Shi-xu, Kwesi Kwaa Prah, and María Laura Pardo, **Discourses of the Developing World: Researching Properties, Problems and Potentials**, Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016, 180 pp., £95 (hardcover).

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Against the backdrop of scholarly Western-centric practices in contemporary times, three authors—Shi-xu from China, Kwesi Kwaa Prah from South Africa, and María Laura Pardo from Argentina—offer a development-centered approach to discourses of the Third World in their coauthored book *Discourses of the Developing World: Researching Properties, Problems and Potentials*. The studies, which are rooted in a culturally driven perspective on discourse, seek to overcome scholarly West-centrism and reconstruct Eastern paradigms of communication studies.

This book is composed of three parts—namely, Asian discourse studies, African discourse studies, and Latin American discourse studies—each of which, written by one author, contains three chapters. Key issues that are regularly addressed include an Asian paradigm of development discourse studies, Chinese cultural psychology, city-branding discourse, the impact of Western colonialism on language use in Africa, harmonization of African languages, a framework for Latin American discourse studies, and cultural differences between modern and postmodern capitalist logic.

Part I (chapters 1–3), written by Shi-xu, presents an Asian paradigm of development discourse studies with three approaches: paradigmatic, theoretical, and empirical. Chapter 1 argues for the necessity and possibility of constructing an Asian form of development discourse studies. The author points out that Western discourse studies "developed in the Euro/American-Western context, are neither universal nor neutral as they are often indirectly or explicitly presented" (p. 18). They may not be applicable to Asian cultural contexts, which have their own realities, cultural traditions, values, rules, and strategies for action and communication. The author proposes Asian discourse studies to address Asian discourse from its own perspective.

Against the background of the neglect and misunderstanding of Asian communication, chapter 2 re-explicates contemporary Chinese society from a cultural-psychological perspective, with the focus on six typical Chinese cultural-psychological categories and principles, namely, *he* ("harmony"), *mianzi*
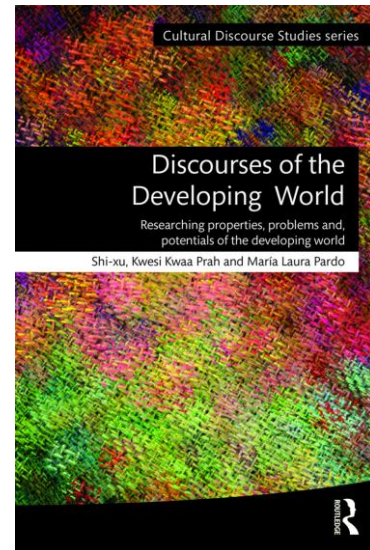
("face"), *aiguo zhuyi* ("patriotism"), *chongshang quanwei* ("respect for authority"), *yan bu jinyi* ("meaning beyond language"), and *bianzheng siwei* ("dialectical way of reasoning"). Drawing on insights from Chinese cultural psychology, this chapter proves that the communicative practice of contemporary Chinese culture can only be understood from a cultural perspective. Therefore, scholars should work out a paradigm of discourse studies based on a Chinese cultural context.

In chapter 3, the author outlines a brief conceptual framework—city-branding discourse—with the purpose of understanding city-branding practices of developing countries. Taking Hangzhou, an ancient capital and tourist city in eastern China, as a case, the author assesses the city's international city-branding discourse by probing into various aspects of branding practices, including municipal management, exhibitions, travelling cuisine, the Internet, and international languages. Compared with other city-branding studies, the city-branding discourse framework appraises city-branding practices more comprehensively and objectively.

Part II (chapters 4–6), written by Kwesi Kwaa Prah, discusses African discourse studies, with the influence of long-term European colonialism on the language practices and policies of African countries as the main subject. Chapter 4 looks at the impact of Western colonialism on language use and policies in Africa. The author suggests that the development of African languages signifies African emancipation and progress and calls on the cooperative efforts of Africans to develop and advance indigenous African languages.

The case of South Africa-based CASAS, which is introduced in chapter 5, is a good example to show African-language harmonization for purposes of education, intellectualization, and development. Against the background of long-term Western colonialism, the author argues that "strengthening and reinforcing democratic indigenous language policies are systematically effected" (p. 90) to protect the traditional African cultural patrimony.

