Language in Society **32**, 105–138. Printed in the United States of America

REVIEWS

Language in Society **32** (2003). Printed in the United States of America
DOI: 10.1017/S0047404503211052

MELISSA BOWERMAN & STEPHEN LEVINSON (eds.), *Language acquisition and conceptual development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. ix, 602. Hb. $100.00, pb. $35.00.

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This volume, dedicated to Martin Braine, is the outcome of a conference held at the Max Plank Institute in Nijmegen in 1995. The first of four parts covers general theoretical issues; part 2 focuses specifically on word learning, particularly nouns; in part 3, entities, individuation and quantification are examined; and in part 4, relational concepts in form-function mapping, with a focus on the influence of language-specific properties. Two main issues link the nineteen chapters: whether concepts are language-independent or constructed through language, and the role of experience in conceptual development. As emphasized by the editors in the introduction, past attempts to relate cognitive and linguistic development have not been too successful, possibly because of the focus on language structure within theoretical linguistics. Recent research on the domain-specific cognitive abilities of infants and on semantic and cross-linguistic aspects of language acquisition have provided new insights, and thus it is timely to reexamine the links.

There are three excellent chapters in part 1, "Foundation issues": one by Jonas Langer on cognition and linguistic ontology, one by Alison Gopnik on Whorfian influence, and one by Elizabeth Spelke and Sanna Tsivkin on conceptual change in the domains of space and number. The issues they discuss are complex, and I have not attempted to give an overview here.

Three authors take up issues relating to the constraints approach to word learning. There are different opinions about whether children are guided in the acquisition of new words by innate principles or by learned biases. A main part of Linda Smith's chapter in part 2 is an insightful review of research on the "shape bias." Research findings reveal that children attend to shape in naming tasks by 24 months of age, but this attention develops, becoming more specific to specific contexts (p. 111). Smith, who follows a biological perspective, views specialization as emerging from general processes. While domain-specific knowledge is first the product of development, it can shape later development.

Michael Tomasello also argues against innate principles; he assumes that children learn words in the same way as they learn other cultural skills. Readers

familiar with Tomasello's work will know that he takes a social-pragmatic perspective. He argues that the link between conceptualizations and language is learned in communicative interactions: Children attempt to understand the intentional actions of others as they engage in social interaction, and the adults' use of language draws children's attention to various aspects of the situation. Tomasello suggests that the infant's ability to understand others as intentional agents emerges at about 12 months of age.

The third chapter on word learning is by Paul Bloom, who takes a strong position against both the innate-constraints and the learned-biases approaches. Bloom puts word learning into a wider perspective, the general capacities for learning and memory in humans. He offers alternative explanations for research findings that support the constraints approach to language acquisition, and he argues that children's linguistic and conceptual resources underlie their acquisition and use of words, making constraints redundant. Bloom makes the claim that other aspects of language are acquired through dedicated neural mechanisms, but many authors in this volume would not agree.

Susan Carey's chapter is one of six in part 3. She suggests that for some grammaticized notions there is support for the continuity/universalist position, but the Whorfian alternative is true for others. This makes for interesting reading. Carey focuses on the conceptual and linguistic representation of number, examining specifically which of the representational resources made use of by languages in expressing number concepts are available to the prelinguistic infant. The evidence is clear: Some conceptual distinctions are not induced from experience with language; they are clearly not unique to humans. Children master the symbolic representation of integers as they come to understand the counting system of their language, a cultural construction. Thus the Whorfian position can also be supported.

Dedre Gentner and Lera Boroditsky support the view that some parts of the semantic system are cognitively driven, but others are linguistically driven. They propose an individuation continuum, pointing out that languages differ in what they treat as automatically individuated, and they hypothesize that less easily individuated objects should be acquired after those that are more readily individuated. Since Gentner's (1982) claim that nouns are learned before verbs, a number of researchers have reported differences across languages, and a major section of this chapter responds to some of the questions raised, with specific language examples cited. The conclusion drawn is that the accessibility of verbs in the input affects how early they will be acquired.

In discussing the reality of cultural diversity, John Lucy and Suzanne Gaskins emphasize the comparative perspective for research on language and cognition. The chapter draws on Lucy's (1992) study, and a follow-up study, with speakers of American English and Yucatec Maya, in which speakers of Yucatec Maya were found to prefer material as the basis of classifying while English speakers pre-

ferred shape. Lucy and Gaskins discuss developmental patterns in children aged 7–9 years from these two language groups; they suggest that some reorganization takes place in the relation between language and thought during the middle childhood years.

A different emphasis on context is presented in the chapter by Werner Deutsch, Angela Wagner, Renate Burchardt, Nina Schultz, and Jörg Nakath. The authors report that personal deixis is learned at different rates by singletons, twins, and non-twins who have siblings. That is, the social context in which language is acquired influences the rate at which children use the pronominal forms appropriate for self-reference.

Patricia Brooks, Martin Braine, Gisela Gia, and Aria da Graça Dias examine the early availability of canonical collective and distributed representations of the universal quantifiers *each* and *all*. They report on data from children speaking English, Portuguese, or Mandarin, showing similar patterns for a collective interpretation for the quantifier for *all* in both Portuguese and Mandarin. Adding to the discussion of children's interpretations of universal quantifiers, Ken Drozd argues that young children treat *all* and *every* as weak quantifiers – that is, like *two*, *some* and *many*. Their interpretation errors are shown to be context-dependent. Drozd discusses problems with previous pragmatic explanations for these errors and links his own explanation to Spelke and Tsivkin's arguments (in this volume) for two preverbal number systems, one for small numbers and one for larger quantities.

