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Farzad Sharifian and Gary B. Palmer (eds), *Applied Cultural Linguistics: Implications for second language learning and intercultural communication*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2007, xiii + 170 pages. ISBN 9789027238948 Hb.

Reviewed by Jyh Wee Sew (National University of Singapore)

There is no such thing as a clean slate in formal second language learning (SLA). Whether the learner is a secondary school student, undergraduate or working adult, the learning mind has pre-wired knowledge of first language (L1). Apart from L1, a learner brings along cultural knowledge. Both L1 and cultural knowledge form the basis of learning in SLA. This knowledge basis on which learners of a second language (L2) mediate the second linguistic intelligence is languaculture.

Languaculture underscores language and culture as an inseparable entity influencing the conceptualisation of human cognition. Following Wolf and Bobda (2001), the editors in this book are aware that students may associate their cultural schemas and categories to the words of the language they are learning (p. 7). Thus, applied cultural linguistics is relevant in SLA to inform on the various clashes and confluences between source and target languacultures. Languaculture as a rich intelligence is significant to cross cultural communication. The notion of languaculture is explicated in the work of Agar (1994) and is elaborated in Sew (1997).

SLA as a common top-down requirement in education makes the learning of L2 a reluctant journey for many students and an uphill battle for L2 teachers. To insist on absolute L2 environment in SLA is a pedagogical misappropriation, especially for SLA in the secondary education, because the students already have a strong inclination towards L1. There is a need for L2 teachers to incorporate L1 and cultural knowledge; judiciously in SLA to engage and enhance teaching and learning in SLA. The same applies to adult learning in SLA.

This volume contains revised papers from the theme session on Applied Cultural Linguistics, which was part of the 8th International Cognitive Linguistics Conference at La Rioja, Spain in 2003. There are a total of 8 chapters, mostly on L1 interference as intercultural communication in SLA. Among others, the insights on intercultural difference span from teaching English inference schema for archaeology in Japan; Farsi-Persian cultural ethos among Iranian students; Chinese conceptualisations of body parts; and the embodiment of fear expressions in Tunisian Arabic. This review surveys the work that incorporates applied educational

linguistics in the analysis. The select authors in this collection share their insights on existing individual cultural biases brought along by the learners of L2 that the teachers of L2 should acknowledge. The clarification of L1 and cultural knowledge provides the parameters to forge the understanding of L2 pragmatics in SLA classrooms. Readers of this book will be able to understand SLA better either as students, teachers, or researchers of language acquisition.

Applied cultural linguistics is defined as a holistic approach that examines the cultural constraints on schemas, basic concepts, prototypes, metaphors and other types of meaning structures (p. 4). The editors of this volume advocate languaculture as a mediating foundation in language teaching. The need to attune SLA with languacultures outside the language classroom becomes the basis for the editors to question the learning adequacy in the work of many contributors reported in *Applied Cognitive Linguistics II* (Mouton de Gruyter, 2001):

... studies in the Putz, Niemeier and Dirven volume work within the traditional approaches and problems of cognitive linguistics,...they do not, for the most part, appear to explore culture outside the vocabulary of instruction. Thus, their students have the burden of imagining the culture to which they must then map their new vocabulary (p. 6).

Following Wolf and Bobda (2001), the editors inform that conceptual diversity enriches English language because learners benefit from the co-presence of indigenous cultural element alongside English elements (p.7). This point paves the way for applied cultural linguistics as relevant and to be further incorporated in SLA.

Chapter 2 is written by Debra J. Occhi, who is interested in examining what linguistic and cultural features learned by Japanese speakers need to be factored into the designing of appropriate resource for L2 (p. 18). Debra J. Occhi examines the Japanese languacultural influences against the acquisition of a linguistic schema that is pervasive in archaeology reasoning in L2. The English modal + have + past participle construction [dinosaurs could have been rescued] construction is considered basic in archaeology reporting. The schema, however, is difficult to obtain in SLA of Japanese students.

The learning culture of middle and high school culture is such that students do not question the source but rather accept the lesson package as received wisdom for passing examinations (p. 19). The learning of English by Japanese students is equally a memorisation-focused experience that provides little development for native English discourse styles (p. 24). As such, the development of logical argumentative skills in both L1 and L2 are problematic for many Japanese learners. The problem is compounded with popular Japanese archaeological reporting for younger audiences that uses potential + past or non-past constructions (p. 25). The lack of inferential schema in the cultural background resulted in little use of

modal construction in the writing styles at the varsity level, which is relevant in archaeological reporting.

Among the strengths of this article, is the multimodal understanding in the practice of SLA by Debra J. Occhi and her partner. They use US documentary from Discovery Channel to circumvent the L1 transfer that leads to the problem in reporting style. Japanese students in their classes are trained to use clause format to create constructions of conclusions based on evidence (p. 29). Interestingly, students are encouraged to doubt the approach and method in which the conclusions are derived with modal constructions. They are taught about anachronism, an inevitable challenge in archaeological interpretations, in relation to modal constructions.

In Chapter 3, Farzad Sharifian shares a number of Persian languacultural notions pertinent to the Iranian speech community. Some of them are *aberu* (face): *ab* (water) and *ru* (face), *ta'arouf* (courtesy, compliment), *shekasteh-nafsi* (modesty) and *ghorbun-sadaghe* (sacrifice-charity) (p.36–45; the *a* in *aberu* is a low back unrounded vowel). *Aberu* is different from the notion of face in English because it holds the honour gathered through social interaction appreciated in the Iranian community. Farzad Sharifian reminds the readers the importance of social opinion to an Iranian, which leads to the need for maintaining individual dignity in the classroom of SLA.

