

## Student Mobility and Migration Goes “Glocal”

Geraghty, Barbara, and Jean E. Conacher, eds. 2014. *Intercultural Contact, Language Learning and Migration*. Advances in Sociolinguistics. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic.

Jackson, Jane. 2014. *Introducing Language and Intercultural Communication*. Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge.

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Intercultural communication and language education are two topics central to international education. Both are often conceived in terms of long-term mobility (i.e., international student and scholar services [ISSS]) in scholarly research outside of the field. Colleagues in education abroad (EA) recognize the importance of these topics but may not be aware of their theoretical frameworks (the former primarily in sociolinguistics and the latter in applied linguistics, notably second language acquisition). Intercultural communication and language education are unquestionably important to ISSS and EA, and practitioners on both sides of international education could benefit from and also contribute to the discussion of where these two fields intersect. The topic of human migration flows add interesting elements to the discussion of intercultural communication and language education, relevant to both ISSS and EA.

Jane Jackson’s *Introducing Language and Intercultural Communication* (2014) is an excellent primer on the intersection of language and intercultural communication. Jackson explains that these two topics should be studied within the context of what she considers to be the “seven imperatives”: globalization, internationalization, advances in transportation and communication technologies, changing demographics, conflict and peace, ethics and personal growth, and responsibility. The chapters that follow focus on the impact these seven imperatives have on culture and socialization, culture and power in context, nonverbal communication, identity, ethnocentrism, culture shock, relationships, conflict, and communication in the workplace, and close with a discussion on global citizenship and intercultural competence.

One could divide the book into two different sections: the first half covers foundational topics in the field, while the second half delves into more nuanced themes that readers will find applicable in professional or personal interactions. Each chapter provides a thorough, accessible, and practical discussion of its subject, offering discussion questions as well as resources for further reading. Even if there is an evident logic and evolution to the order of the chapter topics, this format allows for any chapter to be used independently, if for instance, the topic is covered in a staff retreat or a student orientation. While presented as an introduction, this rather exhaustive volume offers insight to all, including those with a more advanced level of familiarity with these topics.

In *Intercultural Contact, Language Learning and Migration* (2014), Barbara Geraghty and Jean E. Conacher approach intercultural communication and language education through the

lens of migration. Discussions about migration and language contact are followed by communications in the so-called “contact zone” and community formation. Although this volume has been published in a series titled *Advances in Sociolinguistics*, its content crosses over into the realm of applied linguistics with multiple chapters on language learning and second language acquisition, albeit through studies based on popular sociolinguistic themes of attitudes, perceptions, and identity.

Discussing intercultural communication and language education in terms of migration may be a seemingly obvious approach. However, this compilation does so from a variety of perspectives, with examples taken from language management in historic Jewish communities of the diaspora, to language use and learning among Polish immigrant communities in France and Ireland, to internal politics in Catalonia and Spain, to the effect of mobile technology on identity in a South African township. The capstone of this thorough discussion is a series of chapters on the additive element—linguistic and cultural alike—of migration and the benefits this brings to the individual and the host community. As directly referenced in this volume, according to UNESCO, “migration is not a single act of crossing a border, but rather a lifelong process that affects all aspects of the lives of those involved.” It is important to remember that “those involved” are not merely those who have migrated, but rather everyone with whom those who have migrated come in contact.

Regrettably, migration is often conspicuously absent from many discussions of intercultural communication and language education. People coming to a new country for work or education may share similarities with those featured in the migration literature. However, the abbreviated, and often mediated, structure of education abroad students’ time in their host country suggests that their experience is markedly different from those making a longer-term, possibly permanent, journey. These differences notwithstanding, the impact of migration on these experiences should not be neglected. Indeed, those migrating are generally aware that they will encounter a new culture and possibly a new language or language variety. What is very often missing from these discussions is the cultural and linguistic diversity that awaits them.

Whether resulting from domestic or transnational migration or developing in relative isolation, cultures and languages are seldom the neatly bundled static units that are often presented in textbooks or orientation materials. It is true that we should take care not to overwhelm those who have just arrived, whether they intend on staying for the short or long term. That said, imagine if you will, a Japanese student arriving at a U.S. campus with a significant Hispanic population, or conversely, a U.S. student arriving at a German city with a large Turkish or now Syrian population. We would be doing them a great disservice if we did not offer some guidance on how to navigate some of the complex situations that may confront them. Through this exercise, we should also invite these students to reflect upon how their presence in these settings and their interactions with those around them may impact their hosts and, of course, vice versa. Even if this is a singular experience, planting the seed could lead to further introspection, which could hopefully include contemplation of the complexity of the reality “back home.” Indeed, even the most purportedly homogenous, monolingual societies do not exist in a bubble and very likely were never as uniform as we have been left, or lead, to believe. Finally, the role of the international educator should not be restricted to that of facilitator. We do not live in a vacuum and can certainly stand to learn from this process of reflecting on how we communicate with those who also live in our respective societies.

## References

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