



EDITORIAL

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Rethinking language policy and planning in the Greater Bay Area of China: insights from translanguaging theory

Zhisheng (Edward) Wen^{1*} , Lili Han¹, Guangwei Hu²  and Mark Feng Teng³

*Correspondence:
edwardwen@mpu.edu.mo

¹ Faculty of Languages and Translation, Macao Polytechnic University, Macau SAR, China

² Department of English and Communication, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China, Hong Kong SAR

³ Center for Linguistic Sciences, Beijing Normal University, Zhuhai, China

Abstract

This special issue sets out to revisit major bilingual and multilingual education policy and planning issues in key cities across the dynamic Greater Bay Area (GBA) of China (including Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macau), as informed by the emerging insights from translanguaging theory (Li in *Appl Linguist* 39(1):9–30, 2018). Specifically, contributions are invited from the GBA and beyond to trace the milestone developments of relevant language policy and planning (LPP) initiatives featuring governmental policies on the language of instruction (e.g., English as Medium of Instruction, Chinese as Medium of Instruction) and the daily use of multiple linguistic resources or repertoires (e.g., language learner's L1 or mother tongue) in foreign/second language classrooms and/or in content-based classroom instruction. As such, major papers in the special issue not only set out to provide historical and analytical reviews of these related LPP issues across Hong Kong, Macau, and Guangdong Province but also reflect upon the language use and behaviors of the residents, showcasing their identity and attitudes and ideological stance toward the multiple languages that are being taught or used in daily life. Toward the end, we outline our research agendas for future endeavors in broader domains in the GBA and beyond through the translanguaging analytical tools. Overall, our position is that the GBA presents itself as an evolving, complex, and super-diverse zone of "Translanguaging Spaces" within which key LPP issues may need to be reconceptualized and implemented in such a way so as to fully reflect the dynamic and fluid multilingual, multicultural, and multisemiotic lived reality of the residents in this megapolis region.

Keywords: Language policy and planning (LPP), Translanguaging, The Greater Bay Area (GBA), Medium of instruction, Translanguaging spaces

Introduction

The year 2019 witnessed the official promulgation of the "Outline Development Plan of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area" (hereinafter referred to as the Plan) by the Central Government of the People's Republic of China. As stated in the Plan, the Greater Bay Area (GBA; formerly also known as the Greater Pearl River Delta, or GPRD; Bie et al., 2015; Ma et al., 2021) is now strategically positioned as a "megapolis" or "city cluster" consisting of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), the

Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) and the nine municipalities in Guangdong Province, that is, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Huizhou, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen, and Zhaoqing.

The Plan sets out its objectives to cover the period from 2019 to 2022 and with its short-term and long-term vision extending to 2035. Its grandly laid-out vision thus constitutes an important 'mission statement'. The statement guides the current and future cooperation, integration, and deep-level development of the GBA as a whole across multiple sectors and in multiple aspects. These include, among others, strategically positioning the GBA as (1) a vibrant "world-class city cluster" (consisting of the two Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau plus the 9 municipalities of Guangdong), (2) a globally "influential international innovation and technology hub", (3) an important support pillar for the country's "the Belt and Road Initiative", (4) a showcase for "in-depth cooperation between the Mainland and Hong Kong and Macau" (e.g., Qianhai in Shenzhen, Hengqin in Zhuhai, and Nansha in Guangzhou), and (5) a quality "living circle for living, working and traveling" (c.f. Li & Wang, 2020).

Given their unique geographical locations and complicated historical backgrounds, many of the cities in the GBA have been hubs of trade transactions and cultural exchanges for centuries, gradually converging on a superdiverse multilingual and multicultural landscape. For example, the three pillar cities in the GBA, viz. Guangzhou (also known as Canton) and the two special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau have all had a long history of import–export trade transactions between China and the West, thus serving as intersections where constant cultural exchanges are occurring between the local Chinese and foreign visitors from other countries around the world (e.g., Western nations). Meanwhile, due to their colonial history, both Hong Kong and Macau have witnessed fundamental and significant changes in economic, social, and political life before, during, and after their colonial periods (e.g., the "one country, two systems" policy currently in Hong Kong and Macau; Leng, 2016). Alongside these changes in social and economic life, the language education policy of both regions has also been evolving (Li & Tong, 2020), giving rise to the "Biliterate and Trilingual" (Cantonese, Mandarin, and English; known as "两文三语" in Chinese) language policy in Hong Kong (Chan, 2021; Leung & Li, 2019; Li, 2022a this issue) and the "Triliterate & Quaralilingual" (Cantonese, Portuguese, Mandarin, and English; known as "三文四语" in Chinese) language policy in Macau (also see Han & Wen, 2022; Han & Yang, 2022 this issue; Lam & Jeong, 2022 this issue).

