political leaders makes a significant contribution.

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Urban schools and English language education in late modern China: A critical sociolinguistic ethnography. Pérez-Milans, Miguel. New York, NY & Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2013. 196 pp., (hardback), £80, ISBN: 978-0-415-50222-1.

Miguel Pérez-Milans's *Urban Schools and English Language Education in Late Modern China: A Critical Sociolinguistic Ethnography* examines how national, linguistic, and cultural ideologies relating to modernization are being institutionally (re)produced, legitimated, and inter-personally negotiated through everyday practice in the current Chinese context of educational reforms. In particular, the book analyzes the processes of institutional categorization of the "good experimental school," the "good student," and the "appropriate knowledge" that emerge from the daily discursive organization of those schools. The book pays special attention to the related contradictions, uncertainties, and dilemmas arising from Chinese experimental reforms in the context of China's history of education modernization. Thus, it provides an account of the on-going cultural process of change faced by contemporary Chinese educational institutions.

This book's strength lies firstly in the critical sociolinguistic ethnography used by the author as a theoretical and methodological framework. The author combines methodologies from three disciplines: participation observation from ethnographic studies, analysis of interaction from interactional sociolinguistics (Goffman, Gumperz and Goodwin, p. 33) and critical discourse studies (van Dijk, van Leeuwen, Martin-Rojo and Wodak, p. 35). This is a transdisciplinary approach, asking "how a dialogue between two disciplines or frameworks may lead to a development of both through a process of each internally appropriating

the logic of the other as a resource for its own development”¹. Therefore, this book enables to gain a new understanding of the implementation of reforms in English language education by closely examining the textual, semiotic, and linguistic resources as discursive traces connecting situated practices in three schools, while also drawing on other institutional documents and wider political discourses.

By carrying out the fieldwork in three schools in two different cities of Zhejiang province, the author is able to identify the specific implications of the institutional category of “experimental school,” directly linked to institutional and discursive changes regarding national education modernization under the socioeconomic and political conditions of late modern China. The author also analyzes the different discourses of bilingualism, historical pedigree, and social cohesion within these three schools, all of which compete for recognition as “good” experimental schools. It is worth mentioning that the author treats the schools under study not simply as ethnographic fields where he collects data but as institutional sites where people display, try out, contest, and negotiate a wide range of identities through the use of varied linguistic and communicative repertoires in situated activities. The author does not treat the schools as a bounded system, a container of classroom processes and curricular texts, an institutional shell waiting to be filled by the actions of teachers, students, and administrators; instead, he situates this research in the wider social, economic, and political context of late modern China.

Secondly, in terms of methodological considerations, the author has carried out his ethnographic field work in these three experimental schools in line with “multisited ethnography”² which could be conceived as “oriented primarily to explicating a shared world of a set of subjects derived from attention to situated discourse”³. In this way, the articulation of ethnographic, interactional, and discursive analytical perspectives resulted in a broad-based set of data. Such a varied collection of data forms a sound empirical base to ensure the validity and

¹ Chiapello and Fairclough as cited in N. Fairclough (2005). Critical discourse analysis in transdisciplinary research. In R. Wodak & P. Chilton (Eds.), *A new agenda in (critical) discourse analysis: Theory, methodology and interdisciplinarity* (pp. 53–70). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins, p. 53.

² See, G. E. Marcus & M. M. J. Fischer (1986). *Anthropology as cultural critique: An experimental moment in the human sciences*. Chicago, MA: University of Chicago Press.

³ G. E. Marcus (1999). What is at stake—and not—in the idea and practice of multi-sited ethnography. *Canberra Anthropology*, 22(2), 6–14. doi: 10.1080/03149099909508344.

reliability of interpretations. Chapter 4 is a good example, illustrating how skillfully the author uses this theoretical framework in analyzing what it means to be “a good community member” and how this is discursively constructed. The author closely analyzes data such as video-taped ritualized practices: Monday meetings, physical exercises, eyesight exercises, school entrance and exit exercises, interviews with teachers, textual documents, pictures, and posters. In so doing, the author probes into very detailed discursive traces in daily school life beyond the grand official narrative of the three dimensions of intellectual, moral, and physical aspects in evaluating the “quality” of students.

Moreover, regarding the issue of reflexivity in ethnography, the epistemological considerations surrounding how researchers and their fieldwork trajectories intersect with spaces, social actors, and meaning-making practices on which the analysis is based, the author regards reflexivity as a *must* for ethically and politically engaged research. This results in him describing himself as a researcher as well as a constitutive person in the institutional discursive practices in the three schools. The author’s identity as a Westerner allows him to access the schools and participate in their key institutional practices. However, it also causes some methodological dilemmas. Particularly, those dilemmas are concerned with the (re)construction of the researcher’s regional identity as a Westerner during the data collection process in the institutional space of three experimental schools, resulting in the tension between being “out there” or “being there” in terms of ethnographic authority and the ethics of representation, which calls for the author’s further explanation.

In addition, the author displays his cross-cultural interpretative abilities in the understanding of “moral education.” For example, in Chapter 4, the author discussed “moral education” through a genealogical account of its discursive changes in various periods, starting from the beginning of the twentieth century till now. In his analysis of “chorus repetition” practice in English classes in Chapter 5, he conducted a critical literature review in the areas of socialization studies and sociolinguistic critique. However, the author’s attribution of the above two discursive practices to the Confucian tradition of collectivism tends to be a bit simplistic, as the Confucian heritage of education has been subordinated to Western discourses since the early-20th century: “with the modernization of Chinese society, beginning in the early-20th century, the Chinese language has experienced a fundamental change that has transformed Chinese pedagogic

practices. Modern Chinese discourses, whether of social or scientific practices or on China's intellectual heritage, are largely articulated in Westernized discourses that have been normalized as China's own"⁴. Therefore, a critical investigation of the idea of "morality" or "collectivism" needs to be carried out through a careful analysis of the original Confucian texts. This would make it possible for these notions to be explicated in relation to the Confucian perspective as it was understood in the pre-modern era.

In all, this book makes a significant contribution to critically oriented research in the field of language and education and it is recommended for practitioners and students who are interested in adopting the approach of critical sociolinguistic ethnography for the study of education in the Chinese context.

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A Chinese perspective on teaching and learning. Eng, Betty C. (Ed.). New York, NY: Routledge, 2012. 214 pp., (hardback), £84, ISBN: 978-0-415-89594-1.

Since Hong Kong's reintegration with the People's Republic of China, its higher education system had gone through drastic changes in academic structure, curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment. This has been undertaken in order to realign its education system with Chinese mainland, the U.S., and European countries. Hong Kong's University Grants Committee required its

⁴ Z. J. Wu (2011). Interpretation, autonomy, and transformation: Chinese pedagogic discourse in a cross-cultural perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 43(5), 569–590. doi: 10.1080/00220272.2011.577812, p. 569.