Papers by Eve Clark, Dan Slobin, Heike Behrens, Melissa Bowerman and Sonja Choi, and Stephen Levinson make up part 4. Clark's position is that acquisition is a product of cognitive and social factors. Since young children make the sorts of distinctions that are grammaticized in some languages but not in their own, there is some support for a set of general conceptual categories underlying language. As emergent categories, not available in the input, they must be accessible at the conceptual level. One example Clark presents is the distinction between inherent properties and those conferred as the result of an action, a distinction made in Spanish but not English; yet the distinction is made by a young English-speaking child.

Slobin argues against the view that a child is predisposed to relate elements of meanings to specific grammatical forms, as proposed, for example, by Pinker 1984. He suggests that children are influenced by factors similar to those affecting which semantic notions fail to become grammaticized in languages (e.g. color). Social-pragmatic, environmental, and linguistic factors all play roles. In a chapter packed with examples, Slobin discusses many of the problems inherent in assuming a dichotomy between closed and open classes. As he states, it is not clear at what stage in its history a form can be thought of as a "true grammatical morpheme" (431) or when a "true grammaticizable notion" develops, because languages change and that change is gradual, embedded in communication pro-

cesses. Slobin suggests a cline of grammatical morphemes (from lexical-content words to specialized grammatical morphemes) and a range of classes (from almost entirely open to almost entirely closed).

The topic of Behren's chapter is the development of time concepts and tense in German. Behrens considers whether cognitive development constrains the development of tense, whether universal concepts assist children in the mapping between form and meaning, or whether the particular language structures and forms influence the child from the onset. Data from children acquiring German are used to illustrate that by the time they use past markers productively the children are already attuned to language-specific properties; they are not constrained by a set of assumed universal concepts.

Spatial categories and the influence of language-specific properties on their acquisition is the topic of three chapters. Bowerman and Choi have published a number of papers comparing the structuring of spatial semantics in English and Korean. Their research has provided clear evidence against a universal set of spatial meanings that are mapped onto language forms. Their findings show that children develop concepts on the basis of their exposure to semantic patterns in a particular language. In this chapter, Bowerman and Choi do not rule out inherent biases; they propose gradients of perceived similarity between situations of different types as conceptual prerequisites to semantic learning (503). Brown's chapter also stresses language-specific differences in the semantics of space. She discusses the complex three-way ambiguity in the frame of reference underlying the use of spatial terms in Tzeltal and argues that there is no evidence that Tzeltal children are influenced by a set of universal spatial concepts. Rather, the children are influenced by lexicalization and typological features of the language, acquiring language-specific meanings for verbs of motion early in development. Another Mayan language, Tzotzil, is discussed by Lourdes de León, who argues that children acquiring Tzotzil are influenced by the input language. In contrast to English-speaking children, whose early expressions include 'up' and 'down', the Tzotzil children do not express vertical path in their first productions. They do encode verticality for downward motion, but conflate this with manner, figure, and ground. Of particular interest is the use by the youngest children of specific motion verbs, as opposed to a small set of general verbs, as is typical for other languages.

In his concluding chapter, Stephen Levinson discusses some of the findings from studies on spatial cognition undertaken by members of his Cognitive Anthropology group. Given the vast variability across languages, the complexity of the mapping task between form and meaning is enormous. Levinson proposes three levels of complexity. However, as he points out, adults provide children with numerous behavioral clues to solve the mapping problem.

Although much research has been conducted since the chapters for this volume were completed, the body of research that has been drawn together makes

this an excellent reference. As in any volume of this size and breadth, not all the chapters are of equal quality or of equal interest to all readers. I found chapters in parts 2 and 4 extremely useful, even though I was already familiar with much of the research reported; the chapters in part 1 were stimulating, as were several in part 3. Language acquisition researchers will find much to digest and should find the overviews of research in specific areas useful. The focus on Whorf and the influence of language on conceptual development, as opposed to the mapping of language onto a universal set of concepts, will be of interest to researchers of language and society, as well as to language acquisition researchers.

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(Received 11 March 2002)

Language in Society **32** (2003). Printed in the United States of America
DOI: 10.1017/S0047404503221059

JOSHUA A. FISHMAN (ED.), *Can threatened languages be saved? Reversing language shift, revisited: A 21st century perspective*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001. Pp. xvi, 503. Pb $24.95.

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This volume revisits, as its title states, the theory and practice of reversing language shift (RLS) first proposed by Fishman in 1991. A dozen of the original case studies are reanalyzed and several more are added, producing a rich source of detail on some of the specific situations of language shift and efforts to reverse it. Fishman contributes introductory and concluding chapters as well as one of the case studies (Yiddish); other authors cover Navajo, New York Puerto Rican Spanish, Québec French, Otomí, Quechua, Irish, Frisian, Basque, Catalán, Oko, Andamanese, Ainu, Hebrew, immigrant languages in Australia, indigenous languages in Australia, and Maori. The resulting book provides a wealth of information about language shift and public policy directed toward RLS, but its aims are broader than that.

In particular, the principal proposition of this book is to reexamine the ideas set forth in 1991, and to revise, supplement, or abandon them on the basis of case

studies directed specifically toward their evaluation. The original ideas are by now well known, especially the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), an eight-point scale positing a continuum of disruptions to the existence and maintenance of a language. Fishman views this scale as directive or implicational with regard to social action, rather than simply descriptive or analytic. As he says (p. 2), "The analysis of languages in competition, in terms of the societal functions that are involved, contested, lost or gained in such interlanguage competition and the degree of 'cruciality' of these functions for the future longevity of given languages, is what the study of 'reversing language shift' seeks to become, in both theoretical and practical terms."

Many of the authors of the individual articles find that the GIDS is useful at least for analyzing RSL, and may be useful for planning how to implement specific policies to reverse language shift. Most in these case studies, however, analyze to what extent policies to reverse language shift, where they exist, conform to the GIDS, and how successful they have been, rather than analyzing whether language policies can be designed using the GIDS as a guide. Although Fishman's 1991 book is well known among academics, and parts or all of it have been translated into appropriate languages, it does not appear to function yet as a practical guide for many language planners who are not also academics. As a consequence, none of the authors was able to evaluate a specifically GIDS-driven language planning program.

