Journal of Academic Writing
Vol. 13 No 2 WINTER 2023, pages 81-84
http://dx.doi.org/10.18552/joaw.v13i2.1056

Review of Translingual Dispositions: Globalized Approaches to the Teaching of Writing

Esther R. Namubiru
George Mason University, USA

Frost, A., Kiernan, J., & Blum, S. (Eds.). (2020). *Translingual dispositions: Globalized approaches to the teaching of writing*. The WAC Clearinghouse & University Press of Colorado, pp. 309, 978-1-64215-043-8

What exactly does translingualism mean? How can it be meaningfully applied in Western and non-Western academic writing contexts without engaging in "linguistic tourism" (Matsuda, 2014) or discounting the unique linguistic backgrounds and desires of all writers? Alanna Frost, Julia Kiernan, and Suzanne Blum Malley's edited collection *Translingual Dispositions: Globalized Approaches to the Teaching of Writing* clearly embodies and answers these questions. This three-part, twelve-chapter collection examines translingual applications in U.S. and non-U.S university academic writing contexts and, by the end, demonstrates the need to augment the discourse on translingualism in a myriad of ways both globally and in the classroom.

In its introduction, the editors of the collection attend to readers who are newer to the translingualism discourse by using a footnote in the collection's introduction to outline core texts from which the collections' authors' draw their definitions of "translingualism." Part one opens with studies that center student views on translingualism. These studies juxtapose students' views with programmatic orientations steeped in translingual orientations. Part two shifts focus and takes a closer look at those programmatic translingual orientations. Studies in this part explore the pedagogical decisions faculty and program directors make to apply translingualism in their monolingual and multilingual classrooms and the consequences of these decisions. Finally, part three considers the global perspective of translingualism by presenting the experiences and works of transnational scholars who embody and complicate translingualism in their personal and professional lives.

Whether reading a study on translingual teaching methods in a U.S. classroom site or study on a monolingual site in the Middle East or a graduate writing center or a single language writing group, readers begin to appreciate one of the main points of the collection: translingualism is not only difficult to practice but also to define. Ayash (chapter 1) and Palmer (chapter 2) frame translingualism as distinct from monolingualism and multilingualism, and they also argue that it is a solution to the problems commonly raised in relation to mono- and multilingualisms. Their studies stand in contrast to Roozen (chapter 6) who opposes the translingual-monolingual-multilingual frame by showing findings where monolingual writers experienced translingual literacy experiences. Summers (chapter 11) and Kang (chapter 4) agree and integrate multilingualism with translingualism in their studies, but Mina and Cismasko (chapter 3) suggest connecting translingualism with the notion of student agency and confidence. Mihut (chapter 12) and Khadka (chapter 8) add that translingualism cannot be fully understood without the notion of localization since language and literacy look different from (and within) each geographical context. For these transnational scholars, translingualism has been heavily defined from a U.S./Western centric perspective without acknowledging the embodiment and operationalization of the concept in non-U.S./non-Western contexts.

What I liked about the collection is how it demonstrated the feasibility of applying translingualism in different sites of literacy and learning, and it did this while carrying the students' voice on the concept. In almost all the studies, students are the participants. Some are graduate writers in

graduate writing centers (Summers, chapter 11) while others are taking online composition courses (Roozen, chapter 6 & Palmer, chapter 9). Still others are in monolingual writing groups (Kang, chapter 4) or multilingual international student writing groups (Campbell, Fernandez, and Koo, chapter 2). Whatever the mode of learning, readers can see that translingualism can work for monolingual as well as multilingual virtual and digital writing contexts. At the same time, readers can also see how students' views complicate the oft-noted conclusion that translingualism is somehow better for (multilingual English-as-other language) students.

That said, to get the fullest sense of the concept of translingualism and its practical applications, I had to read the entire book since each chapter treats a narrow aspect of the concept. The seeming contradictions in terms between, say Ayash and Palmer's chapters and Roozen, Summers, and Kangs' chapters, made it difficult to deduce an overarching definition of the concept. On the other hand, perhaps the goal is not to deduce an overarching definition but rather an overarching constellation of key terms of the concept. Therefore, I would discourage picking and choosing chapters to read based on, say, their objects of study or their local contexts.

