

Review of

Li, Wei. (Ed.) (2016). *Multilingualism in the Chinese diaspora worldwide. Transnational connections and local social realities*. New York and London: Routledge. Pp. 323, including Index.

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This book is a welcome addition to the growing literature on linguistic and sociolinguistic consequences of migration, especially language maintenance and shift, multilingual practices of plurilingual interaction in diasporic communities, impact of family language policy (FLP) on plurilingual language development, and heritage language speakers' attitudes towards their heritage and host languages. As the book title suggests, the use of one or more Han Chinese varieties in diaspora, typically across generations, is an important unifying theme.

In addition to the editor's overview in the opening chapter, the rest of the 16 chapters fall more or less evenly into four Parts:

Part 1: Emerging diaspora, emerging identities (3 chapters)

Part II: Changing times, changing languages (5 chapters)

Part III: Transnational communities, cultural mediators (4 chapters)

Part IV: Transnational families, transcultural living (4 chapters)

In Chapter 1, Deumert and Mabandla adopt Edouard Glissant's (1997) notion of entanglement (original French expression: *intrication*) to investigate how migrants from "three distinct Chinas" adapt to the linguistic-cultural challenges and economic opportunities by examining their everyday interrelations and plurilingual practices when interacting with Africans living in the 'global countryside' located in two rural townships in South Africa. In Chapter 2, as part of a large-scale ethnographic project (HERA) involving researchers in Britain, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, Li and Juffermans report on Dutch Chinese youth's negotiation of Dutch and Chinese identities in two settings: Chinese lessons conducted in a complementary Chinese language school, and online digital platform or chatroom. They present evidence of traditional values embodied in an ideologically loaded Chinese 'folk' tale written during the Great Leap Forward (1959) being contested by Dutch-dominant Chinese youth growing up in the Netherlands. Chapter 4 takes the reader to Egypt, where some transnational migrants ('transmigrants') from China, riding on the economic strengths of their motherland, explore business opportunities there (selling, e.g., mobile phones). As Wang explains, such migrants' success depend in part on how well they fare in Egyptian Arabic, the local vernacular which lexico-grammatically diverges considerably from written, Classical Arabic.

Part II involves locations as disparate as Kazakhstan (Smagulova, Chapter 5), Cuba (Clements, Chapter 6) Suriname (Paul Brendan Tjon Sie Fat, Chapter 7), and Indonesia (Stenberg, Chapter 8), each reporting on the difficulties of locally born children to maintain their (grand-)parents' heritage language(s). This is due in part to the need for improvising plurilingual practices while enacting complex ethnolinguistic identities and negotiating meaning with locals, typically for transactional communication purposes.

Each of the four studies in Part III highlights how challenging it is for younger generations of the Chinese diaspora to maintain their heritage language in Japan (Maher, Chapter 10), Malaysia (Wang et al., Chapter 11), and Singapore (Lee, Chapter 12). Whether it is Hakka (Kejia), Hokkien or Teochew, the diasporic topolect ('dialect') is fast losing ground to Putonghua (Mandarin), the national variety hailed as the standard language in mainland China (Mandarin in Taiwan). As the editor indicates, Standard Chinese is more attractive not only because it is codified (quintessentially through the Romanization system, pinyin) and promoted by the mainland Chinese government, but also because it is easily accessible online as well as in sundry private and state-run media products. In her study of the traditional role of the *peranakans* in Singapore (Chapter 13), Lisa Lim analyzes the reasons why people of mixed Chinese and Malay descent have been able to maintain their vitality as a distinct ethnolinguistic group, and serve as cultural mediators through their substratum Chinese influence on Singlish, the colloquial variety on the lectal continuum that is widely perceived as a marker of Singaporean identity. Lim further expresses optimism that such a sociolinguistic condition will most likely continue into the future.

Part IV begins with Chen's ethnographic study of a Chinese Indonesian couple, surnamed Tan (Teochew-L1) and Lee (Hokkien-L1), whose parents were driven from their hometowns in South China to West Kalimantan by extreme adversities in the 1930s. As teenagers, Tan and Lee independently had the first taste of discrimination amidst anti-Chinese sentiments in Indonesia in the 1960s. Attracted by the 'red' rhetoric glorifying their motherland around the time of the Cultural Revolution (officially dated 1967–1976), young returnees like Tan and Lee left for China for good but, due to their overseas connections, were quickly disillusioned after being received with skepticism and discrimination by local officials. Affected were not only their educational aspirations and career opportunities, but the type and location of work assigned to them. After about a decade's hardship, they decided to leave the mainland and settle down in British-ruled Hong Kong in the 1970s, where to their disappointment their educational qualifications were not recognized. With meager incomes earned from manual labor toiling in factories, they managed to support their children's higher education. Life circumstances had it that both Tan and Lee could only reunite with their relatives in Indonesia some three decades later. Added to these ethnographic details is a tabulated and annotated overview of the plurilingual repertoire of the couple and their family members (grandparents and children, pp. 244-249). As one would expect, language shift across the three generations is in evidence, while the couple's "extraterritorial identities" are intricately tied up with languages they acquired at different life stages along the way, notably their respective home 'dialects', Teochew and Hokkien, but also Hakka (lingua franca among the Chinese diaspora in West Kalimantan when they were young), 'Huaqiao Guoyu' (Overseas Chinese Mandarin) which they insisted using at home with their children, Siantar Mandarin, and Bahasa Indonesian.