Some of the authors suggest ways of supplementing the analysis proposed by the GIDS, especially by linking variation in language shift to the wider economic and social systems in which it is encountered, or by supplementing it with an analysis of language vitality within multilingual settings. The principal criticism of the GIDS, which several authors share, is that it is overly linear, and that official recovery programs often do not work that way but instead institute actions that may be circular with regard to the scale, or intersect it at several different stages. Fishman states quite explicitly in his concluding chapter that linearity of implementation is not necessary; policy can work on more than one stage at a time.

He also makes it clear that the scale is meant to be implicational; that if a language community is found to be operating at any particular stage, then all lower stages (those with higher numbers) should also be found to exist. Thus, if the language community is transmitting the language intergenerationally (stage 6), then the presence of adult language speakers (stages 7 and 8) is implied. However, several of the individual authors rather puzzlingly analyze the particular language communities they are reporting on at each stage of the scale, as if there were no implicational connections between stages.

Fishman concludes with several clarifications or amendments to his original proposal. He especially suggests that the case studies show that more differentiation is needed for stage 6, the crucial intergenerational transmission stage, since

there is an overly wide variety of speech communities at this stage. He also warns that school acquisition of a language is not enough, so that, in spite of considerable emphasis placed on teaching a threatened language in the schools in a number of programs for RLS, this is not sufficient to guarantee recovery. He also warns against an "all or nothing" attitude toward language recovery: Although being ambitious in language recovery efforts may be worthwhile, being overly ambitious will probably lead to great disappointment and therefore failure.

Finally, Fishman tries to answer the question the title of the book poses: Can threatened languages be saved? Ten years are, of course, too few to be able to answer this question, but none of the reported cases shows any substantial progress resulting from changes in the "general atmospheric circumstances." None show dramatic success; some show moderate success, while others are losing ground. Some of the languages most successful in reversing shift also seem to be combating fatigue – the fatigue of constantly fighting the same issues over extended periods of time. The general climate for RLS has improved, but in most cases, the actual RLS prospects and achievements have not. Fishman concludes optimistically (481): "Yes, more of them can be saved than has been the case in the past, but only by following careful strategies that focus on priorities and on strong linkages to them, and only if the true complexity of local human identity, linguistic competence and global interdependence are fully recognised."

Fishman's 1991 work was instrumental in helping to define a new focus in the study of language loss: how language shift can be reversed in both theoretical and practical terms. This new book's set of analyses of language policy directed toward reversing language shift should be equally influential. The variety of languages and situations represented is broad, the specific details of policy and language vitality in each case are very informative, and the theoretical discussion is lively. The book is slightly flawed by inadequate editing (for example, Fishman substitutes 'Xians' for 'Xmen' to mean 'speakers of Xish' but one of the chapter authors continues to use the unfortunate 'Xmen'; one of the chapters should have had the (nonnative) English edited more thoroughly; the chapter on New York Puerto Rican Spanish constantly confuses all other US ethnolinguistic groups with immigrant ethnolinguistic groups; and there are several typos in prominent places), but this does not detract from its overall interest and usefulness. More and more people are becoming actively engaged in RLS policy; this book will serve them well.

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(Received 14 June, 2002)

Language in Society **32** (2003). Printed in the United States of America
DOI: 10.1017/S0047404503231055

MAGDA STROINSKA (ed.), *Relative points of view: Linguistic representations of culture*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2001. Pp.xii, 228. Hb $69.95, Pb $25.00.

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At first glance, the title of this book seems to index major themes of linguistic anthropology; however, it is published as volume 6 in a cultural studies series. Its contributors' interests range from linguistics through the expanse of humanities, illustrating how eclectic and interdisciplinary contemporary research in area of language and culture has become. The editor, Magda Stroinska, begins this volume with a brief overview of several themes recurring throughout: linguistic relativity, the search for universals, cross-cultural identity, globalization, and translatability. The research presented here analyzes interactions among language, behavior, and context as they emerge in several areas of current concern. These include metaphors and their use in speech, as well as discourses on topics such as gender and marriage, science versus postmodernism, internationalized business, politics, nationalism, study abroad experiences, emotion, and religion. The authors examine data from various sources, including original speech data, data first discussed elsewhere, literature, and media. Five thematic sections of two chapters each comprise this edited volume.

The first section, entitled "Thinking in words," contains two chapters directly concerned with metaphors. First, Jim Miller uses the localist hypothesis to discuss nonliteral extensions of spatial and temporal expressions in Russian, with ample comparison to English. He clearly outlines these structural patterns and then closes the chapter with a call for further examination of metaphorical systems and of discursive data.

Teresa Dobrzýnska shows the pragmatic dimensions affecting metaphorical expressions in reported speech in English. Like Miller, she uses contrastive sets of constructed linguistic data. Her focus on communication theories, drawing particularly on Bakhtin/Voloshinov, points away from traditional grammar-based interpretations of the phenomenon and toward speaker's stance regarding the original utterance. That metaphors undergo a reworking when expressed at second hand becomes clear through her examination of differences in topic/comment placement of metaphors, particularly in reports of emotive or ironic expressions. She then expounds on these conclusions by showing their potential ramifications in journalistic-style frameworks.

The next chapter also focuses on metaphor, though it is placed in the second section,"Language and politics." Sakis Kyratzis examines political anti-drug discourses in a 1994 Greek parlimentary discussion and in American English (taken from Elwood 1995), with an interest in universality versus cultural specificity. I

note the additional PATH metaphor in the sentence openers "Our road . . ." and "Every step forward . . ." appearing in the translation of the Greek data prior to the WAR and ILLNESS metaphors of focus here, and I wonder whether it reappeared elsewhere in the discussion. The final paper in this section presents a historical discussion of language prescription and ideology as François Nectoux reflects on culture and nationalism.

