

Book Review

Review of Rebecca L. Oxford, María Matilde Olivero, Melinda Harrison, and Tammy Gregersen, *Peacebuilding in language education: Innovations in theory and practice* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2021). 320 pp., \$49.95. ISBN: 9781788929783.

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Four editors and twenty-one influential authors from diverse geo-cultural backgrounds and contexts collaborated on this inspiring edition of *Peacebuilding in language education*, Book 83 in the series *New Perspectives on Language and Education*. This six-year labor of love, which culminated during the COVID-19 pandemic, is available in print and electronic formats.

Hadley's **Foreword** begins by highlighting the urgent need to foster holistic peace in classrooms worldwide against a capitalist backdrop in which influential media and discourse color it unprofitable and calls on language educators to respond as transformative agents. Emphasizing the interconnectedness of humanity and the impact of individual actions on ourselves and our ecosystem, Harrison's **Introduction** then underscores how integral language use is to peace. In the following 16 chapters, contributors emphasize the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication for building peace and address the challenge educators face of simultaneously helping learners to develop proficiency and strategies necessary to construct more peaceful societies. To give due consideration to each article in this collection, I review each chapter separately.

Chapter 1 in *Section I: Language Education Responds to the Call for Peace* sets the stage with the editors posing fundamental questions like What is

peace? and How do we communicate it?, defining basic concepts related to peace, conflict, and violence, discussing popular conceptions, and explaining the six dimensions of peace from Oxford's *The Language of Peace* (2013) that serve to structure middle sections of the volume: inner, interpersonal, intergroup, intercultural, international, and ecological. To empower language educators to peacebuild in **Chapter 2**, Gkonou et al. recall prerequisite knowledge, share a framework of classroom teacher competencies for peace, and claim that the skills can be developed by strategically implementing proposed language and culture activities in multiple dimensions, following transformative, holistic approaches. Useful comments about their impact follow. **Chapter 3** then focuses on the transformative contributions of nonverbal and paraverbal communication to harmonizing interactions. While Gregersen and MacIntyre share nonverbal decoding and encoding strategies, examples, and peacebuilding tips, they highlight the importance of awareness, attention, intention, and effort, a combination dubbed 'peace consciousness' by Oxford.

Next, **Chapter 4** in *Section II: Applying Peacebuilding for Inner, Interpersonal and Intergroup Peace* presents a theoretically-grounded, experiential pedagogical intervention aimed at contributing to holistic education by developing inner peace through increased emotional regulation and positivity in a language classroom for teacher educators. Here, Barbeito and Sánchez Centeno present adaptable activities to foster peace under 'full consciousness mode'. **Chapter 5** then explores the emotional reactions of students and teachers to an innovative and holistic learner-centered and task-based approach rooted in humanistic principles called 'cooperative open learning'. Here, Amerstorfer relates empirical evidence on the benefits of this approach to aspects of inner and intrapersonal peace. Noting the importance of the under-researched emotion of love in opening **Chapter 6**, Barcelos critically advocates for its incorporation into research and practice to rehumanize education and bring about social change. She explores the concepts of 'revolutionary love' and *amorosidade* and their connection with peace before relating them to the construction of a teacher's professional identity using a framework for narrative analysis informed by perspectives on love. Subsequently, **Chapter 7** emphasizes connection and harmony through difference via the nexus of holistic, transformative learning and peacebuilding in language learning. Through storied form, the author-practitioners, Prado et al., present journeys of personal and professional self-knowledge, gradually resulting in *conscientização* that empowered them to work for social change. They then share advice and recommend classroom materials, ways of structuring interactive activities, and strategies for integrating and reinforcing peace language and skills.

Chapter 8 in *Section III: Applying Peacebuilding for Intercultural and International Peace* begins by exploring the special circumstances of teaching foreign languages and peace to military linguists, diplomats, and astronauts and ways that the teaching led to successful bi- or multi-lingual and cultural transformations. Among others, Bernhardt et al. present a design thinking approach to curriculum development and problem-based practica, which promote authentic language use, context-specific skills, and a peace-oriented learning culture. Following this, **Chapter 9** on internationalization in the US, looks at the impact of campus conflicts on motivation and achievement and how stakeholders can foster peace cultures through intercultural communication. After introducing key concepts, models, and prerequisites, Wei and Zhou back the promotion of peace education and the role of language educators in this task. Then, they present pedagogies to cultivate dialogue, critical literacy, intercultural encounters, and culturally responsive conflict resolution. They also discuss peace, social justice, and actions that can lead to understanding and conflict management. Next, they provide definitions of intercultural critical incidents and two analyses along with implications and recommendations for peace-fostering strategies and practices. **Chapter 10** focuses on social justice pedagogies intended for use with Muslim English learners in US schools. Aiming to better understand identities, social relations, power, and language use and, thereby, improved educational and social experiences and outcomes, Mahalingappa et al. advocate for teaching inspired by critical multicultural education, culturally relevant teaching, and equity literacy. To this end, they implemented the critical language awareness framework.