With the implementation of the Plan taking effect in 2019, it has come to a critical juncture in time to revisit some key language policy planning (LPP) issues in relation to the strategic positioning of the GBA as laid out in the Plan and outlined above. To this end, this special issue has been conceived, conceptualized, and subsequently put into action. Contributions have been invited to trace back and re-examine some major multilingual social-linguistic features and practices in important cities across the GBA and mainland China. The individual papers have been asked to focus on some key LPP issues as implemented in the two administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau SARs, as well as the major cities of Guangdong (e.g., Guangzhou and Shantou). More importantly, all contributions have also been encouraged to consider and adopt the emerging theoretical framework of translanguaging theory (e.g., Li, 2018, 2022 this issue; Li & Shen,

2021; Li & Kelly Homes, 2022) as an analytical lens to re-examine these language policy planning (LPP) practices and classroom instruction reality. As already clearly stated in the Foreword (Li, 2022b this issue), the GBA's multi-linguistic and multicultural cities are evolving into dynamic "translanguaging spaces" where complex and superdiverse language contacts and interactions are taking place, thus warranting the validity of the translanguaging lens as a viable theoretical framework. In the next section, we will summarize the major topics and focus of each individual paper and further demonstrate how the LPP issues under examination can be informed by insights of translanguaging theory.

In his Foreword to the special issue, the pioneering scholar and key proponent of translanguaging theory, Li Wei explains his personal views on language policy planning (LPP) as both a field of practical inquiry and a field of theoretical inquiry, which fits squarely with the evolution and motivation of translanguaging theory. To demonstrate the relevance of translanguaging theory to the issues examined in this special issue, Li starts with the fundamental assumptions of LPP, attributing variations in language behaviors among individuals (across time, space, and events/occasions) to language contacts. The consequences of these lead to language attitudes and ideologies, from which translanguaging weighs in to provide a theoretically valid epistemological stance and practical analytical tools that reduce and transcend barriers existing in *named* languages, thus achieving linguistic equity and social justice. Following the Foreword, nine major papers are included in this special issue.

1. Trilingual and Biliterate Language Education Policy in Hong Kong: Past, Present, and Future

By *David Li*

The first two papers in this special issue discuss relevant LPP endeavors in Hong Kong. The first paper by David Li provides a detailed historical and theoretical review of Hong Kong's trilingual and biliterate (TaB) language education policy, which was implemented shortly after the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997. Li traces the genesis of the policy back to the colonial era and outlined the evolution of language-in-education policy in Hong Kong since the 1980s. To provide a perspective on the difficulty of accomplishing the TaB policy goal, Li discusses the various linguistic, sociolinguistic, and literacy challenges that the great majority of Cantonese-dominant Hong Kong students face to develop trilingual and biliterate competence. Li also reviews the language support measures staged by the Hong Kong SAR to achieve the TaB goal. These measures consist of (1) adopting 12-year free primary and secondary education, which has important implications for students' exposure to the target languages and hence their language learning outcomes; (2) introducing the Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme to public secondary and primary schools to assist English curriculum development and support English speaking activities; (3) rolling out the Benchmark Test for Teachers of English (LPATE) and Putonghua (LPATP) to certify teachers who are qualified to teach English or Putonghua in secondary school; (4) setting up grants to support university initiatives to enhance undergraduate students' English and Chinese proficiency; (5) offering Chinese literacy training in primary school; (6) providing high-ability students

with English medium instruction in secondary school; (7) prohibiting code-switching/mixing in classroom instruction; and (8) making Putonghua a compulsory subject in primary school and an elective in secondary school. Li notes that while these policy supports have brought about some positive outcomes, for example, improved Putonghua test results for primary and secondary students, they have fallen short of achieving the TaB goal.