"Divided by a common language" is the theme of the third section. Chris Horrocks evaluates the "Two Cultures" (scientific and literary communities) debate most recently prompted by Sokal and Bricmont. They see Baudrillard's use of scientific terminology as improper, but Horrocks interprets Baudrillard's lexical choice as motivated by an overt agenda (in the literary vein of Pataphysics) to dethrone that very jargon. Following this, Lia Litosseliti provides an overview of language and gender research. She then turns to discursive data on social change regarding gender and marriage she collected from focus groups of white heterosexual academics and professionals in Northwest Britain. Using critical discourse analysis, she shows how the arguments, gender assumptions, and associated linguistic resources exhibit gendered differences in discourse.

The next section is titled "Different language, different thoughts." Here Francesca Bargiela-Chiappini presents a case study of an Italian-British joint venture whose data, though initially questionnaire-based, were drawn largely from interviews. Her discussion of how the initial methodology served the purpose of establishing credibility yet shifted in response to cultural preference should bring a grin of recognition to many fieldwork-savvy readers. Her analysis of management, culture, and discourse in the realm of multinational business shows the importance of focusing on emergent interaction, especially discourse, to understand how cultural differences impinge on a supposedly shared capitalist framework. Cross-cultural interaction and non-adjustment to different cultural worlds is also taken up by Libby Rothwell, who analyzes discourses of study-abroad students. She calls for an interdisciplinary approach to cultural learning. Her data also point to the educational possibilities latent in the cross-cultural comparison of descriptions of a behavior (e.g., going barefoot) to reveal norms and their interpretations.

The final section promises to take us "Beyond the limits of language." Stephen Lloyd Smith criticizes Hochschild's assessment of emotional labor; I wish more information about Hochschild's work had been provided for the reader, perhaps in place of Smith's extended quotes reiterating cognitive versus social constructionist views of emotion, culture, and language – none of which are employed in his analysis. What I find most troubling about this section, particularly as a Japan specialist, is the author's uncritical inclusion of an essentializing statement (from Morsbach & Tyler 1986) that the Japanese behavior/emotion "*amae*, approximating to 'sweet childishness and lifelong dependency', CANNOT be learned by Westerners" (emphasis mine). Then, rather than locating the agency of his analysis in the character of an alien – a rhetorical claim to objectivity – he should take

responsibility for his critique of various stances toward emotional labor, including his conclusion that "Emotional labourers are better-off than manual workers." In his chapter, Ben Wiebe discusses language about God in Christian and Hindu frameworks.

This book contains a variety of topics and approaches within the area of language and culture. Perhaps this diversity induces a craving for some notion of universality that prompts the authors to mention inquiry into semantic primitives, though this approach is not tried explicitly here. What is even more intriguing is that the two authors who mention this approach at length embed their citations in contexts that actually contain serious critiques of it, without overtly employing these contexts as such. Specifically, these include discussions of the relative importance of the lexicon in determining universals, and of the notion of an unmarked "I," which is not present in all languages.

Despite its uneven spots, I found this book interesting. The diversity of approaches contained in it and the accessibility lent by its focus on English and Indo-European languages should encourage its use in graduate seminars across several fields of study.

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(Received 17 July, 2002)

Language in Society **32** (2003). Printed in the United States of America
DOI: 10.1017/S0047404503241051

CAMILLE C. O'REILLY (ed.), *Language, ethnicity and the state. Vol. 1, Minority languages in the European Union*. Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001. Pp. v–x, 183.

CAMILLE C. O'REILLY (ed.), *Language, ethnicity and the state. Vol. 2, Minority languages in Eastern Europe post-1989*. Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001. Pp. v–xii, 228.

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This is an exceptionally interesting collective work put together by Camille C. O'Reilly in two volumes, the first focusing on minority languages and problems of nation and ethnicity in western Europe, and particularly in the European Union (EU), and the second taking as its main focus languages and nationalizing discourses in eastern Europe. A large part of the discussion in vol. 2 concentrates on issues related to the fate and ongoing processes of nation formation, citizenship,

linguistic ideologies, and minority languages in the successor states of the former Soviet Union. In both volumes, some chapters focus more narrowly on language, whereas others give emphasis to macro processes of a political nature. And, of course, no article in the collection is indifferent to the politics of minoritization, ethnic-national boundaries, and the restructuring of the European national map as a whole. Thus, variation in theme and method of analysis should be considered as a positive element of this endeavor, even though the overall treatment is neither exhaustive nor radically critical, as I will argue below.

O'Reilly, in her almost identical introductions to each of the twin volumes, offers a very clear overview of issues of language, nation-state, and ethnicity, and discusses critically the major theoretical trends in approaching the problems of ethnic or nation-state formation. She particularly focuses her analysis on three perspectives that deal with nationalism: the primordialist, the instrumentalist, and the constructivist. She successfully avoids a reductionist, catch-all adoption of any single view, shedding critical light on all three. As is known to scholars in sociolinguistics and the social sciences, the constructivist perspective is the most historically grounded, whereas the primordialist comes closer to ethno-theories of nation genesis (it is, in a sense, the most iconic in the eyes of those who adhere to the ideology of the indissoluble, metaphysically conceived links among language, nation, and culture). The instrumentalist view has a rather long tradition in ethnographic treatments of ethnicity, where it has been recruited to the goal of explaining shift or retention of boundaries (Barth 1998 [1969]:9–38).

