingual and intercultural learning that were shown to be useful in breaking down stereotypical representations of linguistic and cultural “others,” as well as promoting more positive attitudes to partial competences (p. 301).

In the conclusion, the authors are quick to note that, as the majority of their data came from workplaces in Switzerland, a context in which multilingualism is ingrained in law, the findings are not necessarily generalizable to other contexts. However, the findings should be of interest to those involved in language management in increasingly diversifying environments.

Perhaps the greatest contribution that this volume makes to the literature on language management is how English as a *lingua franca* operates in multilingual companies. While the argument has previously been made that an increase in multilingualism will result in a greater use of English and subsequent decline in other languages (Riley, 2015), at least in the Swiss context, “as a general rule, English is one of the components of an integrated plurilingual repertoire” (p. 315). Finally, it seems that plurilingual competence (including partial competences) as championed by the CEFR nearly two decades ago, may be gaining traction in larger society, as “the plurilingual solutions to the firms’ and their employees’ communicative challenges are not only frequent and normal, but are often valued as a real asset rather than as a stop-gap solution” (p. 317).

In the Japanese context, this volume may be of considerable value, in that it is the first to attempt a comprehensive contrast of individual language use, overarching language policy (meso or macro), and the influence of English as a *lingua franca*. Japan has, throughout the late 20th century to the present day, been defined by the paradigm of *double monolingualism* (the idea that Japanese is the language of domestic communication, and that English is the only useful language for international communication (see Oyama, 2016)). However, the overwhelming number of immigrants to Japan are not native speakers of English (Ministry of Justice, 2018), and therefore have no guarantee of English competence, while simultaneously diversifying the linguistic landscape in Japan. In this sense, while English may be a useful language for a typically monolingual Japanese population to acquire, a more nuanced understanding of how languages interact in reality is necessary. This volume stands apart from previously descriptions of language management, which have relied heavily on philosophical

discussions of top-down policy. By providing raw data in multilingual contexts, it may therefore help to inform policy on how multilingualism in Japan should be managed, or at the least demonstrates how top-down policy has limits.

One drawback of this volume is that it does not contain a glossary of commonly used terms or abbreviations. The reader is therefore compelled to read the introduction, which, while recommended, somewhat limits the accessibility of each individual chapter or subchapter to readers interested in only specific contexts. Nevertheless, the book is successful in providing a sound theoretical rationale, delineating and clarifying some of the concepts related to language management, and makes a significant contribution to the field through the wealth of data it provides.

- 1) The DYLAN project sought to identify the conditions under which Europe's linguistic diversity can be an asset for the development of knowledge and economy and was conducted over five years in 12 European Countries. (see http://www.dylan-project.org/Dylan_en/home/home.php)
- 2) It is common in the literature to refer to the micro-level as “simple language management” and the meso- and macro-levels collectively as “complex language management” (see for example, Fairbrother, Nekvapil & Sloboda, 2018)

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(京都ノートルダム女子大学)