Drawing on an extensive review of relevant linguistic, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, neurocognitive, and pedagogical research, Li makes a number of important recommendations for improving the opportunities for achieving the policy goal. These recommendations include (1) strengthening the quality of language input at the key stages of learning; (2) using Cantonese as the medium of instruction for teaching all subjects except English and Putonghua at preschool; (3) implementing total immersion in Putonghua for three years at a lower primary level to leverage young children's superb language learning ability; (4) adopting translanguaging instructional strategies to capitalize on students' various semiotic and linguistic resources; (5) improving the quality of the teaching force; and (6) promoting and encouraging bilingual interaction as communication norms. In conclusion, Li argues that these "theoretically grounded and evidence-based policy options" serve as a roadmap for creating the necessary conditions for the TaB language education policy to bear fruit.

2. Revisiting TBLT in the GBA: Insights from translanguaging theory

By *Gavin Bui & Kevin Tai*

The last 30 years have seen great developments in task-based language teaching (TBLT) in both theory and practice. TBLT has been listed as a preferred pedagogy by the Education Bureau of Hong Kong SAR and is being promoted among schools in the territory (Curriculum Development Council, 1997, 2017) under its overarching "Biliteracy and Trilingualism" language policy (Leung & Li, 2020; also see Li & Leung, 2020). The paper by Bui and Tai is situated in the Hong Kong context and argues that translanguaging offers a practical tool for improving functional adequacy in L2 task-based performance, especially among learners with a common first language background but lower affect as well as limited lexical and morpho-syntactic knowledge. Pedagogical implications for L2 or foreign language teaching in the GBA are discussed. In its neighboring GBA cities with similar linguistic complexity, TBLT has also been gaining traction in English language teaching since the 2000s, when China promulgated a New Curriculum Standards (Wang, 2007) that advocated task-based language teaching as part of its curriculum revamp. When the aim of TBLT to nurture L2 learners' real-world communicative competence meets with the multilingual reality of the GBA, its conventional immersive target language teaching approach encounters challenges, given the L2 proficiency of both teachers and students as well as their potential emotional response to behave like a monolingual native speaker. The challenges of implementing translanguaging in English language teaching, especially TBLT, are outlined with their relevance to the GBA. Suggestions for adopting translanguaging at the macro (policy) level and micro (TBLT and functional adequacy) level are delineated.

3. Translanguaging and Multilingual Society in Macau: Past, Present and Future

Fat-Iam Lam & Wai-In Ieong

The next three papers turn to the GBA's other Special Administrative Region of Macau (MSAR). Lam and Ieong's paper traces back the evolving changes of Macau's multiple languages and their relationships with the society at large through a historical review, with a view to analyzing the features of Macau's multiple languages in different historical periods and revealing the impacts brought about by multilingualism on the SAR's societal developments. More specifically, the paper outlines three development stages, with the Chinese language playing a predominant role in the first period (ancient times–1553), followed by the introduction of foreign languages in the second period (1553–1987), which established the official status of the Portuguese language. The third period (1987–present) features the co-existence of the three “mainstream” languages of Chinese, Portuguese, and English alongside other minority languages, thus shaping Macau as a multilingual society and transforming it into a translanguaging space. The paper ends by arguing that Macau could capitalize on its multiple linguistic resources and, in particular, utilize its unique strength in Portuguese to bridge the gap between China and other Portuguese-speaking countries. Such positioning of Macau is compatible with the objective laid out in the Plan discussed in the beginning section.

