

many ways, I found these case studies to be the greatest strength of the volume, as they offer an in-depth array of contexts and findings. This collection goes quite some way towards answering Alderson's questions. We certainly have more evidence of the existence of washback, and we know, to some extent at least, 'what it looks like'. What is still lacking, however, is a clear theoretical model of washback. We may not yet know what this model looks like, but I feel that the various perspectives offered here hold a key to understanding its complexities, if not necessarily its place in our theories of test validation. While I have some concern over the fact that the volume does not offer an operational definition of washback, I feel that the bringing together of a series of detailed case studies in the area offer the researcher valuable insights into the nature of washback and into the methods that can be used or adapted to allow us to more fully understand its complexities. For this reason, researchers interested in the relationship between testing and other variables in the language education context (e.g., teachers, learners, materials, curriculum) will find this volume a valuable addition to the field.

Alderson, J.C. and **Wall, D.** 1993. Does washback exist? *Applied Linguistics* 14: 115–29.

Chapman, D.W. and **Snyder, C.W.** 2000: Can high-stakes national testing improve instruction?: re-examining conventional wisdom. *International Journal of Educational Development* 20: 457–74.

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James W. Tollefson and **Amy B.M. Tsui**, editors, 2004: *Medium of instruction policies: which agenda? Whose agenda?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. 312 pp. \$69.95 (HB), \$32.50 (PB). ISBN 0–8058–4277–2 (HB), 0–8058–4278–0 (PB).

This book examines medium of instruction policies (MIPs) in educational contexts around the world. MIPs are official policies mandating which language(s) are to be used for instruction in schools. Arguing that MIPs must be understood in relation to wider historical, social, political and economic forces, the editors have

assembled a coherent collection of situated MIP analyses from an impressive range of international settings, many of which remain underrepresented in language policy studies and in applied linguistics more generally. By situating MIPs in a broader social context, the book provides a compelling argument (as well as model) for language teaching researchers to themselves seek out how broader contextual factors inevitably influence what goes on in the language classroom.

The editors have divided 12 chapters (excluding introduction and conclusion) into three parts: (I) MIPs in English-dominant contexts, (II) MIPs in post-colonial states, and (III) MIPs in countries where subordinated ethnolinguistic groups have won political independence. Overall, these chapters are policy analyses undertaken from a sociopolitically oriented or 'historical-structural' (Tollefson, 1991) perspective. As the questions in the book's title suggest, the authors seek to illuminate – and describe the educational consequences of – the various agendas that both inform MIPs and advance the interests of particular groups. All of the chapters are successful in this, and as the editors note in their introductory chapter, all sound on four recurring themes: the need for MIP analyses to be sociopolitically situated; the inequality perpetuated by MIPs; the discernible gap between MIP rhetoric and the reality of implementation; and the inevitable tensions between the local and the supra-local brought on by the pervasive pressures of globalization.

May begins Part I with a discussion of MIPs in Aoteara/New Zealand. In detailing the decline and subsequent regenesis of the Māori language following colonization, May discusses the importance of state support for bilingual and mother tongue education: without it, it is difficult to obtain the resources necessary to implement it. Jones and Martin-Jones also examine language shift and revitalization, this time in Wales. In the only chapter to include actual classroom data, they provide an analysis of code switching in a Welsh-English mathematics class as a means to illustrate challenges facing students and teachers in bilingual classrooms. In the concluding chapter to Section I, McCarty examines the varied history of MIPs in the United States, arguing that

incongruities in selected policies can be understood in terms of 'safe difference' (e.g., language diversity in service of colonialism) and 'dangerous difference' (e.g., language diversity as a threat to national unity). One notable omission here is discussion about Hawai'i, the only US state with two official languages; Hawai'i also has a robust Hawaiian immersion programme, a large creole-speaking population, and it complicates, perhaps, the three-part arrangement of the book. Despite the overall excellence of these three papers, Part I is arguably the least cohesive of the volume.

Part II, the most varied and compelling in the book, begins with Tsui's chapter on MIPs in Hong Kong, a fascinating exegesis of the enduring legacy of colonialism. Tsui details how Chinese-medium schools in Hong Kong remain subordinated to more prestigious English-medium schools, even after independence and despite repeated recommendations of linguists and educators. Tsui links this apparent conundrum to a strong desire in the former colony to retain a distinctly Hong Kongese identity. Pakir less critically describes colonial hegemony in multilingual Singapore, where English continues as the main instructional medium, though its privileged status is mitigated by a tightly controlled bilingual MIP. Gill's chapter on MIPs in Malaysian higher education concerns how the replacement of English by Bahasa Malaysia as a medium of instruction following Malaysian independence has led to two parallel educational 'streams': a Bahasa Malaysia-medium public education system, and a private, English-medium one. Gill points out that this policy has institutionalized linguistic, socioeconomic and ethnic inequality.