The concept of Persian face work suggests for a further evaluation on the pedagogical strategies that are relevant to the Iranians. *Aberu*, an important schema behind the operation of daily life amongst Iranians, suggests for the learning of L2 among the Iranian students to be performed in group-based learning avoiding learning inhibition. Cooperative learning (CL) in L2 pedagogy, for example, is in tandem with the languacultural concept of *shekasteh-nafsi*, whereby modesty to the point of denying any individual merit bestowed upon directly (see Sew 2007a for a review on CL). The languacultural schema behind the Iranian norms of denying personal glory provides a parameter for positive reinforcement in SLA. The teachers of L2 who reward the Iranian students in group may avoid personal anxiety and guilt for a student (p. 43).

In Chapter 5, Ning Yu explores *xin*, the Chinese equivalent for heart in English, as a metonymy for one's thought and feelings. Constructions of *xin* as the locale for feelings are supplied in phrasal expressions collocating *xin* with terms such as room, land, field, house, nest and threshold (p. 67). It is informed that the distinction between heart and mind is not clear, as *xin* is glossed together with mind in ancient Chinese (p. 74). This point is questionable. While *xin* is the storage of feelings, *nao* (brain) in Chinese does not compound with the collocating terms of *xin*. I provide a comparison between the idiomaticity of *xin* and *nao* below:

Chinese Body-Part Term	Location Term	Nonsense	Meaningful collation in Chinese Idiom
<i>Nao</i> (brain); <i>Xin</i> (heart)	<i>Fang</i> (room)	* <i>Nao fang</i>	<i>Xin fang</i> (heart's room)
	<i>Jian</i> (inside)	* <i>Nao Jian</i>	<i>Xin jian</i> (inner heart)
	<i>Wo</i> (nest)	* <i>Nao wo</i>	<i>Xin wo</i> (heart's place)
	<i>Di</i> (land)	* <i>Nao di</i>	<i>Xin di</i> (heart land)
	<i>Tien</i> (field)	* <i>Nao tien</i>	<i>Xin tien</i> (heart field)
	<i>Hai</i> (ocean)	* <i>Xin hai</i>	<i>Nao hai</i> (brain state)

The data show two different kinds of collation suggesting that heart and brain are different thinking organs in modern Chinese. The last datum is particularly interesting, as *hai* (ocean) has not been able to find a place in the heart of Chinese but associates well with *nao* as an idiom. The fact that there is only one locale for brain based idiom in Chinese is another point deserving attention. Mu Peng, a native of Northern China, informs that *nao hai* is a sum of thoughts. This point suggests that both heart and mind engender different types of thinking and processing. A possible conjecture is that *xin* (heart) is the end of feelings that are transferred from *nao* (brain), the generator of thoughts.

The similarities and differences in conceptual structures between Chinese (learners) and the L2 languaculture should be the focus of relevant L2 teachers. The areas identified in applied metaphor research on source-target mappings discrepancies and the different value judgements on source-target domains between languacultures are highlighted (p. 80). Ning Yu likens L2 learners as travellers in the night, feeling their ways in the dark. By highlighting the contrasts in conceptualisation between source and target languacultures, the L2 learners are assisted with street lamps and road signs resulting in better SLA outcomes. Consequently, the simplistic metaphor view equating L2 learners as container or machine in SLA is not valid in the actual language learning process (cf. the literature on SLA gathered in Ellis 2001).

This review reminds that understanding the intercultural differences between L1 and L2 is not enough. The profile of the learners as a heterogeneous entity with a diverse inclination of knowing is another area lacking in applied cultural linguistics discussed in the collection. Kinesthetic intelligence and audio visual intelligence, for example, are part of the 21st century teenagers' learning styles. These profiles are captured from the teenagers' preoccupations at Cineleisure, a popular shopping Mall at Orchard Road, Singapore, by 60 teachers embarking on an amazing race in their staff retreat (Sew 2007b). Following this discovery, SLA practitioners need to know the appropriate methods in the delivery of learning that are in alignment with the learner's profile (see Lazear 1999).

Applied cultural linguistics, hence, is beyond the romanticism of semantics and pragmatics. It has to incorporate visual and physical communication as part of the semiotics of practice in SLA (Barab 2007, Gu 2007). While the editors mention multimodal entry points of learning via a variety of senses and channels (p. 3) there is little on Multiple Intelligences as practicing framework for a rich cross cultural and learning basis (see Sew 2006a). Little on interactive learning, a rich site to play out the languacultural differences between L1 and L2, is incorporated to the SLA components. Dramatics or educational drama classes, as a particular facet of interactivity in SLA, for example, is reported in the work of Schomann (2006), Smith (2006), Araki-Metcalf (2006) and Sew (2006b, 2007c, 2007d).

At the macro level, with reference to applied cultural linguistics, globalisation requires the integration of various voices from different languacultures into an ever changing perspective of intelligent adaptation for individuals. It is through the application and reintegration of languacultural schemas into pedagogical knowledge, that applied cultural linguistics stands tall in the business of teaching and learning a second language. Insights from practicing authors may offer the technical know-how of classroom dynamics in SLA against the backdrop of intercultural communication. And knowing that there is no clean slate in SLA, students, researchers and teachers of L2 should find this book a welcome addition for identifying specific and general cultural constraints in the SLA classrooms.

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