Chapter 11 in *Section IV: Applying Peacebuilding through Positive Psychology, Peace Linguistics and Peace Language* starts by highlighting a shift away from deficit understandings of phenomena to sustainably constructive ones and from reactionary to proactive actions. Gregersen and MacIntyre discuss the contributions of positive psychology to peace from local to global levels before raising the pragmatic question “What can a humble language teacher do to affect world peace?” (p. 185). Acknowledging the cumulative potential for change through English language learning, they focus on pragmatic pedagogical interventions. Turning to language, Oxford explores interpretations and features of speech- and hate-related words and reveals how the dehumanizing process of enemy-creation works in **Chapter 12**. She discusses reasons hate speech is used, consequences of acute and chronic discrimination/hate, and the controversial issue of banning hate speech without addressing its root causes. Then, she shares contextualized examples of its nefarious impacts by supposed leaders. More hopefully, she then presents two psychosocial alternatives, a humanistic African philosophy embodying connectedness, community, and caring and the complex notion of empathy, along with a developmental

process. After featuring the triumphant story of an individual's 'pathway of positive peace' (p. 208), she cites work by notable supporters of love. Combined, **Chapters 13 and 14** look at forms of six H words: hate, hurt, and harm, and hope, help, and harmony, respectively. Curtis and Oxford describe their origins, meanings, and uses giving examples from selected dictionaries. They share application activities using mostly news media to develop awareness and reflection on the use of 'the negative 3-H words' and social issues. Insights from the arts and humanities on 'the positive 3-H words' are shared along with positive psychology interventions aimed at stimulating them.

The shortest part, *Section V: Moving Further with Peacebuilding*, contains a highly practical chapter and future-oriented conclusion. After presenting a triad of approaches consisting of holistic, contemplative, and experiential learning and benefits, **Chapter 15** outlines the format of 54 distinct and adaptable classroom activities inventoried into five categories with detailed lesson plans. **Chapter 16** closes the anthology with stories of remarkable young peacebuilders and the message that nomenclature, actions, the internal source of peace, timing, and change matter. The editors summarize five important principles (peace as positive, embodied and enacted, arising from within, urgent, and transformative) and underline the need to actively pursue and propagate positive peace. Lastly, they identify validating peacebuilding actions as an important research agenda and pinpoint ecological peace as an urgent focal area.

