

Communicating Conflict: Multilingual Case Studies Of The News Media

Bi/Multilingual Literacies in Literacy Studies

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Abstract

Traditional ways of thinking about literacies as manifested in the use of terms such as bilingual literacies, multilingual literacies, or even plurilingual literacies have increasingly come under challenge by the rise of recent terms such as translanguaging (García, 2009) and literacy as translingual practice (Canagarajah, 2013a, 2013b). In what follows we shall analyse what seems to be new in the conceptualization of literacy practices in the use of the new terms. Then we shall illustrate these new conceptualizations of translingual literacies with examples from the case of Hong Kong where Cantonese, English and Chinese literacies have been mixing and matching for over a century. In the concluding section, the theoretical and empirical challenges facing the field now are discussed and future directions for research are suggested.

Key words: translanguaging, translingual literacies, plurilingualism, multilingualism, bilingual literacies, multilingual literacies, literacy studies, bilingual education, Hong Kong, Cantonese, code-mixing, code-switching

Introduction

As we embarked on writing on the topic of bilingual/multilingual literacies, we were initially stuck with the difficult question of how we could introduce a field of studies that seems to be undergoing rapid re-conceptualization and witnessing mounting tensions between not just old and new terms but also radically different ways of conceptualizing language and literacy practices. Traditional ways of thinking about literacies as manifested in the use of terms such as bilingual literacies, multilingual literacies, or even plurilingual literacies have increasingly come under challenge by

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