4. Remapping the language and translation policies in China: Contributions from Macao

By Lili Han & Nan Yang

Macau has been a multilingual society since its establishment in 1557, with Chinese intermingled with multilingualism in Portuguese, Malay, Japanese, English, Korean, Catalo, and other foreign languages. As the meeting point of oriental and western cultures and the place of multilingual practices for centuries, Macau has its own systematic translation management, featured by institutionalized translation practices and historical translation records. This paper by Han and Yang traces the development of the translation policy in Macau (from its establishment to its handover to China in 1999) to cast a critical eye on its experiences in translation policymaking, using examples from official regulations, existing studies, and bibliometric data, in the time span of over 400 years since the Portuguese establishment in 1557. The authors argue that the translation policy of Macau contributes to remapping the translation policy of China as important footnotes to the fuller picture of several essential historical periods. It is expected that through this study of the translation policy of Macau, especially with attention to the historical milestones of each stage, policymakers can take historical experiences as a new perspective to evaluate the present translation policy and look into future translation policies to better cope with the burgeoning development of the GBA.

5. Translanguaging practices of Macau junior-one students in a remedial class

By Brian Chan & Chris Chou

With the burgeoning development of classroom translanguaging research in the last 20 years, most studies have focused on teachers' translanguaging practice called pedagogical translanguaging. However, this paper by Chan and Chou intends to investigate

students' translanguaging practice by analyzing the use of translanguaging in the co-learning activities of four junior-one students in an English remedial class in Macau. Due to the complexity of language education in Macau, Chan and Chou examine the translanguaging practices engaged in by students of an official English-medium school and address two research questions: (1) How do the students make use of different semiotic resources in translanguaging practices in a remedial class? and (2) what are the purposes of the students' translanguaging practices in the remedial class? By analyzing the students' efforts to leverage their available semiotic repertoire, it turns out that their translanguaging practices for meaning-making reflect their hobbies, personal experiences, and cultural preferences, thus building their individual image and identity in relation to the teacher and other students.

6. An overview of the "Protecting Cantonese Movement" in Guangzhou (2010–2021)

By *Yaling Li, Yeqin Kang, Dan Ding & Nianqing Zhang*

The use of a local language in the public domain is one of the key drivers for its maintenance. As a local dialect in most cities in the GBA, Cantonese maintenance has also drawn much attention from researchers (e.g., Gao, 2012). This paper by Li, Kang, Ding and Zhang presents a historical overview of the scholarly literature on the "Protecting Cantonese Movement" (PCM) in Guangzhou, through methods of bibliometric analysis and content analysis. By reviewing the concerns and opinions of researchers on language maintenance, this paper addresses (1) the general characteristics of scholars' research on "Protecting Cantonese" and (2) the future trends of research on "Protecting Cantonese". The literature review shows that researchers initially focused on the interpretation of the PCM as well as the analysis of its causes, countermeasures, and suggestions, but gradually, their focus diversified and rationalized. In recent years, Cantonese inheritance has been one of the important issues in the language preservation of the GBA with a view to constructing harmonious language ecology. As Einar Haugen (1972) has pointed out unequivocally decades ago, if concerned about protecting language, it is better to bend than to break (Vogel & Garcia, 2017).

7. Global Englishes and curriculum design for international universities in the GBA of China

By *Fang Fan, Limin Yuan, Hongchen Xu, & Xueyi Wang*

The field of applied linguistics in relation to language education is in transition where traditional monolingual ideology is challenged to foster an equitable multilingual de-colonizing pedagogy (Liu & Fang, 2021). This paper by Fan, Yuan, Xu & Wang departs from de-colonizing pedagogy, investigating how the concept of criticality can be incorporated into applied linguistics at the level of language policy planning (LPP), with a special focus on Global Englishes (GE) and curriculum design for international universities in the GBA. Based on the level of LPP in the multilingual GBA, this paper addresses the need to incorporate GE and translanguaging into textbook and curriculum design from the perspective of critical pedagogy. A case study is presented to probe into the cultural contents of a textbook with respect to the GE proposal of exposure to multilingualism/

multiculturalism and respect for diverse cultures and identities in English language teaching. In line with a survey about university students' attitudes, the paper points out the urgent need to revise the current textbook and curriculum to enhance teachers' and students' awareness of the need to integrate GE and translanguaging into classroom practice. The paper ends by addressing some of the challenges associated with the top-down language policies in the GBA and providing some practical guidelines for translating GE and translanguaging into textbook and curriculum design and classroom practice as topics for future research.

