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KWOK-KAN TAM & TIMOTHY WEISS (eds.), *English and globalization: Perspectives from Hong Kong and mainland China*. Hong Kong: China University Press, 2005. Pp. ix, 276. Hb \$35.00.

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“Has English become the ‘cultural SARS’ and ‘king of terrorists’ for Chinese people? Are we Chinese really facing a new ‘Opium War’ against English?” ask the authors of a recently published book, *The English demon* (Zhu & Yang 2004), which denounces English as a new form of opium, invoking the painful image of the history of Western invasion of China. Comparing English to opium, a substance that is believed to have been used by the Western imperialists to intoxicate the Chinese people and to have caused two wars between China and Britain, is a clear indication of growing hostility toward English in China. At a time when China has just joined the World Trade Organization, has successfully competed for the opportunity to host the 2008 Olympic Games, and is rapidly growing into a powerful global economy, the hostility toward English seems puzzling. After all, English is THE language for international trade and communications and thus a necessary medium for China to express its desire for globalization. Why this resentment, then?

Kwok-kan Tam and Timothy Weiss’s book *English and globalization: Perspectives from Hong Kong and mainland China* offers some unique perspectives that can help us understand this puzzle. This edited book contains contributions from a group of Chinese scholars who carefully document and analyze the experiences of English in mainland China as well as Hong Kong, a former British colony and now a special administrative region of China. An introductory essay by Tam provides a thorough overview of various perspectives on English and globalization and sets the context and framework for the rest of the book. The rest of the book is a collection of 15 essays. The first eight are primarily about English in Hong Kong, while the remaining seven discuss English in mainland China.

The topics these essays cover are quite diverse, as are the authors’ backgrounds, providing a rich, well-grounded set of discussions about the various issues surrounding English in Hong Kong and mainland China. As the editors suggest, these essays can be read as a hypertext because “the topics and issues in each essay often refer to and are linked with those in other essays that neither immediately precede nor succeed them in the Table of Contents” (p. viii). The topics and issues in these essays, according to the editors, can be grouped into a number of thematic categories: theoretical and historical perspectives (chaps. 1,

2, 3, 4, 8, 15), culture, communication, and the classroom (7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14), and standards and variations (5, 6, 10). Other issues discussed in these essays include “diversity and plurality” (1, 3, 5, 6), “computers and language fashions” (6, 7, 9), “interrelationships among language, literature, and culture” (3, 9, 10, 13, 14), “English language education and intercultural competencies” (7, 8, 10, 13, 15), and “language standards, international communication, and linguistic/cultural imperialism” (4, 11, 12, 15).

Through personal accounts, theoretical analyses, analyses of historical events and documents, and empirical data, the essays in this book provide an insider’s look at a wide range of issues concerning English in mainland China and Hong Kong. These issues are significant as well as complex. As China, the world’s most populous nation, further develops into an economic superpower, many are concerned about its potential impact on the rest of the world politically, culturally, economically, and militarily. There is thus increasing need for a better understanding of China, particularly of how it interacts with foreign cultures, and language is one of the most representative subjects of study. Understanding the experiences of English in China opens a window on the complex and intriguing struggle for a delicate balance between the desire for global participation and the wish to maintain national identity and cultural traditions. This book makes a timely contribution in this regard.

This volume should also be valuable as data for those interested in language and culture in general, and globalization in China in particular. Feelings toward English in both mainland China and Hong Kong have always been mixed with politics, national identity, and economic development; thus, the fate of English there has always been entangled with the political and economical conditions of the moment. The situation is further complicated by the fact that China has a long history and once enjoyed tremendous cultural glory. Although the homogeneity of the majority of Chinese people and their common cultural heritage amplify any emotions about English (or anything foreign, for that matter), the complexity and strength of the feelings are difficult to detect and understand from the outside. Hence, a book like this that relies on scholars who work inside mainland China and Hong Kong is especially valuable.

This book is not only informative but also delightful to read. Except for a few that are heavy with empirical data and historical facts, most chapters read more like personal stories with rational analysis. These personal reflections and observations, although not necessarily systematic and representative, provide penetrating insights into the deep and foggy struggles of a people who desire globalization with great enthusiasm while remaining painfully concerned about the loss of their own culture, identity, and history, and thus are suspicious of foreign languages, cultures, and ideas.

The book’s strengths are, unfortunately, also its weakness. While all the essays provide some rich and authentic data and insights about English in China, the quality of the chapters is very uneven. Moreover, because of the diversity of

the approaches the authors take, the book reads more like a conference proceeding than like a well-planned volume focusing on one topic. Hence, it wins on breadth but loses on depth. It would be a great introductory read for those who are interested in English and globalization in China, but it would not serve well those who want in-depth exploration of one topic.

REFERENCE

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VIV EDWARDS, *Multilingualism in the English-speaking world: Pedigree of nations*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. Pp. viii, 253. Pb \$29.95.

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Amid widespread talk about the dominance of English across the world, this volume is a reminder that even at the core of the English-speaking world, English monolingualism is not as universal as is often assumed. The book's subtitle, *Pedigree of nations*, conveys that, in fact, multilingualism is not only an important element of contemporary daily life in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Australia, and Aotearoa/New Zealand, but also an essential thread in these nations' ancestral lines, indeed part of what has made them what they are today. In this comprehensive effort to dispel the "myth of monolingualism" (p. 3), Viv Edwards has assembled copious evidence of the use and significance of minority languages in English-dominant countries. Readers will find themselves better equipped to counter not only this general misconception but also the pervasive corollaries that position other languages and their speakers as problematic, outside the mainstream, and therefore outside the range of what is valued.

Edwards's exploration of the extent, forms, and functions of multilingualism focuses on the inner-circle countries of the English-speaking world (Kachru 1985), where the myth of monolingualism is strongest. The first of three sections in the book establishes a background to the extent of linguistic diversity in these five countries and discusses issues in the provision of multilingual services. This is followed by two other sections detailing the use of multiple languages, first at home and school and then in the public and international spheres. In the first chapter, Edwards delineates three general categories of