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CHARLOTTE BURCK, *Multilingual living: Explorations of language and subjectivity*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, 218. Hb \$75.

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What are the pros and the cons of writing a book outside one's main field of expertise? *Multilingual living*, a book about bilingualism written by a psychotherapist whose previous work has focused on gender and family therapy, offers interesting answers to this question. Among its advantages are a fresh perspective and the considerable body of expertise in the field of family relationships that Burck brings to the table. She asks intriguing questions about living in more than one language and answers them in engaging and compelling ways. Yet her outsider status also carries its price: Scholars who do not take part in an academic conversation within a field do not always have a clear idea of whether their work is truly novel or whether previous work has already attempted to answer the same questions in similar ways. Rather, they are at the mercy of a body of literature they are able to locate through a time-constrained search, without a clear feeling for which sources can be considered central in the field and which are peripheral, or which debates are still going on and where scholars might have reached a consensus.

This shortcoming is particularly evident in chapter 1, "Researching multilingualism and multilingual identities," which aims to review the literature relevant to the present study. The chapter unsuccessfully attempts to bring together a variety of unrelated, outdated, and often peripheral sources, violating the three unspoken rules of a literature review: currency, comprehensiveness, and relevance. The discussion of multilingual development in childhood, for instance, relies on research conducted in the 1970s and 1980s, rather than on the abundant body of recent work. The section on linguistic relativity misses Lucy's (1992a,b) seminal work, instrumental in the current revival of interest in the so-called Sapir-

Whorf Hypothesis. Throughout, the discussion of the bilingualism literature abounds in oversimplifications and facile and factually incorrect statements about accepted knowledge (e.g., “neurological differences have been linked to ways in which polylinguals and polyglots experience their languages differently,” p. 17), about current research (e.g., “much of the traditional linguistic research into bilingualism and multilingualism had concentrated on individual ‘language competence’ rather than ‘language use’,” 32), and about research directions that have not been pursued in the field (e.g., “gender differences have rarely been examined in research on multilingualism,” 33). Contrary to these statements, scholars are still debating the relevance of neurolinguistic data to experiential differences; language use has been central to bilingualism investigations in the past four decades; and the role of gender in second language learning and bilingualism has been very actively examined in the past decade (for reviews of this work see Norton & Pavlenko 2004 and Piller & Pavlenko 2004). Most important, the author appears unaware of the whole body of work on linguistic biographies and language and family relationships that is most directly linked to her own study (cf. Franceschini & Miecznikowski 2004, Piller 2002).

Fortunately for readers, the rest of the book is not significantly tied to the literature review, and one can safely skip the first chapter and enjoy the rest of the text. Chapter 2, “The research framework,” introduces the research questions formulated by the author: How do individuals construct their experiences of living life in several languages? What meanings are given to speaking more than one language, and what relational issues arise? These questions were answered through semi-structured interviews with 24 multilingual individuals living in Britain at the time. The chapter offers a description of these individuals and of the interview, transcription, and data analysis procedures. The analytical procedures are described very briefly, however, and novice readers may remain in the dark as to what are “meaning units” or “evaluative elements.”

Starting with chapter 3, “Childhoods in several languages,” we begin hearing the voices of the participants, and this is where the study gets truly interesting. Burck begins her discussion with the four participants who grew up in multilingual colonial contexts: an Asian man who had lived in Kenya as a child, a black African man who grew up in what was then Rhodesia, and two white South Africans. Her analysis challenges the unproblematic view of the “mother tongue” as the language of intimacy and warmth and shows that mother tongues implicated in the processes of racialization and oppression may elicit contradictions and negative feelings such as shame and embarrassment. Somewhat different concerns appear in accounts of individuals who grew up speaking a minority language. As children they had to negotiate the pressures of participating in two distinct worlds, the world of the home language and that of the outside language and culture. To convey their sense of living in different worlds, these individuals systematically constructed themselves as doubled and multiple.

While children's linguistic identities are given and imposed, adults have at least some degree of freedom in terms of language choice and identity construction. Chapter 5, "Adulthoods in several languages: Constructions of self and language," examines the inner workings of this linguistic identity work and the meaning of "finding a voice" in a new language. To do so, Burck explores further the notion of doubleness, showing that several narratives in the corpus link the first learned language to a core, "authentic," "natural" identity and a second language to performed identity. She explains this narrative trope of inner/outer self as a way to maintain the notion of a coherent core self and to offer a more consistent and positive account of self than one offered by the notions of identity split or schizophrenia.

Emotionality is another way in which participants frame the difference between their languages: First languages are presented as emotional, expressive, and creative, and subsequently learned languages as more formal and constraining. For instance, for Henka, a native speaker of Polish, English words do not carry the same emotional significance as Polish ones, which is why she is able to use them to talk about her relationship. Paradoxically, points out Burck, this choice also creates more intimacy than she was able to create in the first language. This freedom of expression offered by the later learned language serves as a counterpoint to accounts that emphasize the inauthenticity and inarticulacy of the second language.

Since most participants had consistently presented themselves as double or multiple, it seems reasonable to ask how they perceive and manage this multiplicity. Chapter 5, "Language identities and power relationships: Strategies of hybridization," considers participants' views of themselves and how they are constructed by others. Burck shows that despite the miscommunication and misinterpretation common in the lives of second-language speakers, most participants viewed the availability of different cultural perspectives and linguistic resources as an advantage rather than a deterrent. Importantly, later on in the book the researcher acknowledges that she may have influenced and co-constructed such accounts in her desire to unpack what she saw as "unquestioned negativity about bilingualism" (166).

Chapter 6, "Language use and family relationships," considers how the presence of two or more languages plays out in family relationships. Burck identifies three main sources of tension. The first comes from the language differential between children and parents in immigrant families, where children's greater competence in the majority language may lead to power struggles and to stress, embarrassment, and resentment for both parties involved. The second source of tension is language choice in bilingual couples, where one member of a couple may not be proficient in or willing to speak the other's language (for an in-depth treatment of this issue, see Piller 2002). The third source is language choice in parenting by couples where parents speak different first languages or live in an

environment different from their first language. Burck argues that women married to speakers of other languages may implicitly draw on the notion of “mother tongue” to lay claim to the importance of their own language and to warrant a change in the family’s linguistic practices. To justify the use of the first language to their children, they appeal to the idea of “naturalness” and construct their choice as the only possible one (for similar findings, see Pavlenko 2004). At the same time, using the second language enabled some parents to be more like the kind of parents they wanted to be.

Chapter 7, “Positioning the researcher,” represents a somewhat abrupt transition from the data back to the methodology, and it would have been much better positioned as a follow-up to chapter 2. Here Burck shares the story of her own transitions between languages and countries and reveals ways in which her own beliefs influenced her agendas and questions. Chapter 8, “Concluding discussion,” summarizes the findings of the study, highlighting ways in which race and gender mediate the meanings of particular languages, far beyond the oversimplified labels of “mother tongue” and “second language.”

What is particularly interesting and perhaps even uncanny about this “outsider” account of bi- and multilingualism is how much its questions and findings are in sync with the most recent trends in the field – a blooming interest in multilinguals’ lives and in ways race, class, gender, and emotions play out in the learning and use of multiple languages (Franceschini & Miecznikowski 2003, Piller 2002, Piller & Pavlenko 2004). It appears then that, at least in this case, the pros of engaging in interdisciplinary or even out-of-one’s-discipline work far outweigh the cons. Burck’s book offers a well-theorized, lucid, and engaging account of how multilinguals feel, think, and talk about their languages, and it will be of value and interest to scholars and lay readers alike.

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