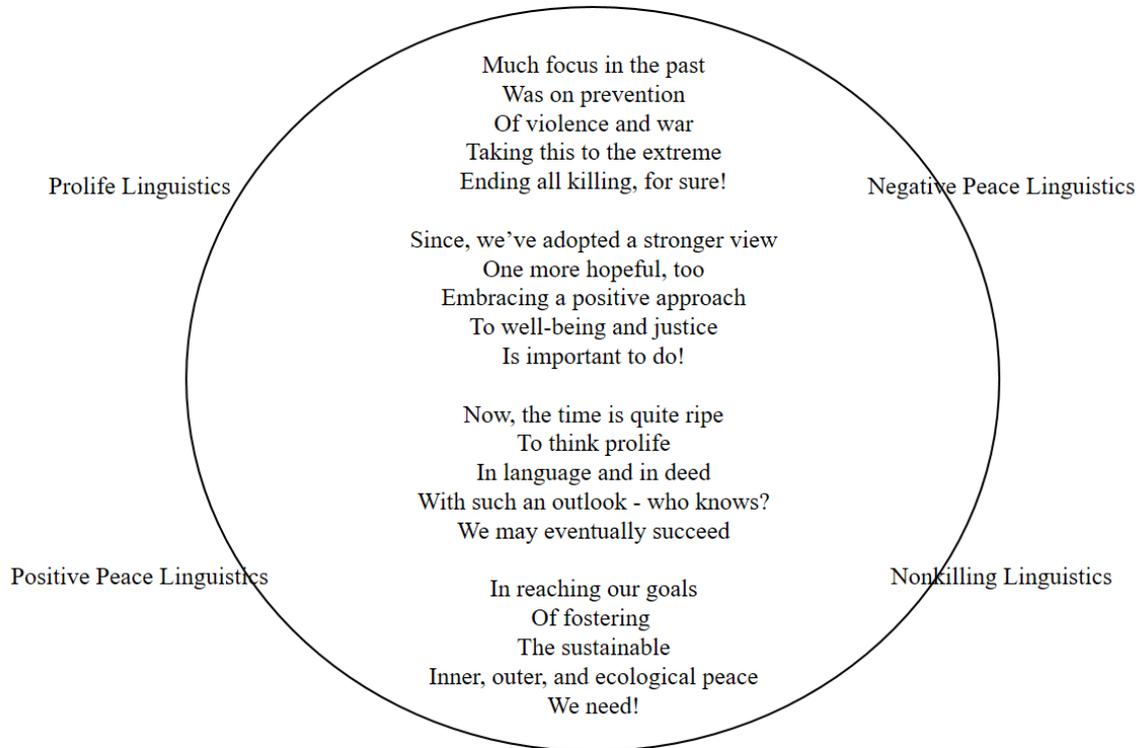
As a budding peace linguist, I welcomed this book, and I believe it achieves its aims (p. 12). Despite pandemic travel restrictions, through this text, I was able to embark upon a journey of self-exploration and discovery. I cultivated inner peace and positivity and did soul work through deep breathing, visualization exercises, alternative scenarios activities, applying meaning-making principles of logotherapy, and learning about new notions of love and the kindness concept of *ubuntu*. Looking outward, I genuinely reflected on social justice issues explicitly mentioned such as inequality, discrimination, hate speech, and bullying as well as inferred (linguistic rights) and pondered my role as a peacebuilder and activist ally through the lenses of critical and caring theories. I saw avenues for research through qualitative questionnaires, case studies, and interviews. Vicariously, I crossed continents through success stories, counter-stories, critical incidents, and presentations of artwork, videos, photo stories, poems, and other media, and stopped by classrooms, campuses, a peace booth, marginalized communities, and well-known government institutes like NASA. As I filled my suitcase with the new-to-me pedagogy of encounter, appreciative inquiry, and servant leadership, I considered how to own these experiences and approaches and even incorporate them.

Clearly, there are more than three things to savor in this work! The humanistic style with emphasis on the positive perspective and whole person sets the tone. Its organization around a theoretical framework provides structure. The inclusion of many core peace concepts, inspirational quotes, interesting anecdotes, valuable perspectives, varied research methodologies, and adaptable pedagogical approaches and activities, supported by informative endnotes and useful references after each chapter, offer substance. Additionally, the examples of teaching all around the world, with diverse populations, and at different levels provide numerous contexts for application.

Certainly, though, adventures can leave us craving more. Because the term appears in a section and chapter title, I longed to read about peace linguistics, an area still little known despite having roots in the 1980s. Since words matter and studying language *on, in, for,* and *through* peace may uncover promising shortcuts to peace cultures, I hoped to find a discussion of its origins and aims and pioneering linguists, most notably, Francisco Gomes de Matos, who coined the term ‘communicative peace’. Second, this book is plotted around six dimensions of peace. However, the ecological dimension is somewhat washed-out. While there was an opening for environmental justice, no chapter is dedicated to this theme, and only a few activities focus on nature and its protection. Hopefully, future research directions will stake this out as called for in the conclusion. Last, a wealth of possibly unfamiliar or confusing concepts is scattered throughout this book. To this end, a collaboratively constructed glossary of key terms might have provided valuable orientation. Yet, a silver lining takeaway related to these limitations might be that curiosity often leads us to further expeditions.

While covering a wide terrain, this anthology remains very accessible and should appeal to you as ‘peacebuilders-under-construction’ (p. 16) or in action worldwide, whether engaged in teaching, learning, administration, or research. Overall, if you are like me, this resource will move you. The change within will transform your work, and this is exactly ideal and necessary given our privileged positions to impact the world positively through language education and use. After all, what could be more worthy than pursuing a broad itinerary of peacebuilding? Inspired, I leave you with an offering:

A Typology of Peace Linguistics and its Evolution



~ Jocelyn Wright, A Peace Linguist