

## ○ **A. PENNYCOOK, *LANGUAGE AND MOBILITY: UNEXPECTED PLACES***

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Alastair Pennycook's thought-provoking book builds on previous research and explores language, culture and identity in eight chapters. Pennycook uses unexpected texts and contexts to illustrate a discussion of language and mobility, including what it is to have expectations of appropriate locations for particular languages, and how languages might be used in different places. This book, therefore, raises a number of questions about the fundamental concepts in language and linguistics such as the notion of the native speaker, the use of the term bilingual, and the notion of language hybridity. It also questions the division of languages along national lines.

The book incorporates an intriguing range of examples to discuss the aforementioned issues using a non-traditional writing style. The non-traditional style in the first chapter incorporates a personal narrative about place using evocative images from Pennycook's family history to introduce a discussion of what it is to consider the "self" and the "other". Pennycook uses the example of port cities as sites of diversity throughout history and ideas of "home" in his exploration of movement and mobility to show the impact that these notions have upon language and identity. Pennycook also explores the things we physically take with us when we move – furniture, keepsakes, photographs, but also those things we retain that are not visible or tangible – smells, sights, sounds and languages. In doing this the author draws a parallel with visible and invisible elements of language and culture and challenges the reader to consider the similarities between visible/invisible and expected/unexpected aspects of language.

Pennycook extends Joseph's (2007) notion of 'tactile knowing' to talk about 'mnemonic traces' that people retain from their previous experiences, locations and family histories in the first chapter. The author draws on his family link to India and subsequent travel between India and England to discuss his ongoing connection to the two places and how such affiliations can be passed on within a family. The reader can see here how 'unexpected' locations of languages can sometimes arise when a person has no direct link with the language, rather people are linked to languages and places through the passing on of stories and histories within a family or social group. This illustrates the book's aim to encourage the reader to question assumptions about languages and national boundaries that underpin much of the policy and practice surrounding languages education.

In the second chapter, one of the main focal points is a discussion of the historical focus on 'pure' or 'correct' language use. Within this discussion, Pennycook questions a number of

terms that are commonplace in research on languages. For example, the author critiques the use of the term ‘hybridity’ as he sees it as reinforcing monolingual notions of ‘correct’ or ‘appropriate’ language. In an attempt to encapsulate the dynamism and mobility of language, Pennycook explores the term ‘bilingualism’. He also highlights an important current debate – about speakers being labelled resourceful rather than L1, L2, background or heritage learners. Such a limiting set of labels serves to position people in a rigid manner rather than allow for the mobility and diversity of language. Otsuji and Pennycook’s prior work (2010, 2011, 2012) is highlighted here as the term ‘metrolingualism’ allows for some of this mobility, defining language as emergent from interaction. Pennycook raises a number of thought provoking questions throughout the book around the assumptions and terminology inherent in much language research. This chapter uses illustrations such as tattoos, citizenship and entry tests, signage, and family history to argue that movement is central to the human experience; therefore, control over mobility can be likened to the notions of power associated with access to language.

In Chapter 3, the example of a teacher taking cheese to China serves to introduce a discussion of how we can be prepared for the unexpected and to be fully prepared for it would make the encounter expected. The author explores how it might be possible to ‘unexpected the expected’ and links this to developing ‘intercultural competence’: language learning might be better served by working towards questioning expectations and seeking to unlearn suppositions about language. In Chapter 4, there is an exploration of the historical practice of letter writing and parenting by distance again using the family history narrative and an example of when children were sent to Britain from around the world to be schooled at ‘home’. Pennycook explores what ‘home’ is when these children had never before been to Britain, and their immediate families were not located there. In this setting, the letters provided mobility for the English language; however, the colonial context also raised questions about who had access to mobility.

Chapter 5 revisits what it is to be a resourceful speaker. It incorporates a discussion of identity that aligns with Varghese, Morgan, Johnston and Johnston (2005) in being seen by others differently than you may see yourself. Pennycook describes the language learner’s general aspiration to be seen as or ‘pass as’ a legitimate language user. The author uses examples from his own experiences in Germany, from English Language Teaching in various settings and as a language learner in Quebec, Hunan and Japan. Pennycook concludes that it may be possible to pass as a local to non-locals, but not to locals. There is a robust examination of how the terms native speaker, L1, mother tongue and lingua franca all have reasons to be criticised. It would be a valuable addition if this discussion were expanded to consider the notion of ‘fluency’ and how it is currently understood, as this could inform the current Australian debate surrounding the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and

the impact of the Asian Century White Paper upon languages education (Australian Government, 2012).

In Chapter 6, the family narrative is revisited through an examination of farewell letters and formal documents written by local workers to the estate managers in India. Stylistic patterns and local language practices are discussed and used to support the argument that understanding local language practices is more important than dividing languages along national boundaries. Chapter 7 uses examples from language teacher education practicum placements to discuss how teachers might incorporate unexpected moments into their teaching and how they might decide upon appropriate content to use in the language classroom. The differing tone and type of examples in this chapter serves to illustrate the book's point, to expect the unexpected. Practicing language teachers and teacher educators, however, might value further exploration of the practical application of the principle put forward - that language teachers should incorporate the unexpected into their practice.

In the final chapter, Pennycook uses examples of cricket and Cornish to argue that seeing languages as being whole and discrete entities is not helpful to understanding languages. The author further argues that people use language fragments and should, therefore, aim to be resourceful users of language by learning about local language practices rather than seeking to become native speakers. This raises an interesting challenge for the language learning and language teaching community who are positioned within systems that incorporate a separation of languages and language skills along traditional lines. The book also challenges the reader to consider inherent assumptions of linguistic terminology such as native speaker, L1 and L2, bilingualism and the definition of languages within our field.

The use of unexpected texts throughout the book challenges us to think about what is an appropriate academic book, but does so convincingly and it is refreshing to encounter personal narratives and personal reflection alongside academic examples. The unexpected nature of the blend of poetry alongside teaching observation illustrates the theme of the book. Chapter six has a different flow to the rest of the book, yet this chapter directly engages with in-practice teaching examples and for this reason, makes an important contribution to the collection of examples explored within this publication. Overall, this book achieves its aim of confronting and challenging the reader to think about language expectations, locations and assumptions, and in doing so opens up a debate around some long-established traditions.

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