

Educating Chinese-heritage Students in the Global-Local Nexus: Identities, Challenges, and Opportunities, Edited by Guofang Li and Wen Ma. New York, NY: Routledge, 2018, 272 pages.

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The book, *Educating Chinese-heritage students in the global-local nexus: Identities, challenges, and opportunities*, edited by Guofang Li and Wen Ma, provides a significant addition to the current need for a better understanding of Chinese immigrant literacy learning around the world.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China estimated that as many as 149 million people from mainland China live in other countries by the end of 2018, forming the largest migratory population in human history. Meanwhile, diverse sociocultural, political, and geographical characteristics from diasporic Chinese communities have led to increasingly diverse populations of Chinese immigrants. The situation brings researchers and policymakers difficulties in obtaining a clear overview of the impact of changing demographics in gaining an in-depth understanding of the “Chinese diaspora,” and responding to the needs of the specific Chinese-immigrant communities (e.g., Skeldon, 2003). Although current literature (e.g., Ho, 2019; Junker, 2019; Mu & Pang, 2019; Teoh, 2018) has approached the Chinese diaspora from a multitude of disciplinary perspectives, the lack of studies on the educational domain is evident. To respond to this urgent demand, the book adds an extensive understanding of how oversea ethnic Chinese are doing educationally in the international spectrum with a socio-cultural lens. Building on a previous 2016 volume, which focuses on the literacy performance of K-12 Chinese heritage learners (CHLs, learners who grow up and learn in communities where the mainstream language is not Chinese) in North American schools, this volume offers a sequel by turning to the settings outside of North America, paying close attention to the status quo of CHLs’ education from multiple diasporic cohorts worldwide. Specifically, this book addresses crucial aspects of existing CHLs’ education overseas, such as host language (English) learning, heritage language (Chinese) learning and culture maintenance, and CHLs’ adaptation, acculturation, literacy construction, and identity formation.

In the preface, the authors elaborate on the notion of CHL, which enables the audience to anchor this vital term throughout the book quickly. Next, the authors arrange the volume’s 13 chapters following the abovementioned dominant strands, outlining CHLs’ learning and life in different world regions. This overview shows three themes, including; 1) CHLs’ achievements, failures, and needs when they learn and live in the mainstream society (chapters 1 to 5); 2) their strategic efforts in wrestling with the obstacles and challenges (chapters 6 to 10), as well as instructional implications of how educational practitioners scaffold CHLs’ literacy learning and identity construction (chapters 11, 12, and 13).

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CHLs encounter multiple issues during their process of acculturation, academic development, and identity formation in global-local settings. Based on what is depicted in this book, these issues include how languages and cultures are interwoven to (re)shape and enrich CHLs' academic and life experiences, how minoritized learners negotiate their literacy options and identities in mainstream learning settings, and how they shuttle back and forth between their host and Chinese home societies. During learning, accommodation, and acculturation, most CHLs believe that a transnational identity and multilingual skills will help them step over lingual/cultural boundaries and bring new possibilities for their academic life overseas. This topic is addressed in Chapter 2. The researcher Tsukada looks at CHLs' dilemmas, challenges, and opportunities in a particular anglicized English-focused but Japanese-dominated community. Tsukada finds that Chinese international students attempt to transcend national borders by taking Japanese language courses, alongside the compulsory English courses, which serve as a bridge to the local (Japanese) language in non-English-speaking countries like Japan. CHLs with multilinguistic capacities thus encompass expanding possibilities that support their process of "becoming transnationals" (Baas, 2010), which increases their flexibility for life. Since "linguistic structures provide elements for a communication system" which "becomes the resource through which social practices are created and accomplished" (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 17), the different languages CHLs learn bind them to the sociocultural context where they study and live, following the glocal flows of "interested knowledge and cultural capital" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008). The entanglements among languages and cultures encourage literacy practitioners to pay attention to learners' diverse linguistic heritages to expand opportunities for situated literacy practices and intercultural awareness development.

Besides issues related to literacy and cultural challenges, CHLs' psycho-emotional struggles also raise current scholars' concerns. The psycho-emotional issues reported in Chapters 3 and 4 mainly relate to CHLs' "sense of affiliation, frustration, and boredom" (Chapter 3, p. 57) when they shuttle between their heritage language/culture and the mainstream one. Two dominant factors contributing to this are the dread of dissociation with local peers and the lack of immediate incentive to maintain Chinese language and culture in the host country. In addition, "the context of reception, the organization of the Chinese community, sociocultural needs, and family dynamics" (Chapter 4, p. 67) also alter CHLs' degree of connections with their Chinese language and culture. All these factors impel educators to consider how the interplay of environment, cultures, and individuals affects the status of different languages within learners' self-concepts, which further impacts their emotional and pragmatic needs and experiences. Therefore, language can be a strategic yet flexible symbolic resource for managing tensions and shifts between varying identities and cultures. This extensive understanding of interrelationships between language, socio-culture, and identity sheds light on further investigations of how to satisfy CHLs' emotional-psychological demands during their literacy development and continuous identity construction by focusing on interactions between individuals and the situational dynamics. There is also a need to design relevant and culturally rich literacy events/resources to ensure meaningful literacy practices for CHLs, keeping a close eye on their uphill journey of heritage language and culture maintenance in the host society.