In Chapter 15, Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen shows how Singaporean families' language choice and attitudes toward multilingual practices are shaped by the government's top-down 'purist' language policy. Data from carefully documented conversational interaction from two families show that the family language policy (FLP) of Chinese Singaporean parents was guided by the "one language, one culture, one nation and one identity" ideology (p. 258). Out of a concern for language 'purity', Singaporean parents tend to dismiss the "mixing and meshing" (p. 272) of discrete languages – English, Mandarin and 'dialect' (Teochew, among others), in any combination – as indexical of their children's inability to express themselves using 'pure' language, especially 'good' English, even though translanguaging is clearly an everyday conversational reality across different age groups in multilingual Singapore.

In Chapter 16, Tsung reports how, unlike the trend of irreversible language shift typically over three generations in diaspora, persistent family language policy (FLP) and planning driven by parental language ideologies have helped three extended Chinese migrant families in Australia to maintain their children's heritage language, culture and identity. In the final chapter, He conducts discourse analysis of child-parent "family discourse" over an extended period, showing how in the US, Chinese migrant parents' use of the host language is progressively adjusted by the English-dominant child. Key discourse strategies used by the child include reformulation, repair and brokering.

Among other things, the book is a living testimony of the footprints left by different groups of Han Chinese (especially 'dialect') speakers, who set foot on six different continents. This is probably why, while reading, I couldn't help conjuring up an image, a mosaic or tapestry, featuring an antiquated world atlas dotted with plenty of spots – dots that are linked up, in myriad intricate ways, to various parts of China, notably three provinces on the China Coast: Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang.

Whereas more recent cases of migration were driven mainly by a desire to make profit through engaging in some form of business, which is made possible by surging economic strengths of their motherland (e.g., Putonghua-speaking workers in Japan and shop owners in rural South Africa and urban USA), one commonality weaved into the fabric of earlier cases of migration is the historical circumstance under which various groups of Han Chinese migrants left their homeland, typically involuntarily to evade political instability and/or socioeconomic adversity. Some fled the war, mostly as refugees but also defeated Kuomintang officials (to Egypt), sometimes involving the crossing of borders multiple times, returning and re-exiting so to speak, for example, the Dungans of Kazakhstan (Smagulova) and the Chinese Indonesian (or Indonesian Chinese?) couple who settled down in Hong Kong after a difficult decade in pre-open-door China (Chen). Others could not resist sealing their fate by signing up as indentured laborers, as part of the burgeoning coolie trade (e.g., Chinese diaspora in Cuba and Suriname). Still others decided to try their luck in gold mining (e.g., Chinese diaspora in West Kalimantan and Australia).

Many of the migrants in the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia, notably Indonesia (West Kalimantan) and Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur), are heritage speakers of Hakka (Kejia), including Setijadi's study of young non-

pribumi Chinese Indonesians' dilemma whether to embrace 'being Chinese again' by learning Mandarin in Post-Suharto Indonesia. Heritage speakers of Hakka, while on the decline, seemed to outnumber those of Hokkien, Cantonese and Teochew in Southeast Asia (except Singapore, where heritage speakers of Hokkien were and are still numerically superior).

Personally, reading this monograph was in many ways a distant yet intimate experience, which resonates with my own Hakka descent. First, born to Hakka parents who fled the Sino-Japanese war and who found in British-ruled Hong Kong a habitable shelter and haven, I recall having lived through very similar experience as a child, the most regrettable being the loss of a golden opportunity in the home, where I could have picked up effortlessly my parents' much cherished Meixian Hakka at a tender age. While a lot of Hakka was used at home up until I progressed to secondary school, I recall talking back to my parents in Cantonese, an interactional pattern or plurilingual practice also observed by several authors in the book.

Second, well into my teenage, I remember watching many Canto films featuring 'piglets selling' (賣豬仔, *maai6 zyu1 zai2*), a self-mockery term used by contemporary Chinese in reference to the out-bound coolie trade set in nineteenth-century China (compare Chen, p. 252). Another popular theme was 'to go gold-digging in Gold Mountain' (去金山掘金, *heoi3 gam1 saan1 gwat6 gam1*), with San Francisco, nicknamed 'Old Gold Mountain' (舊金山, *gau6 gam1 saan1*), being an auspicious destination where some returnee was typically portrayed as nouveau riche. In Li Wei (2016), real people were reportedly driven by similar life circumstances, from being lured to join the gold rush to signing up as indentured laborers, most knowing full well that the physical severance with one's extended families, networks of acquaintances and hometown heritage was likely to be permanent. That was what makes the departing experience emotionally such a pain. What is highlighted in this book is a host of real-life stories that happened to many first-generation migrants and their offspring, wherever their ultimate destination would be.

Finally, apart from a great variety of Chinese diasporic experiences, the empirical data and analytical frameworks in all the chapters are theoretically and methodically well-conceived. As indicated by the editor in the blurb (inner cover), there are good prospects of "open dialogue" with researchers working on similar topics in other diasporic communities such as Russian, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic.