Foreword

Eva, my granddaughter, aged 5, moved from Washington DC to Mexico City last Fall and with her growing interest in reading and her mother’s able assistance as a scribe, we took up emailing (in addition to skyping) to keep in touch—mostly in English, still her dominant language, though she is rapidly gaining fluency in Spanish. At one point, in April, I wrote a note to Eva and another to her little sister Vivic, aged 2, both in English; and after receiving Eva’s response to her own note, was delighted to also get the following email (font colour, size, and formatting removed). My daughter introduces it and comments once within (underlined):

Eva read almost the whole note that Nainee sent to Eva!: Now Eva is writing a note to Nainee as if she were Vivi:

Dear Nainee, Este dia vamonos a la Feria! hehehehe. Pero, yo no va a la Feria. Hmm! No es fair. Si yo voy a la Feria cuando soy grande lo voy a gustar mucho. Y si yo voy a la Feria otra vez voy a gustar la mucho mucho mucho. Y quiero palomitas. Pero yo si fue a una fiesta y me pintaron como Spiderman!!! (Vivi insisted and was the only girl that was not a princess.) Y me gusta todo en el mundo y el mundo es bien. Abrazos!! Vivi

Dear Nainee, This day we will go to the Amusement Park! hehehehe. But, I doesn’t go to the Amusement Park. Hmm! That’s not fair. If I go to the Amusement Park when I’m big, I will like it a lot. And if I go to the Amusement Park again I will like it very much, much, much. And I want popcorn. But I did go to a party and they painted me like Spiderman (Vivi insisted and was the only girl that was not a princess.) And I like everything in the world and the world is well. Hugs!! Vivi

Among the features that charmed me in this message were Eva’s use of Spanish in recognition of Vivi’s dominance in and preference for that language, her topic and word choice that so aptly capture her little sister’s views and experience of the world, and her whole idea of explicitly voicing her sister in the first place; hence her email came readily to mind as I pondered Bakhtinian themes of indexicality, stylization, and multivoicedness that run through this volume. Also of note is that although from a code-based perspective, Eva’s (or is she representing Vivi’s?) Spanish has grammatical mistakes and the occasional English word (bolded in the translation), she draws quite effectively on her available linguistic resources to communicate information, emotion, and even social evaluation.

This small and personally meaningful bit of Eva’s heteroglossia gives but a hint of the creative heteroglossic practices readers will encounter in the pages of this
volume. You will be introduced to a wealth of multilingual texts and discourses constructed in sometimes contested spaces in and out of schools. Among these spaces are a multigrade primary classroom in Vienna, a bilingual teacher education program in Alsace, a massively multilingual high school ESL classroom in Philadelphia, 7th–9th grade classes in a Copenhagen public school serving linguistic minority children, a New Latino diaspora elementary school in the U.S., trilingual education classrooms in the Basque country, a 9th–10th grade Latino newcomer English language arts classroom in New York City, an inner London multiethnic secondary school, and a Panjabi language classroom in Birmingham, UK; but also a multi-ethnic working class neighbourhood in the UK; rap performances by Inari Sámi schoolchildren in Finland, by a new and boldly eclectic hip hop group in Hong Kong, and by a whole generation of fluidly multilingual Quebecois hip hop artists and poets; Ghanaian taxi drivers’ decorative inscriptions on their vehicles; and desktop videoconferencing between American learners of French and their French tutors in France, a website design class for adult Latino immigrants in the US borderlands, and a mobile phone texting code used in Wesbank township in South Africa.

Introducing this rich and deeply insightful collection of essays, Blackledge and Creese propose heteroglossia as ‘an analytic perspective that takes linguistic diversity to be constitutive of, and constituted by, social diversity’ and go on to frame the volume and its unifying analytical perspective in relation to Bakhtin’s thinking on heteroglossia as ideologically-infused indexicality, tension-filled interaction—especially stylization and hidden dialogicality, and hierarchically-layered multivoicedness. Acknowledging and building on several decades of research on multilingualism and multilingual education, they foreground translanguaging as heteroglossic practice and pedagogy, illustrating this with an example from their own classroom research, and arguing that for scholars and educators to adopt a heteroglossic lens is ‘to ensure that we bring into play, both in practice and in pedagogy, voices which index students’ localities, social histories, circumstances, and identities.’ These are claims that resonate deeply for me with key lessons I took from the continua of biliteracy, namely that the more we allow and enable language minoritized learners to draw on all points of the media, context, development, and content continua of their multilingual repertoires the greater the possibilities for activation of their voices; and that inclusion of learners’ voice and agency is the only ethically acceptable solution when it comes to educating a linguistically and culturally diverse learner population which, in today’s world, means every learner in every classroom (Hornberger 1989; Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester 2000; Hornberger 2006).

Indeed, I find resonance in all the chapters that follow, along with new insights and formulations. The authors draw deeply and authoritatively on Bakhtin’s evocative conceptual lexicon—chronotope, voice, dialogism, double-voicing, centrifugal/centripetal forces, genre, ideological becoming, and, centrally, raznojazyčie ‘linguistic diversity,’ raznogolosie ‘multidiscursivity’ and raznorečie ‘multivoicedness.’ Beyond this, though, they utilize an exceptionally rich analytical repertoire to bring their examples of heteroglossic practice and pedagogy to life, including: enregisterment, metacommentary, repertoire, auto poiesis, integrationism, transculturación, border crossing, language crossing, interaction ritual, performance, poetics
of creolization, *language, oraliture*, rhizomatic analysis, nexus analysis, structure of feeling, multimodality, scaffolding, and of course languaging and translanguaging. The effect is an invigorating theoretical and empirical portrait of transgressive and creative heteroglossic practices increasingly finding their way into informal and formal learning spaces across the globe. Even more importantly, in my estimation, the examples and analyses herein give unmistakeable evidence of the emancipatory possibilities and transformative promise of heteroglossic practices and pedagogies for the many language minoritized groups who have heretofore been so relentlessly ill-served by our educational systems.

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References

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