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BOOK REVIEW

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Lankiewicz, H. (2015). Teacher Language Awareness in the Ecological Perspective. A Collaborative Inquiry Based on *Languaging.* Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego.

The ecological approach in linguistics, known also as ecolinguistics, is a relatively new concept defined as "the study of interactions between any given language and its environment" (Haugen, 2001, p. 57), and due to its recent emergence, is a rather unexplored field of linguistics. It is categorized as a holistic and dialogical discipline, and reflects the post-modernistic perspective in language acquisition studies.

Lankiewicz's monograph is one of few publications on ecolinguistics in Poland and is probably the first book that draws upon ecolinguistics with reference to applied linguistics in general, and foreign language teaching in particular. The book comprises all elements of a well-written monograph: the original, relevant and up-to-date topic is discussed at length by the author and the theoretical claims are supported with an interesting empirical research project.

The book consists of four chapters: three of them provide the theoretical background for the study, while the fourth chapter discusses the details of the empirical research project designed and carried out by the author. The list of references is exhaustive: it comprises a wide range of books and articles connected to the concept of ecolinguistics and the topics, such as chaos theory or dialectical linguistics, which are – as the author argues – interestingly complementing ecolinguistics. It proves to be a comprehensive reference list for those who want to explore the concept in more detail. The appendices include research tools and the materials used in the investigation.

In the first chapter, the author presents and explains the postulates of ecolinguistics from the historical perspective. Lankiewicz discusses two approaches to ecolinguistics: a literal and a metaphorical one. The former views language as one of the constituents of the world of nature, which in consequence has an enormous impact on the ecology in its biological sense and, in the case of any deviation from the norm, may lead to some serious problems in the ecosystem (Halliday, 2001). The metaphorical representation of ecolinguistics, originally defined by Haugen (2001), is understood more as language in the environmental context, focuses more on the complexity of language, its relativity and non-linearity. The author opts for the

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latter approach, tracing its development in postmodern thinking and the influences of research in quantum physics and the sociocultural approach, to name only a few.

The second chapter is a transition towards a more pedagogical perspective in ecolinguistics. The author introduces critical pedagogy and emphasizes its importance in fulfilling the language teacher's role as a transformative intellectual (Kumaravadievelu, 2012), i.e. someone who actively and purposefully strives for intervention and change in the process of the learner's acquisition of a target language, by redefining this concept with reference to the ecological perspective. Lankiewicz convincingly argues that language teaching and learning is far from being politically and ideologically neutral, hence he claims that critical thinking is an essential element of language instruction. As ecolinguistics offers a more dynamic and locally oriented approach, it fits well with the characteristic features of language acquisition in a pluralistic and multicultural world.

Chapter three serves as a prelude to Lankiewicz's research. The author introduces here the concept of teachers' language awareness as an essential element of foreign language instruction and puts forward his model of teacher critical ecological language awareness (TCELA) which appears particularly relevant to language teaching in the globalized world. He suggests that language awareness can be raised through *languaging* about language, i.e. verbalizing one's beliefs on language and reflecting on the meaning-making process, by experimenting with language, problematizing the unproblematic and raising the student-teachers' meta-awareness. Lankiewicz maintains that the model can be effectively applied in the Polish educational context, undersocres the need to implement the TCELA model into foreign language teachers' education in Poland to make it more effective, and at the same time provides a rationale for his research project.

The fourth and final chapter of the monograph is devoted to the research project aimed at investigating critical ecological language awareness among prospective teachers at one of the Polish universities. Three research goals were addressed in the study: (1) to investigate moments of microgenetic change in the pre-service teachers' reflection on the nature of language, (2) to find out whether these changes have a potential to become transformative, (3) to comment on how the co-operative inquiry method, used as a research tool, allows for reflection, leads to a change in attitudes and raises linguistic awareness in the pre-service teachers investigated. A qualitative study, supported by some statistical data analysis, was designed to achieve the aforementioned goals. Lankiewicz draws upon four research methods that are in line with the ecolinguistic approach, namely: a co-operative inquiry, languaging, microgenesis, and a narrative inquiry. All these four methods were used to observe, analyse and describe the incidents of critical ecological language awareness in the eight students who were the subjects and co-researchers[2] in the presented research project. The process of data collection lasted for almost a whole academic year and was a part of one of the licentiate seminars. The procedure

[2] The idea of co-operative inquiry postulates research "with" people rather than "on" people. Hence, the students, whose narratives were analysed and presented, were treated by the author as co-researchers whose contribution to the shape and content of the study was immense.

comprised four phases and the most important was the second one, which addressed the first objective, where the students were given 15 reflective tasks that were discussed and video-recorded during their weekly meetings, followed by students writing their diary entries. The analysis of students' diary entries served to target the second objective. Finally, a questionnaire was used to gain more quantitative data and to answer the third question about whether the co-operative inquiry that the student-teachers were involved in enhanced reflection on language and whether the subjects' change in attitudes resulted in the emergence of a new, critical linguistic awareness.

The results of the action research project reveal that the student-teachers investigated displayed a tendency to follow normative perspectives on the nature of language. However, the co-operative inquiry, used both as a teaching tool and a research method, proved to have a positive influence on the students' linguistic reflection and meta-cognition. The author underscores the need for change in teacher education, as he identifies the current situation as worrying. In particular, Lankiewicz observes that the L2 teachers are much too focused on the participants' communicative effectiveness and measurable learning outcomes, whereas language awareness is a very neglected area of foreign language teaching. He concludes by emphasizing that raising critical ecological language awareness may very well translate into a more critical approach to social and ideological issues, which is closely related to the concept of ecology in its metaphorical sense.

One of the strong points of this monograph is undoubtedly the vast theoretical perspective embracing a wide range of theories, from Vygotsky to Peirce, that support the premises of ecolinguistics. The theoretical considerations are presented in a clear, logical and structured manner. Another important aspect that merits recognition is the author's ability to critically reflect on the subject at hand. Furthermore, the innovative research tools used in the study provide a different perspective on pre-service teachers' language awareness and allow us to gain a deeper insight into the process of awareness raising. In consequence, the results of the research project under discussion may substantially contribute to the improvement of the quality of both pre- and in-service teacher education in Poland.

There are, however, some minor flaws in the fourth chapter that I consider worth pointing out. Firstly, I have some doubts about the number of subjects engaged in this study. The target group comprises a rather small sample of 8 student-teachers, which makes it difficult to draw any strong conclusions. Secondly, the idea of co-operative inquiry that empowers the subjects and involves them into the process of conducting research seems to be very controversial. However, as the author of the research claims, the project presented also aimed at transforming and changing students' tendency to perceive the nature of language, which accounts for the choice of this method. Finally, the last minor concern refers to the use of students' foreign language, i.e. English, during the whole process of collecting and analysing the data. I consider it an important factor that could have posed some barriers to expressing and formulating students' ideas.

Despite these minor concerns, I consider this book a highly valuable, insightful and informative publication. I strongly support the author's message and the urge to

transform and improve the system of pre-service language teacher education, since teachers in general, and foreign language teachers in particular, are in the position to shape and raise students' critical awareness that should help them embrace the challenges of the 21st century.

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