8. Translanguaging Pedagogy in Tutor's Oral Corrective Feedback on Chinese EFL Learners' Argumentative Writing

By *Yibei Wang & Danli Li*

From a pedagogical perspective, translanguaging is a multilingual approach to second and foreign language learning. The adoption of translanguaging is modernizing the way in which foreign languages are taught, learned, and assessed in the twenty-first century. However, limited attention has been given to the potential influence of translanguaging in the process of corrective feedback on learners' second language writing performance, especially oral corrective feedback. This paper by Wang and Li aims to explore the effects of translanguaging in tutors' oral corrective feedback (OCF) on Chinese EFL learners' argumentative writing in 6-week writing tutorials. The findings show positive effects of translanguaging in OCF on Chinese EFL students' argumentative writing performance in terms of content and grammar. Translanguaging pedagogy enables teachers to alter their practice in using English as a monolingual medium, adapt to students' language needs, focus on their language practices, and create a supportive linguistic ecology for effective language education.

9. Translanguaging Genre Pedagogy: Implications for Teaching Business Communication in the Greater Bay Area

Zhisheng (Edward) Wen, Lawrence Jun Zhang, Hao Kong, Lili Han

The past 3 decades have witnessed significant developments in both genre theory and pedagogy (Pérez-Llantada, 2015) and translanguaging theory and pedagogy (Vogel & Garcia, 2017). Given the perceivable similarities between these two lines of inquiry in their historical roots and core premises, the last paper in this special issue by Wen, Zhang, Kong and Han set out to integrate these two previously disparate pedagogical approaches to achieve synergistic effects. To that effect, the authors argue that while genre pedagogy focuses on promoting discourse community-based generic knowledge among learners to achieve discursively constructed power (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 2017; Pérez-Llantada, 2015), translanguaging pedagogy focuses on promoting multi-competence (Cook, 2016) among learners to achieve linguistic equity and social justice (Robinson et al., 2020). The cross-fertilization of genre pedagogy and translanguaging pedagogy gives rise to a six-stage integrated pedagogical framework to guide curriculum design and task activities in teaching business writing and translation in the GBA. As demonstrated by the authors, such a trans-disciplinary theoretical and pedagogical

translanguaging framework has both theoretical and methodological implications for promoting multicompetence among learners to prepare them for professional careers in the GBA and beyond.

Concluding remarks

By outlining the individual papers in the special issue, the editors hope to have successfully demonstrated that, as an emerging theory of human communication and cognition, translanguaging theory (Li, 2022b this issue) indeed offers a fresh and innovative lens for reflecting and re-examining the dynamic multilingual reality of the GBA, thus serving as an instrumental catalyzer to revisit and transform the language policy planning in this dynamic area of China. In light of these emerging insights from the current special issue, the editors thus call for continued efforts to adopt the translanguaging-informed orientation and stance toward the implementation of LPP in terms of the medium of instruction (MOI) policy (Hu, 2021b), language and translation policy, task-based language teaching, classroom language use, genre-based pedagogy, etc., to achieve linguistic equity and social justice (Hu, 2021a; Li, 2022b this issue).

It should be clear by now that translanguaging theory captures the fluid, dynamic, and complex social-linguistic interactions that characterize the superdiverse, multilingual, and multicultural life-world of GBA residents, allowing agents and stakeholders with vested interest to focus on the communication process of knowledge construction and meaning-making in broader economic and socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, the editors argue that the perspective of the translanguaging lens sheds new light on key language policy planning issues, contributing to the linguistic and cultural matrix to achieve the stated goals set out in the Plan's strategic positioning and thus providing a theoretical rationale and specific guidelines for the implementation of LPP in the GBA and beyond.