In vol. 1, D. O. Riagain gives a thorough overview of the role of the European Bureau for lesser-used languages, combining scholarly accuracy with the inside knowledge of the scholar-activist who has been involved himself in bringing about the outcome. A. Jaffe contributes an excellent analysis of the nature of minority language planning in Corsica. Building on her earlier work on linguistic ideologies, she proposes a pluralist view of language identity. This plural model successfully avoids the pitfalls of hegemony, according to which minority language planning ought to be structured along lines set up symbolically for dominant languages. The same sensitivity toward issues of symbolic domination and social reproduction is shown by the next piece, on Catalan, by S. DiGiacomo. DiGiacomo argues convincingly that Catalan national character has an enormous capacity and potential for irony, in which case identities are depicted as historically constructed. An interesting and illuminating description of the two parts of Ireland is offered by O'Reilly, who focuses her attention on various kinds of language-ideological discourses such as decolonizing, cultural, rights discourse (northern Ireland) and national, cultural, and minority language discourse (southern); all this is embedded in analyses of identity and its historical matrix. L. Timm's piece on language survival in Brittany follows suit, examining the intricate relations between the encompassing nation and Breton and Celtic identity. Avoiding simplistic and unilateral interpretations, Timm also explores the fate of Breton in the context of the European Union.

J. Stacul contributes an innovative article on the formation of regional identity in northern Italy. The dialectic between the regional "we" and the "Italians," as analyzed by Stacul, is reminiscent of historical restructurings in Italy that have occupied the interest of analysts since Gramsci. A focus on construction of identity through this analysis instructs us to pay attention to allegiances regardless of actual genetic proximity and intelligibility between languages or dialects.

The last paper of vol. 1, by T. Cheesman, comes as close as possible to a radical critical analysis of the language-political situation in the European Union. The crucial question raised is: What happens to the non-European languages and communities in Europe? Migrant populations striving to develop a sociospace for themselves can easily be erased by the otherwise all-inclusive rhetoric of Europe. Even though nation-states still figure as a dimension of high or late modernity (along with a global division of labor, a global capitalist economy, and a global military order; see Giddens 1990), the presence of migrants and other borderline social groups questions preestablished and received notions of space and of mapping nations, countries, and inclusive totalities (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:6–23).

In vol. 2 on post-1989 eastern Europe, R. D. Greenberg discusses illuminatingly the complex condition of language and nationalism in Yugoslav successor states, foregrounding the shifting nature of ideological debates concerning Serbo-Croatian. The cataclysmic events of the recent decades following the breakup of a unified nation-state have deeply affected the negotiations of language boundaries. Equally complex is the condition described by R. Guentcheva for the two competing Bulgarian communities in Romania. Political-ethnic maximization characterizes both as they attempt to legitimize their voices as recognizable ethnic entities, with all the benefits following from that within the structures of the Romanian state.

S. Wolff next takes up the issue of German minorities in Poland and the Czech Republic. He analyzes with skill the triadic pattern of ethnic-political relations between the minorities on the one hand, and, on the other, the nation of origin and host countries. Wolff's chapter is an excellent specimen of a critical view of international ethno-politics.

C. Woolhiser focuses more on language ideologies in the nationalizing context of post-Soviet Belarus. A discussion of elite vs. non-elite language ideology – deconstructing the easy dichotomy between Russian and Belarusian and embedding both languages and their perceived values in the newly nationalizing matrix – is a serious attempt at a sociopolitical linguistics. Similar, but not identical concerns seem to occupy T. J. Hegarty, the author of the next chapter, on the politics of language in Moldova. Even though suspicion toward Romanian intentions seems to prevail among Moldovan leaders, the cultivation of routes of interaction between the two ethnic entities is encouraged and welcomed.

J. Dobson offers an honest criticism of Latvian discriminatory policy towards minorities, which makes the capital of "citizenship" a rough gatekeeping mech-

anism that will take time to become smoother. R. Golbert, in the last chapter of the volume, examines the Jewish response to nation- and state-building in Ukraine. Golbert's significant innovation is that she does not rely only on the symbolic macro domain of language, but also focuses on the level of local interactional patterns and how these shape linguistic ideologies and practices.

The contributions in these two volumes combine a high degree of theoretical expertise and integrity in the views expressed by their authors. Nevertheless, I do not think that a critical breakthrough is achieved, at least as concerns the political aspect of the articles. The general spirit of the oeuvre, positive in both its sociological and political morality, is that voice should be given to minorities. But I understand its basic implication to be the following: the EU is something good, and we only have to convince central powers in this formation or organization to show more respect toward minority groups and lesser-used languages. Even though I am not a follower of conspiracy theories, I could cite many examples in which the EU best serves its political agenda by recruiting a pro-minority rhetoric in order to promote divide-and-rule tactics, or even to endorse the launching of international military campaigns. The issues here are indeed very complex, and teach us once more that what counts is not simply to support minority voices, but also, and more crucially, not to allow these voices to become servants of hidden political agendas. The outcome is not foreordained, and we still fight our way between the Scylla of nationalism (take as an example Greece, with its rigid monological, nationalistic discourse supported by the reactionary platform of the church) and the Charybdis of fragmentation in the name of human rights. In the domain of minority languages and ethnicities, we still wait for works that will give voice to borderline groups in a climate of emancipation, analogous to projects advanced for interactional sociolinguistics (Singh, Lele & Martohardjono 1988:43–59).

Works in the volumes under review could have profited by taking account of major collections such the proceedings of the international conference on the "Strong" and "Weak" languages in the EU, which took place in Thessaloniki and came out in two volumes in which all papers appear in English or French translation (Christidis 1999). In fact, papers on Albania or Greece are noticeably absent from O'Reilly's collection. The work as a whole, however, is a useful and up-to-date contribution to political theory, ethnic studies, macro-domain sociolinguistics, and studies of nationalism.

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(Received 23 July, 2002)

Language in Society **32** (2003). Printed in the United States of America
DOI: 10.1017/S0047404503251058

DEBORAH HOUSE, *Language shift among the Navajos: Identity politics and cultural continuity*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2002. Hb $35.00.

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This book is an important and useful contribution to the literature on language shift, especially for readers interested in this issue in American Indian communities. House focuses on discrepancies between public discourse about what it means to be a Navajo person and "undiscussed, yet highly visible, linguistic and behavioral practices" – that is, between conscious, discursive ideology and more unconscious, behavioral ideology as revealed through social practice. She challenges the widespread claim in the Navajo community for the existence of Navajo cultural homogeneity, arguing that although such essentializing discourse may have political, economic, and spiritual motivations, it is also unrealistic and complicates efforts to reverse language shift.

