

Transnational research in English language teaching: critical practices and identities

R. Jain, Bedrettin Yazan, Suresh Canagarajah

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BENJING FU

School of Foreign Studies, West Anhui University, China

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The globalization of English and shifts demanded by the 21st century have modified the landscape of English language teaching (ELT) in the past decades (Blitvich, 2018; Sánchez-Hernández & Barón, 2022). The members of such a globalized village now engage in diverse practices and identity formation processes (Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Silva, 2016). However, many studies on ELT globalization and transnationalism are dominated by specific communities of practice (e.g., US). Additionally, a global and inclusive picture of transnational research on ELT praxis and identity is missing. To fill these gaps, the present volume entitled “*transnational research in English language teaching: critical practices and identities*” aims to showcase the complex global ELT landscape across contexts

and practitioners in order to deepen our understanding of the transnational research and practice. Jain, Yazan, and Canagarajah unified a range of inquiries on this topic drawing on language teachers, educators, and researchers from different backgrounds. The volume considers personal, professional, and theoretical foundations of transnational identities and pedagogical practices, which are shaped by communities of practice. Since this volume rests on trajectories and lived experiences of ELT professionals across the globe, it decenters and decolonizes research in the field and provides a geographically wide insight. Therefore, the book is beneficial for ELT students, teachers, researchers, and teacher educators in that their disciplinary vision could be expanded to a more just and inclusive landscape.

In terms of content, this edited volume encompasses three parts, each containing three chapters. After an introductory chapter (i.e., Chapter 1) that justifies and explains the goal of the volume, the editors present the first part entitled “*transnational practices and identities of ELLs in the US*” including Chapter 2, 3, and 4. In Chapter 2, which is composed by Kwon, the transnational childhoods of second-generation immigrants are explained comprehensively. She uses three cases to exemplify her arguments and pinpoints her participants as ‘active social agents’ in connections other countries, cultures, and languages. Two cases lived transnational and translanguaging lives across the US and South Korea, while the third one blended Chinese, Korean, and US cultural-linguistic repertoires. To inspect their transnational lives



and practices, the author used digital photography, narratives, and self-selected photographs. The results showed that the participants acted in ‘multi-local’ spaces with ‘transborder family network’ that fostered the expression of transnational longing via the photographs. The chapter terminates in some pedagogical suggestions for the implementation of transnational and translanguaging education in K-12 settings.

Shifting to higher education in the US, Chapter 3 reports on a multiple case-study on how four transnational students from different countries shaped a sense of belonging despite being racioethnically and linguistically minoritized in the ‘new’ context. Yeom used an initial interview complemented by observations of the cases. Then a final post-observation interview was conducted. The findings revealed that the participants’ belongingness was shaped by how their host communities perceived them. The author also enumerates some suggestions for universities to construct host members’ translanguaging competence so that translanguaging students perform successfully in campus communities. In Chapter 4, Altun describes how two Turkish international exchange students pursue ‘unbelongingness’ at a US university and create a separate identity from their ethnic identities. Using different qualitative tools, the analysis of translocal narratives demonstrated that the two participants were creating transnational identities, which occupied an in-between third space to transcend their nationalities. They also had challenges being accepted as credible English users in their host communities. Focusing on another Turkish international student, in Chapter 5, Keles and Yazan describe transnational L2 socialization and its emotional costs and challenges. To capture transition, the authors used narrative inquiry and explored the liminal transnational space that the student occupied via agentive and transformative decision-making. They also maintain that a successful co-creation of transnational spaces needs both ‘newcomers’ and ‘old-timers’ to involve in physical and ideological border-crossing.

In the second part labelled “*transnational practitioners and participants in global contexts beyond the US*”, the contributors emphasize on research contexts and participants in ‘other’ global surroundings. Four chapters make up this part (i.e., 6, 7, 8, and 9). In Chapter 6, Ustuk and De Costa describe the transnational identity development of an emerging TESOL practitioner beyond national boundaries. This chapter explains how a single participant from Turkey acquired ‘practical, professional and disseminative profits in in three EU nations – Hungary, Lithuania and Ukraine, where he could enact a transnational identity and develop a transnational habitus. The authors close the chapter with some implications for transnational settings. In a similar vein, Kidwell, in Chapter 7, elaborates on a case study on an ELT practitioner’s the transnational experiences and how they shaped her critical orientations and intercultural competence (ICC). Using interviews and journals, the author explains how the participant’s intranational and international experiences fostered her ICC development and culture instruction. Implications for teaching and teacher education practices are also presented at the end of this chapter. Shifting the attention to the return of migrants, Martínez-Prieto and Lindahl, in Chapter 8, examine five transnational English teachers’ and learners’ return to Mexico according to Foucault’s ideas about disciplinary power. They sought to disclose the participants’ fluid identities as transnational agents. Opposing nativist and colonialist perspectives, the participants demanded a revisit in policies related to transnationals in Mexican institutions. Moving to the identity construction of refugees, Cinkara, in Chapter 9, describes how six Syrian refugees, who were transnational EFL practitioners