Nevertheless, language harmonization usually does not go smoothly without any difficulties. As illustrated in chapter 6, problems emerge in the process of harmonizing indigenous African languages. The author argues that the underuse of African indigenous languages in education "underscores the cultural basis of neo-colonialism in Africa" (p. 111), and therefore, "education in Africa has to be built on African languages" (p. 116). Of course, "cooperative and pan-African solutions are called for" (p. 121) to adopt and implement more Afrocentric language policies.

Part III (chapters 7–9), written by María Laura Pardo, introduces a Latin American discursive approach to development. In chapter 7, the author attempts to prove how modernity and postmodernity coexist in cultural opposition within Argentina. She argues that "the place of cultural studies in the neo-liberal cultural model must be continually re-examined and avenues for resistance to homogenization explored" (p. 9) and that new horizons must be used to look at colonial Westernization "through reviewing the actions as teachers, researchers and particularly specialists in cultural studies" (p. 9).

To illustrate the very Latin American discursive approach, chapter 8 presents a specific example: the discourse of the 30th anniversary of the Malvinas War as marked by Argentine television. By focusing

on four television programs, this chapter identifies five narratives: (1) the nationalist and triumphalist narrative; (2) the pity or lacking narrative; (3) the narrative of the correlation among dictatorship, crimes against humanity, and the Malvinas War; (4) the narrative of a new vision—a diplomatic way (war is against neither the British nor the islanders); and (5) the narrative of the false way (p. 142). The author holds that these narratives form a continuum from triumphalism to the narrative of the false way. Because present-day Argentina is experiencing regionalization and the anticolonialism processes of its history, there is a long way to go between modernity and postmodernity concerning the topic of discoures.

Chapter 9 analyzes the cultural differences between modern and postmodern capitalist logic by examining the discourses of the homeless inhabitants of Buenos Aires. The findings show that most homeless people, who have a culturally oriented conception of modern work, do not accept such work as street selling (work in the postmodern sense) as a stable, regular job. Therefore, the author suggests that public policy and private schemes to help the poor be adjusted to consider "what the recipients of their aid think and wish" (p. 162).

The book is an inspiriting collection of studies made by the three researchers. The writing styles of the authors may differ, yet the differences do not prevent the reader from perceiving a sense of urgency to study the development discourse with culturally conscious and critical frameworks. The book embodies its unique features in terms of the topic and approach. First, the three authors direct their attention to the issues of the developing Third World, which is usually marginalized or neglected. As we know, developing countries are influential in international affairs in terms of population, labor market, natural resources, business trade, and the military. With the acceleration of globalization, many developing countries are putting up resistance to American-Western neocolonialism, which has immense repercussions throughout the world. Globalization cannot be adequately understood without knowledge of the developing world. Therefore, this book, which studies the role of the developing world and the features of its development in the globalization wave, is of great significance.

Second, different from the conventional research on development, which usually focuses on politics, economics, sociology, law, geography, demography, and urban and rural studies, the approach adopted by the three authors manages to integrate the study of language, culture, and history into development study. A more holistic interpretation of development issues is made. In addition, because issues of the developing world are rather complex and complicated, only a locally grounded approach based on the native situation can provide an adequate understanding. In this sense, the cultural discursive approach can contribute to a better and more objective understanding of the developing world and globalization. What's more, the method employed by the cultural discursive approach is different from the traditional discourse or linguistic analysis. Not only the obvious linguistic features but also what is hidden behind the language—including discourse subjects, topics, media, purposes, and effects—is examined, so the studies yield a more thorough interpretation of the development discourse.

Other researchers are also interested in the differences in cultural values between the developing and developed world, for example, Servaes (2005, 2008), who holds similar opinions that modernization and indigenous culture cannot simply converge. Yet, Servaes's studies display a multiculturalist stance by stressing the interaction and influence of different cultures in the process of globalization. The three

authors of this book, however, pay closer attention to the traditional culture of the developing country based on its own realities, traditions, and values. Moreover, not satisfied with mere description of differences between Eastern and Western cultures, the three authors move beyond to promote a cultural discursive approach for "fighting against the ravages of Western hegemony and universalism" (Hoye, 2006, p. 369).

In summary, this book exhibits the three authors' locally grounded and globally minded standpoint on discourse studies. The book is an extremely valuable contribution to the field of development discourse studies and should aid students, scholars, and researchers who are interested in discourse studies or development affairs of the developing world.

References

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