The other surprising note was finding the use of terms like 'L1, L2' and 'Higher Order Concerns (HOCs) and Lower Order Concerns (LOCs)'. In my opinion, terminology like L1 and L2 portray outlooks of language as separate and hierarchical. HOCs and LOCs likewise imply that macro-level concerns (think organization, paragraph structure, coherence, etc.) are also separate and of more importance than micro-level concerns like word choice, spelling, and syntax, etc. That Frost, Kiernan, and Malley allowed for these terms to persist in the final version is surprising. On the other hand, perhaps their existence in the text demonstrates the difficult and messy process of conceptualizing translingualism from both local and global points of view. However, from chapter to chapter, translingualism is developed as a theory, an attitude, a lived experience, an advocacy issue, and a classroom practice.

References

Ayash, B. (2020). Developing translingual language representations: Implications for writing pedagogy. In A. Frost, J. Kiernan, S. B. Malley (Eds.), *Translingual dispositions: Globalized approaches to the teaching of writing* (pp.13-31). The WAC Clearinghouse & University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/INT-B.2020.0438.2.01

Baalbaki, R., Fakhreddine, J., Khoury, M., & Rima, S. (2020). Arabic, as a home language, acts as a resource in an English writing Ccass: Borrowing translation strategies in a first-year writing course. In A. Frost, J. Kiernan, S. B. Malley (Eds.), *Translingual dispositions: Globalized approaches to the teaching of writing* (pp.225-247). The WAC Clearinghouse & University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/INT-B.2020.0438.2.10

Campbell, S., Fernandez, R. & Koo, K. (2020). Artifacts and their agents: Translingual perspectives on composing processes and outputs. In A. Frost, J. Kiernan, S. B. Malley (Eds.), *Translingual dispositions: Globalized approaches to the teaching of writing* (pp.33-62). The WAC Clearinghouse & University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/INT-B.2020.0438.2.02

Canagarajah, A. S. (Ed.). (2013). *Literacy as translingual practice: Between communities and classrooms.* Routledge.

Frost, A., Kiernan, J., & Malley, S. B. (Eds.), *Translingual dispositions: Globalized approaches to the teaching of writing.* The WAC Clearinghouse & University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/INT-B.2020.0438

Horner, B., Lu, M. Z., Royster, J. J., & Trimbur, J. (2011). Language difference in writing: Toward a translingual approach. *College English, 73*(3), 303-321.

Kang, Y. (2020). Translingual approaches as institutional intervention: Implementing the single language writing group. In A. Frost, J. Kiernan, S. B. Malley (Eds.), *Translingual dispositions: Globalized approaches to the teaching of writing* (pp.81-100). The WAC Clearinghouse & University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/INT-B.2020.0438.2.04

Khadka, S. (2020). When multimodal meets the translingual: Case studies from an experiment with a multiliterate composition pedagogy in a globalized writing classroom. In A. Frost, J. Kiernan, S. B. Malley (Eds.), *Translingual dispositions: Globalized approaches to the teaching of writing* (pp.181-200). The WAC Clearinghouse & University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/INT-B.2020.0438.2.08

Matsuda, P. (2014). The lure of translingual writing. *PMLA. 129*(3), 478-483.

Mihut, L. A. (2020). Enacting linguistic justice: Transnational scholars as advocates for pedagogical change. In A. Frost, J. Kiernan, S. B. Malley (Eds.), Translingual dispositions: Globalized approaches to the teaching of writing (pp.269-294). The WAC Clearinghouse & University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/INT-B.2020.0438.2.12

Mina, L. W. & Cismasko, T. (2020). Expectations, mismatches, and translingual dispositions in teaching multilingual students. In A. Frost, J. Kiernan, S. B. Malley (Eds.), *Translingual dispositions: Globalized approaches to the teaching of writing* (pp.63-80). https://doi.org/10.37514/INT-B.2020.0438.2.03

Palmer, Z. B. (2020). Expressions of monolingual ideology and translingual practice in an online international collaboration project. In A. Frost, J. Kiernan, S. B. Malley (Eds.), *Translingual dispositions: Globalized approaches to the teaching of writing* (pp.203-

224). The WAC Clearinghouse & University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/INT-B.2020.0438.2.09

Roozen, K, (2020). Mapping translingual literacies: Encouraging and enacting translingual perspectives of literate life. In A. Frost, J. Kiernan, S. B. Malley (Eds.), *Translingual dispositions: Globalized approaches to the teaching of writing* (pp.133-159).WAC Clearinghouse & University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/INT-B.2020.0438.2.06

Summers, S. (2020). Developing translingual dispositions to negotiate gatekeeping in the graduate writing center. In A. Frost, J. Kiernan, S. B. Malley (Eds.), *Translingual dispositions: Globalized approaches to the teaching of writing* (pp.249-268). The WAC Clearinghouse & University Press of Colorado https://doi.org/10.37514/INT-B.2020.0438.2.11