Finally, while LPP is an important aspect of the linguistic and educational life that can be informed by the translanguaging lens, there are many other facets of individual behavior and a social life that can also be inspired by this practical theory of human communication. In addition to this LPP project, the editors also strive to adopt the translanguaging lens to revisit other related domains in the GBA context. The overarching objective of these GBA initiatives is to tease out the implications brought by translanguaging theory for all major domains of humanities and arts, such as language characters and calligraphy (e.g., Xu Bing's Square Word for Macau; Han & Wen, 2022), music/sounds (e.g., sonic mobilities in southern China; Kielman, 2022; Hakka folk songs, etc.) and some local operas (e.g., Cantonese opera, Teochew opera, etc.), literature, translation/interpretation (Han et al., 2022) and movies (e.g., Ailin Chang's novels and movies by local producers, etc.; Han, in press), foods and meals (e.g., Cantonese food; Hong Kong Cafe by Chan, 2019; and Macanese food by Han & Wen, under review), museums and architecture, history and anthropology, etc.

In time, we hope that these broad studies in humanities and human communication, and social sciences conducted in the GBA can be further extended to other mega city clusters or regions on the Chinese mainland (e.g., The Greater Yangtze River Area; cf. The Shanghai Alliance by Zheng et al., 2022) and even other countries/regions of Greater China (e.g., Shen & Gao, 2019) and beyond (e.g., the Belt and Road Initiatives;

Gao, 2020). Above all, the editors aspire to bring the social and economic life of the GBA residents and beyond to guarantee a “social space for the multilingual users by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience, and environment, their attitude, belief, and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance” (Li, 2011, p. 1223).

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Author contributions

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Authors' information

Zhisheng (Edward) Wen (Ph.D., Chinese University of Hong Kong) is an Associate Professor at Macao Polytechnic University, Macau, China. Dr. Wen is Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Psychology for Language Learning (JPLL)* and Associate Editor of the *Language Teaching Research Quarterly (LTRQ)*. He has extensive teaching and research experience in applied linguistics, second language acquisition, cognitive science, and translation and intercultural studies. Besides an extensive list of paper publications, Dr. Wen has authored and edited over 10 volumes and journal special issues on working memory and language aptitude with Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Routledge, John Benjamins, and *Multilingual Matters*. His latest books include *The Cambridge handbook of working memory and language* (CUP, 2022, with John Schwieter) and *Language aptitude theory and practice* (CUP, 2022, with Peter Skehan & Richard Sparks).

Lili Han (Ph.D., University of Lisbon) is Director/Dean and Associate Professor of the Faculty of Languages and Translation (FLT) of Macao Polytechnic University, Macau. Over the last decade, Dr. Han has lectured and conducted research in interpreting studies, acting as a trainer for the Conference Interpreting (Chinese-Portuguese-English) course in partnership with the DGI (SCIC) of the European Commission. Her research interests include interpreting studies, intercultural studies, language, and translation policy studies, interpreting testing & assessment, and computer-aided interpreting, all from a translanguaging perspective.

Guangwei Hu (Ph.D., Nanyang Technological University) is a Professor of Language and Literacy Education in the Department of English and Communication, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. His current research interests include academic discourse/literacy, bilingual education, language policy, and second language writing. He has published extensively on these topics in such international journals as *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *Higher Education*, *Instructional Science*, *International Journal of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education*, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Language Learning*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Review of Educational Research*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *TESOL Quarterly*, and *Teachers College Record*. His latest book *Cultural Knowledge and Values in English Language Teaching Materials* was published by Springer (2022, with Tao Xiong and Dezheng Feng). He is Co-Editor of *the Journal of English for Academic Purposes*.

Mark Feng Teng (Ph.D., Hong Kong Baptist University) is currently an Associate Professor at the Center for Linguistic Sciences, Beijing Normal University. He was the recipient of the 2017 Best Paper Award from the Hong Kong Association for Applied Linguistics (HAAL), as well as the Teaching Excellence Awards by the Education Bureau of China. His research expertise lies in L2 vocabulary acquisition, and metacognition in L2 writing. His publications have appeared in international journals, including *Applied Linguistics*, *TESOL Quarterly*, *Language Teaching Research*, *System*, *Applied Linguistics Review*, *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *Language Awareness*, *Literacy*, and *RELC*, among others. His recent monographs were published by Routledge, Springer, and Bloomsbury. He also edited and co-edited special issues for several international journals, including *SLLT*, *TESOL Journal*, *ARAL*, and *Journal of Writing Research*.

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