In a chapter that reports findings from a research study (on language attitudes and use), Nical, Smolicz and Secombe examine inherent tensions in the Philippines where one language (Tagalog) has been chosen over others as the national language. They argue that to avoid further social inequality and conflict between ethnolinguistic groups, a more inclusive MIP that admits other regional languages as media of instruction needs to be promoted. Annamalai details the complexities of MIPs in India, where 41 languages are used as media of instruction. Annamalai maintains that the centrality of English as a medium of instruction

(it is the only language taught in all Indian states) serves the interests of an elite few, perpetuates school failure and social inequality, yet continues to enjoy widespread support in society. In the final chapter of Section II, Alidou makes a similar argument about MIPs in postcolonial sub-Saharan Africa, asserting that low school performance of many students in Africa can be explained by the retention of colonial MIPs. Alidou promotes, as do several other authors, a bilingual education programme that emphasizes early L1 instruction, with the later addition of national languages, while acknowledging the inevitable difficulties such a programme would face in terms of materials, teacher education, corpus planning and funding.

Although short, Section III contains three particularly strong papers. Webb describes the development of MIPs in multilingual post-Apartheid South Africa, noting that although 11 official languages were declared in the 1996 constitution, English generally continues as the medium of instruction. Webb traces the continuing prevalence of English to several factors, including a questionable commitment by the government to its multilingual ideals, and maintains, among other things, that this will only serve to perpetuate class and racial inequality, a conclusion echoed in chapters throughout the book. King and Benson's excellent chapter details a number of challenges in realizing 'bilingual intercultural education' in Bolivia and Ecuador, where there have been recent policy shifts towards recognition of indigenous languages and cultures. They worry that the lag in implementation, caused by difficulties such as lack of indigenous language standardization and inadequate materials, may be evidence of a 'rhetorical ploy' on the government's part rather than a sincere attempt to redress centuries of social and educational injustice. Tollefson provides an insightful discussion of MIPs in Slovenia, a state that formed following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, detailing opposing policy approaches to language diversity in an illustrative comparison of Serbian and Slovenian MIPs. He then moves on to consider contemporary language policy tensions within the broader context of globalization: balancing the need to preserve Slovene and other minority languages with the need to learn dominant European

languages in order to ensure equal participation in an integrated Europe. Finally, the editors' concluding chapter helpfully summarizes key themes across the various papers.

Despite the many strengths of the book, there are some shortcomings. Its ambitious international reach inevitably raises questions about what has *not* been included, not only with respect to MIPs in other countries, but in terms of creoles and non-standardized dialects (though Ebonics is mentioned by McCarty, and Singlish is briefly, if problematically considered by Pakir). At times, the book also drifts toward a nationalist language ideology (Woolard, 1998), in which language, culture, and nationality are associated in one-to-one correspondence. While this is likely due to the focus on official nation-state policies, rather than on more local or unofficial ones, it results in occasional unconsidered essentialism (cf. Blommaert, 2001). Additionally, despite an interest in gaps between rhetoric and the reality of MIP implementation, implementation here (with the exception of Jones and Martin-Jones' chapter) retains a decidedly macro focus. Of interest to language teaching researchers would be a more micro consideration of policy implementation, that is, how MIPs are negotiated, accommodated, and/or resisted by teachers and students in actual schools or classrooms, as well as the implications this would have for the day-to-day business of getting teaching and learning done in such settings.

These issues notwithstanding, the volume is an important addition to the applied linguistics literature. By rightly politicizing MIPs, the assembled collection provides language teaching researchers with an amply developed perspective on how macro-level forces can impact on such 'commonsense' issues as media of instruction, and, as mentioned earlier, obliges them to seek out such connections in their own research. These connections can take various form depending on the specific goals of researchers interested in situating their work in broader contexts, and include not only considerations governing media of instruction, but the pedagogies that are employed, the curriculum and materials that are utilized, as well as students' and teachers' particular discourse practices. Researchers engaged in studies concerning language

policy, sociolinguistics, bilingual education, and language education in these respective international settings will find the book particularly useful. When these points are combined with the international scope and multidimensional analyses of the volume, *Medium of instruction policies* becomes an important resource for language teaching researchers and applied linguists in general.

- Blommaert, J.** 2001: The Asmara Declaration as a sociolinguistic problem: reflections on scholarship and linguistic rights. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 5(1): 131–42.
- Tollefson, J.W.** 1991: *Planning language, planning inequality: language policy in the community*. London: Longman.
- Woolard, K.A.** 1998: Introduction: Language ideology as a field of inquiry. In Schieffelin, B.B., Woolard, K.A. and Kroskrity, P.V. editors, *Language ideologies: practice and theory*, New York: Oxford University Press, 3–47.

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