House also accomplishes the difficult task of writing for two audiences: Navajo people themselves, and academics interested in relations between minority and dominant cultures. Although some parts of the book are more theoretical than others, much of it is clearly aimed at Navajo readers themselves – especially the final chapter, which presents an integration of Navajo teachings learned by the author during her more than ten years of teaching and learning at Diné College (formerly the Navajo Community College) on the Navajo reservation in Tsaile, Arizona.

Using Taussig's (1993) concepts of "mimesis" (sameness) and "alterity" (differentness), House argues that Navajo ideologies of identity and language use (among others), far from being homogeneous, are considerably diverse and often contradictory. She writes that too much emphasis by Navajo educational institutions on alterity, or essentializing rhetoric about what it means to be a Navajo person, is obfuscating efforts to reverse language shift.

In the second chapter ("The benefits of being American"), House points out several examples of how the process of mimesis has worked to "reinvent" Navajo culture, as seen in the adoption of pastoralism, mutton and wheat as dietary sta-

ples, silversmithing, wearing of flounced skirts by women, or driving of pickup trucks, all of which today are indexical of Navajo identity. Mimesis may also be seen in typical Navajo events that have incorporated Western models of participation structure, such as workshops or college classes on the subject of traditional knowledge, or activities that use traditional products as commodities, such as raffles or other fund-raisers. House points out that the process of mimesis also has much in common with Gramsci's (1971) definition of hegemonic incorporation of dominant culture, especially as seen in the adoption of consumerism, a cash economy, Western bureaucratic institutions such as schools and government offices, Western values such as materialism, comfort and convenience, and use of the English language and verbal routines. House suggests that the Navajos' motivation for these forms of mimesis is not to assimilate nor to conform to dominant society, but rather to gain greater *agency* in their lives. This is especially evident in the conscious statements of the Navajo people House cites regarding the need to learn to speak English for academic and employment purposes. On the other hand, I would add, one can think of many other examples of mimesis by Navajo people dating to before their contact with European culture – for instance, the adoption of Pueblo cultural practices such as weaving, sandpainting, agriculture, and emergence mythology. What is different today, according to House, is that mimesis now stands in a direct conflictual relationship with its antithesis, alterity, which has come to have paramount importance for Navajo people (as it has for many other American Indian cultures as well).

Whereas mimesis is, for the most part, an unconscious and overtly disvalued process, Taussig's concept of alterity is the opposite. As House points out, efforts toward cultural and linguistic revitalization (which are alteric) are much more visible and public than mimetic strategies. Alteric strategies glorify Navajo differentness from the dominant society, typically depicting Navajo culture as superior in every conceivable way. Importantly, this is the form that Navajo resistance and counter-hegemony (Williams 1977) take as a reaction to overt hegemony by the dominant Anglo society. The third chapter of the book, "The revitalization of Navajo culture," outlines how these strategies have not only been vital to the recovery and communication of a proud and positive image of Navajo-ness, but also have had a negative impact. According to House, this is because Navajo cultural revitalization efforts of the past two decades have been essentializing, effectively reversing the ethnic stereotypes of the dominant society. In this model of "inverted dichotomizing," the dominant culture is denigrated as "greedy and materialistic" while Navajo and other Indian cultures are viewed as "more spiritual, humane, balanced and harmonious" (37). As House points out, this essentialization and stereotyping of indigenous and Western cultures in the US is just as frequently found in the dominant culture: For instance, teacher-training materials characterize "generic" Native American attributes vs. Western ones in terms of oppositional pairs, such as "the group is all important" vs. "the individual is

all-important." What has happened, according to House, is that Navajo educational institutions have turned these stereotypes on their heads in an example of what Abu-Lughod 1991 calls "reverse orientalism" (20).

In chap. 4, "Narratives of Navajo-ness", House presents many examples of discourse by Navajo people illustrating such alterity. In Navajo educational institutions, alteric discourse is used to combat stereotypes about Navajo people found in textbooks, films, fiction, etc., or to "assert that they are the opposite of what has been said about them" (49). She gives many useful examples of statements made by Navajo public speakers, teachers, and ordinary people, as well as examples of written discourse from newspaper articles and traditional mythology. All these examples of Navajo people speaking for themselves, to predominantly Navajo audiences, about what it means to be a Navajo person today at this point in history are extremely valuable for understanding a contemporary American Indian perspective on identity, and they are one of the best aspects of this book.

However, House's thesis concerning the relationship between alteric discourse and language shift in the Navajo community is that it is actually detrimental in that it emphasizes image over substance. A counter-hegemonic, totalizing discourse that celebrates a revitalized, distinctive, and authentic Navajo-ness may lull audiences into believing that it describes the "really-real" rather than the "wished-for real." As House points out, there is a "wide and deep chasm" between frequently heard statements about the "necessity or inevitability of Navajos' knowing and using their tribal language" and actual language practices.

The rest of chap. 4 presents narratives collected by House that exemplify discursive ideology about language use specifically. Reasons given for why people are not currently using and teaching the language to youth include lack of Navajo language on parents' parts; the general belief that the schools will be responsible for teaching Navajo language; conscious decisions on the part of Navajo parents not to teach their children Navajo so that they will be more successful in school; a traditional teaching which states that "the language will take care of itself"; and linguistic insecurity on the part of youth, especially in the face of elder speakers' purism and criticism.

Finally, House suggests that many Navajo people, including elders, are probably lulled into a feeling of security by the sheer number of people who are fluent Navajo speakers today. However, as she also points out, it is up to Navajo young people to decide the future of the Navajo language.