Moreover, the book further probes multidimensional obstacles that CHLs encounter in the host community and highlights their efforts of integrating into the specific local circumstances. Factors undermining CHLs' adaptation concentrate on linguistic, sociocultural, and ideological conflicts. For example, attitudes from teachers, relationships with fellow students, and Western-oriented curriculum/pedagogies may hinder CHLs' academic performance and change their life trajectory,

transforming their “educational and social identity” (Chapter 7, p. 126). However, Chapter 6, 7, 8, and 9 unravel that CHLs’ strive to overcome the lingual, cultural, and ideological barriers by learning other languages that mediate their learning in the host country (e.g., including dialects, for example, Cantonese), actively participating in local communities, and consciously socializing and collaborating with local people. As the author/s point out, the coping skills of individual CHLs suggests that further efforts need to be made to 1) provide professional training to equip educators with awareness and understanding of learner’ diversity, 2) establish reciprocal-respectful “third spaces,” to enhance dialogues between the marginalized groups and the dominant community, and 3) encourage appropriate praises, positive feedback, and encouragement from teachers on CHLs’ literacy improvement and identity transformation.

Further, multi-scalar glocal influences (e.g., patterns of settlement, types of migration, dialects, and political affiliations) engender Chinese-heritage students’ divergent and shifting transnational identities. As noted in many chapters of the volume, building on Ma’s (2003) work on Chinese transnational mobility, researchers note that CHLs’ transnational experiences are both “place-based” (influenced by place of origin) and “place-nourished” (affected by local contexts of reception). For example, “cultural gaps” are experienced by China-born learners who participate in a “root-seeking” program in Taiwan (Chapter 13) as well as by Mainland Chinese students who study in Hong Kong (Chapter 6). Although both groups of learners share the same physical features with local-born Chinese peers, the root-seeking learners feel like “outsiders” in Taiwan. At the same time, the Hong Kong group learners find themselves not only linguistically but also culturally different from their Cantonese-speaking HK-born peers. These two chapters show that dynamic and fluid identities of CHLs must be interpreted both within the local environments and across global contexts.

The conclusion chapter is a retrospect of the whole book. Implications of facilitating CHLs’ language and identity development endows the book with a practical significance in guiding literacy education for CHLs in the contemporary global nexus. These implications include: 1) fostering CHLs’ language development by expanding their use of target language in daily interactions; 2) considering CHLs’ appropriateness of language use in authentic communications; 3) enhancing the marginalized learner’s awareness of self-development (e.g., a sense of entitlement which empowers them to challenge and question the mainstream texts) through their shifting sociocultural positioning; 4) providing educators with adequate pedagogical support of teaching students with multilingual and multicultural backgrounds; 5) raising Chinese immigrant parents’ awareness and appreciation of educational values of Chinese language; and 6) building dialogic spaces for the marginalized community groups and the mainstream community to discuss, negotiate, and contest differences respectfully. Notably, as the book suggests, it is the time that educators and researchers work against the tendency of “cosmopolitan monolingualism.” Preference for one language/culture in the host society neglects CHLs’ contradictions and struggles while adapting to their new life. The editors point out that CHLs tend to conceal their differences and yield to the language and culture that are locally admitted as “mainstream.” In this case, cultural, social, and linguistic capital of the learners from multiple communities of the minority should be encouraged and heeded as one of the powerful resources for them to have more opportunities for literacy development and identity formation; multilingualism and multiculturalism need to be maximized in literacy education for the minority learners in the global society.

The book is readable for all actors of literacy education for marginalized learners in multiple sociocultural settings. The book's content may foster reflective inquiry among the readership of JFDE,

raising their critical awareness toward the experiences and demands of minority learners and families while enriching their pedagogical tool kits to meet educational expectations. In doing so, readers of JFDE will be inspired to transform their dilemmas into various educational opportunities and embark on individual exploration for better-supporting learners from culturally, linguistically, and socially diverse communities. In terms of structure, the organization, coherent narration, and abundant examples make the book a useful addition of knowledge about oversea CHLs' education for its intended audience. Each chapter successfully contributes to the book's aim through rigorous empirical analysis, sound theoretical grounding, and nuanced explanations of its specific topic. However, one shortcoming of the book lies in the confusion of using multiple terms to refer to Chinese-heritage learners in different chapters, such as "Chinese international students," "local-born Chinese learners," "Students with Chinese as a heritage language," and "overseas Chinese students." Even though the opening chapter carefully explains the notion of "Chinese-heritage learners," the book may still need to provide a clear summary of the terms appearing throughout to enhance its coherence. In addition, the similar research methodologies and methods (e.g., case study and ethnographic tools) employed by most of the chapters' authors may generate "aesthetical fatigue" and decrease the reading enjoyment among the readership.

In closing, the book, *Educating Chinese-heritage Students in the Global-Local Nexus: Identities, Challenges, and Opportunities*, is nevertheless a propaedeutic integrative collection of empirical studies and theoretical insights that set a stage for much-needed additional exploration of the themes about Chinese-heritage learners' literacy education and identity construction.

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