and researchers in Turkey, formed their identities. The participants perceived themselves as performing key roles as both teachers and researchers in both home and host communities. The author also demonstrates how the participants' engagement with teaching and research had a bilateral component in both communities. This study adds diversity to the voices concerning refugee's identity formation.

In the third part titled "*transnational practices and identities of TESOL practitioners in the US*", the editors present four separate research studies on transnational scholars and practitioners. This part begins with Chapter 10 in which Kim illustrates the emergence of an individual's fluid and shifting transnational-translingual identities across raciolinguistic situations in South Korea and the US. The participant had a bilingual and bicultural background and took different professional roles in these two countries. To trigger the participant's reconstructive autobiographical writing, the author reflects on her own role as a 'facilitator researcher' in transnational landscapes. Moreover, the personal-professional journeys of the case and how she established herself as a TESOL scholar-practitioner are explicated in this chapter. In Chapter 11, Liao describes research on two adult US-based transnational-translingual practitioners of TESOL, who transitioned across national settings. One of the cases was a South Korean migrated to the US, while the other one came from Hungary. The author accentuates the participants' linguistic and cultural capital as well as strategic enactment of their professional agency to overcome barriers in the US workplaces. She also explains how the cases modified the perceived 'deficits' into empowering identities. As a continuation of research on agency and identity construction, in Chapter 12, Choi, Roose and Manion take an interdisciplinary approach to examine three graduate assistants from Turkey, China, and India majoring in English, computer science, and economics. The authors describe how the cases formed their transnational identities to involve in optimal classroom-based practices to link students' development as writers with their disciplinary content mastery. As the final contribution to this volume, Chapter 13 reports a collaborative narrative inquiry into the lived experiences of four Fulbrighters and ELT practitioners moving to the US. Two of them were from Indonesia, one from Russia, and one from Afghanistan. Swift Black, Liang, and Park, in this chapter, reveal the participants' construction of their transnational teacher identities through initial struggles with the US academia TESOL coursework. They also underscore some generative tensions that the participants had experienced within transnational professional spaces.

Overall, this volume is commendable given its global view of identity and agency (re)formation across transnational and translingual contexts. It truly contributes to the ELT community as it creates a comprehensive and inclusive account of the global ELT landscape. Moreover, this resource is advantageous for its incorporation of multiple perspectives and experiences of traveling across borders to reflect on pedagogical, research and professional practices. Another merit of this volume is the use a wide range of qualitative research instruments and designs complemented by the authors' own reflexive writing and positionalities that effectively clarified transnational identities and questioned leading pedagogical assumptions. This compelling volume is admirable for extending the literature on transnational identity by using a geographical and conceptual variety in its content. Finally, the book is momentous for depicting the complex landscape of global ELT and setting an agenda for research and practice in this line in the future.

Notwithstanding these advantages, this resource has some disadvantages, too. First, the including studies in most of the chapters focus on the US setting, while the volume claims to take a global view of transnational identity and practice. It would have been a good idea, if the editors had injected more chapters from Europe, Asia, and Africa. The current version is US-oriented. The second drawback is the absence of suggestions for future research and further sources for studying the topics of concern in the chapters. As transnational identity is a recent term, it could have been better to suggest some core resources at the end of each chapter. Moreover, the present volume presents the chapters in the form of empirical studies each focusing on a specific aspect of the macro-theme (i.e., transnational research in ELT). An introduction of key concepts at the outset of each chapter would have been promising for readers.

Despite these shortcomings, the present volume deserves praise given its data-driven and empirical approach to showcase lived experiences of ELT practitioners regarding transnational research and practice. This insightful resource contributes to the field by decentralizing ELT research from Anglophone countries to a wider community of practice. Furthermore, this seminal book encourages ELT educators and researchers to work on transnational practices and identities regardless of living in native or non-native settings. By taking a critical and inclusive approach, this volume presents a fair exploration of TESOL landscape. Therefore, it helps ELT teachers, students, researchers, teacher trainers, and policy-makers by informing them of the legitimacy and significance of transnational communities and practices in shaping one's identity.

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