Chap. 5 deals with the issue of self-determination in Navajo education. It contains an overview of the history of Navajo education as well as many excellent narratives by Navajo people on the subject of their experiences in schools while growing up, and their desire for Navajo language and culture to be part of the curriculum in schools today. House also includes narratives illustrating the ideological differences that exist in the Navajo community on the latter subject.

As she explains, the teaching of Navajo language and culture is problematic in that many Navajo people object to the teaching of any material that may be construed as sacred in any way. Some of these people are Navajo Christians, whereas others are strict Traditionalists who don't believe school is the appropriate context for discussion of such a sensitive subject.

In the last chapter of the book, House presents a "Navajo paradigm for reversing language shift," based on traditional teachings she learned during her lengthy tenure as a teacher and student at Diné College. The traditional model for learning, Sa'ąh Naagháí Bik'eh Hózhóón, roughly translated as the 'long life and happiness way' (93), includes four main tenets or steps, beginning with (most important for dealing with the issue of language shift) *nitsáhákees* 'careful thought'. As House suggests, it is this stage of the traditional learning process that is the most essential for formulating a viable strategy for reversing language shift. This stage contains both Protection Way and Beauty Way elements and is therefore suitable for facing the frightening threat of language shift directly, an important step that many Navajo people today are avoiding. The second step involves planning, the third involves action, and the fourth involves review of the action taken. Citing Donna Dehyle's (1995) work, House suggests that this traditional paradigm for learning is useful because the most academically successful Navajo students are typically the ones "most firmly rooted in their Navajo community" (87). This may be somewhat of a simplification when one takes into consideration the conflicts in ideology and identity described by House herself elsewhere in the book (i.e., many Navajo people are not Traditionalists); however, this chapter is still a significant contribution to the literature in that it eloquently explains, in great detail, an indigenous philosophy that I have greatly simplified here. Most important, House carefully attributes every detail she presents (as she does throughout the book) to the Navajo teacher(s) who helped her to understand this model.

This book addresses far more than the matter of language shift; it delves into issues that are not only complex but also very controversial, especially among Navajo people themselves. For this reason it is a brave book, and one that should be useful not only for Navajo readers but also for those interested in contemporary issues in American Indian studies, postcolonial discourse, and the social construction of identity, to name just a few theoretical applications.

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(Received 12 June 2002)

Language in Society **32** (2003). Printed in the United States of America
DOI: 10.1017/S0047404503261054

JOHN R. RICKFORD, *African American Vernacular English: Features, evolution, educational implications*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999. Pp. xxviii, 399.

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This book primarily addresses the following questions:

(a) What are the features of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and how is it used?
(b) What is its evolution and where is it headed?
(c) What are its educational implications?

The volume includes articles that would be comprehensible to nonlinguists, as well as several articles that deal in depth with issues central to the study of AAVE. John Rickford has been studying AAVE for nearly 30 years and is recognized as one of the experts leading the discussion about AAVE and implementing solutions to a number of associated problems. Given the general public interest following the Oakland Ebonics controversy in December 1996, this book should help to correct misinformation in media reports about AAVE.

"African American Vernacular English," the term used in the book's title, is often associated with such terms as "Black English (Vernacular)" and "Ebonics." The Preface (xxi–xxiii) gives a short but clear explanation of the subtle differences among these terms. Rickford remarks that Labov 1972 first started using "Black English Vernacular" (BEV) to refer to the features associated with the speech of African Americans. AAVE is simply the most recent equivalent of that term. In contrast, the term "Ebonics" was coined by a group of black scholars led by Robert Williams in 1973, as a replacement for pejorative terms like "broken" and "nonstandard" English (Williams & Rivers 1975:104–5). Ebonics originates from *ebony* 'black' and *phonics* 'sound; the study of sound'; put simply, it refers to 'black sounds'. Ebonics is regarded by many, if not most, linguists as similar, if not identical, to AAVE in terms of the features and varieties it designates. Nevertheless, the author points out that Ebonics differs from AAVE in two respects: First, to some scholars (e.g., Smith 1997:21), "Ebonics" implies a strong Africanist or Afrocentric conviction that the distinctive grammar and phonology of this variety are derived entirely from the Niger-Congo African languages spoken by the ancestors of today's African Americans. Second, "Ebonics" has a broader scope than "AAVE" because the former term was originally defined as including paralinguistic features and as extending to Caribbean and even West African varieties (for more information, see Williams, 1975). In the US, however, the term "Ebonics" is actually used chiefly

for the verbal language of African Americans. Accordingly, the terms "Ebonics" and "AAVE" in the US are interchangeable.

Why, then, does Rickford use "AAVE" rather than "BEV" or "Ebonics" in the title of his book? He states that while many linguists employ "AAVE" or its predecessors to endorse African origins, to him the term "AAVE" is "neutral" (xxii). Furthermore, Rickford explains that his use of "AAVE" for the English of African Americans implies a continuum of varieties ranging from the most mainstream or standard speech to the most vernacular or non-mainstream variety. In short, "AAVE" is a new term equivalent to "BEV," but to Rickford, it refers not to a homogeneous linguistic entity but to a continuum including acrolects, mesolects, and basilects. By comparison, "Ebonics" is used by Rickford as a politically correct term without reference to Afrocentrism.

In the following sections, I will review the three main topics addressed in this book: features and use, evolution, and educational implications of AAVE.

Rickford refers the reader to prior studies of AAVE (e.g., Fasold & Wolfram 1970, Dillard 1972, Burling 1973), for background knowledge, and he modestly states that he hopes his book "help[s] to fill the need for a brief, up-to-date, relatively complete and relatively non-technical description of AAVE's structural features" (4). Rickford emphasizes that AAVE is a systematic, regular, and complex system. AAVE is often described as "lazy English," "bastardized English," "poor grammar," and "fractured slang." It is called lazy because a word-final consonant is often omitted, as in *tes*(*t*) and *han*(*d*) – but why does such a deletion not happen to words like *plant*? The rules of AAVE do not allow this deletion unless both the word-final consonant and its preceding consonant are voiced or voiceless. Accordingly, AAVE is more than the slang or careless speech with which it is often associated in the public's mind. In addition, Rickford provides other updated and comprehensive information about AAVE's distinctive phonological and morphosyntactic features (chap. 1). He then demonstrates in greater detail that stressed *bin/been* (chap. 2), preterit *had* (chap. 3), and copula absence (chap. 4) are systematic and rule-governed like processes in all other natural languages.

