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Book Review

Codeswitching in University English-medium Classes: Asian perspectives
Roger Barnard and James McLellan (Eds.). Multi-lingual Matters, 2014, 224 pp.
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Reviewed by:
Althea Ha
Centre for Applied English Studies, The University of Hong Kong

Codeswitching refers to the phenomenon of speakers moving regularly between languages within a single communication event (written or spoken). It is ubiquitous in bi- or multi-lingual societies and poses challenges to their education systems. English is often a second language used in these contexts and has often been advocated or adopted as the medium of instruction. Codeswitching by teachers and students is often deemed inappropriate and ineffective, a monolingual classroom policy may be imposed by authorities and discussions about codeswitching may go unnoticed or even be avoided (Wei & Martin, 2009). Against this backdrop, the volume reviewed here probes classroom codeswitching, an under developed research area, at university level by reporting case studies conducted with teachers and students of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Asian contexts.

Participating teachers and students in the case studies were from Asian universities in Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam while one case study investigated the codeswitching of Korean students in a university in New Zealand. Conducted by different researchers from different linguistic backgrounds, these empirical studies vary in terms of their research design yet yield meaningful findings about teachers' beliefs and practices in classroom codeswitching. Taken together, the chapters constitute a particularly valuable, informative, and interesting volume. The book begins with a discussion by Ernesto Macaro about the issues and questions pertinent to classroom codeswitching research. This is followed by the presentation of eight case studies each accompanied by a commentary providing more insights by drawing on other related studies. The book concludes with an afterword by Andy Kirkpatrick.

A strength of this book is the range it encompasses in terms of contexts, languages, focuses and findings. This variety adds richly to the existing sparse literature. There is so much of interest within the case studies that it is difficult to know what to highlight in this review but of particular interest to this reader were: the tensions between policy and practice in classroom codeswitching revealed by the reflective practice of a Taiwanese teacher (Chapter 1); the codeswitching functions (two-way translation, grammar teaching, explaining vocabulary, personal comment, and information giving) identified by two teachers in China (Chapter 2); the domination of L1 caused by reluctance to use the L2 in the Japanese context (Chapter 3); the comparisons of codeswitching in different countries (offered in Chapters 4 to 7); and a view of

codeswitching within an L2 native-speaking context (Chapter 8). Some of the case studies have a tight focus, for example the Singaporean case focuses only on students' choice of determiners in codeswitching while other case studies take a much broader view. The study of Korean students of EFL in New Zealand also distinguishes itself by exploring classroom codeswitching in writing instead of speech. There is, indeed, much to attract readers to this book.

Evidence of codeswitching is pervasive, if not ubiquitous, in the studies reported in this book. The volume successfully provides its readers with detailed and informative snapshots of classroom codeswitching at university level from across an impressive range of countries, adequately fulfilling its aim to "reflect the extent of convergence and divergence between university language teachers' beliefs and practices relating to [codeswitching] in a range of contexts" (p. 3). Most of the case studies reported here are effectively complemented by commentaries from other expert writers, revealing more facets of the topics under investigation and inspiring readers with comments from multiple perspectives.

It is, indeed, as a set of snapshots that this book is best viewed. Despite the depth of the results and findings of the case studies, they are based on the practices of a relatively small number of informants. In addition, linkage between case studies appears meagre. This is somewhat inevitable given their different research designs and pedagogic aims and the fact that they are primarily descriptive rather than theoretical contributions. In fact, one of the commentaries added the caveat that differences among the case studies under review make "a true meta-comparison a shaky endeavour" (p. 60).

Whether classroom codeswitching is truly conducive to the teaching and learning of EFL remains contentious and definitely needs further empirical research and theorising. This book makes an important contribution in providing interesting examples from a variety of contexts including some that are vastly under-reported in the literature. This volume will appeal to teachers and researchers in EFL who want to understand more about the role of codeswitching in Asian university contexts as well as to language policymakers within those contexts. The book will also serve as a useful resource for students of applied linguistics, particularly those with an interest in codeswitching but also those interested more widely in comparing the impact of native and non-native speaking teachers of EFL, the implementation of English as a *lingua franca* and possibly also bilingual education.

About the reviewer
Althea Ha is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Applied English Studies, The University of Hong Kong. Her research interests include corpus linguistics and vocabulary teaching.

References
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