Rickford further explores variability in the use of AAVE according to social class, gender, age, and style. In chap. 5, the author discusses the relationship of AAVE to Southern white speech and the vernaculars of other Americans by drawing on data from the South Carolina Sea Islands. He discovers that a white Sea Islander (Mr. King, a pseudonym) and a black Sea Islander (Mrs. Queen, also a pseudonym) have phonologically similar speech, but grammatically, their speech is quite different in terms of plural formation, passivization, and nominal possessive marking. He points out, based on his data from Mr. King and Mrs. Queen, that major black/white differences persist even when socioeconomic status, education, and geography are relatively well controlled in the language survey. Therefore, the researcher/author interprets ethnicity as a sociolinguistic boundary, contradicting the common assertion that once geography and class are controlled, white dialect and black speech in the South are identical. Rickford

concludes that limited contact across ethnic boundaries and the existence of different social identities and norms might account for the persistent linguistic (especially grammatical) differences between black and white varieties of language.

Moreover, Rickford cites his 1994 study with McNair-Knox to show stylistic variations in AAVE. These researchers examined two of Bell's (1984) hypotheses that "audience design" dominates stylistic variation, and their findings basically confirm Bell's hypotheses in terms of AAVE's uses of invariant habitual *be*, copula absence, possessive *-s*, plural *-s*, and 3rd singular present *-s* absence. However, Rickford remarks that further research on style-shifting according to addressees and topics is needed to clarify a number of complications that arose in the investigation.

Finally, Rickford claims that not every African American speaks AAVE. He notes that although Dillard (1972:229) said that Black English is used by 80% of African Americans, this is only an estimate rather than a well-grounded empirical finding. Furthermore, investigations of AAVE show systematic effects of class, age, gender, style, and linguistic environment. Like most language varieties, AAVE includes inherent variability. The author's studies and others indicate that the features of Black English are used most often by young lower-class and working-class speakers in urban areas, and in informal styles, but even such speakers may alternate between a vernacular and a mainstream variety in the course of a conversation to mark social and stylistic distinctions and to shift relationships with the interlocutor(s).

The second part of this book discusses AAVE in terms of its origins and its future development. The author reviews "Afrocentric," "European," and "creole" views concerning the provenance of AAVE. He pinpoints the problems of the Afrocentric view, which does not cite any particular West African language as the root of AAVE. Languages in the Niger-Congo family vary enormously; for example, some lack features like copula absence. Accordingly, it is not clear what language(s) in the Niger-Congo family influenced AAVE, and whether AAVE arose from that language family at all. Regarding the "European" view, we still don't have enough historical details to settle the question of whether AAVE is derived from Irish English or other English vernaculars. Rickford contends that earlier Irish and English uses of *be* and *does be* had at most an indirect effect on the invariant *be* of AAVE. In contrast, Rickford discovers that AAVE and Jamaican Creole are similar in the copula absence (to be more precise, the deletion of *is* and *are)* that takes place before verb+*ing* and *gonna*. This discovery supports the hypothesis that AAVE is a decreolized form of an earlier plantation creole that was typically similar to Jamaican Creole. Rickford also shows that certain features of Ebonics, such as the absence of the linking verb (i.e., *is* and *are*), are widespread in Gullah and Caribbean English creoles, but rare or nonexistent in British English dialects. He further draws on data from sociohistorical and demographic data rather than linguistic data and indicates that many slaves in most

American colonies were brought in from the Caribbean, even though pidginization and creolization are often found in the southern US (particularly in coastal South Carolina and Georgia). His data imply that the Caribbean varieties might have affected emerging AAVE in the US. Therefore, Rickford maintains that AAVE is more likely influenced by West African and creole languages. In short, although he believes the issue may never be settled, the creole hypothesis incorporates the strengths of the other hypotheses and avoids their weaknesses.

Rickford also addresses the question of whether AAVE is currently converging with or diverging from white vernaculars. The divergence hypothesis was proposed by Labov & Harris 1986. Rickford urges us to explore the convergence/divergence issue from both the synchronic (using apparent-time data) and diachronic (using real-time data) perspectives. Convergence in some features might be accompanied by divergence in others. He first examines the divergence hypothesis by assessing the extent of change in "apparent time" (i.e., across age distributions), investigating language use by old, middle-aged, and young speakers in East Palo Alto's African American community. His findings show that invariant *be* and copula absence appear to be features of divergence, but plural and past markings are likely features of convergence.

An interesting question is: Why do African Americans still speak AAVE despite negative attitudes from the general public? Why does AAVE not converge with Standard American English now that African Americans have lived in the US for more than two centuries? Refuting the racist view that effects of anatomical and genetic differences such as "clumsy tongues, flat nose and thick lips" are the reason for the persistent existence of AAVE, Rickford provides three better reasons. First, limited interethnic convergence might in part account for persistent vernacular divergence. In the Sea Islands, many white children go to school with black children but do not interact with them outside the school. Adults of both races exchange greetings and small talk when they meet on the street, yet rarely meet for religious worship, socializing at home, or drinking and relaxation at the local clubhouse. Thus, while people hear one another's utterances, there is little of the intimate interaction that encourages dialect diffusion.[1]

Second, Rickford explains that AAVE carries sociocultural heritage, and this might be a reason for the existence of AAVE. Sea Islands blacks and whites follow different speech norms. Talking Gullah is part of black identity, as is rapping or telling lies on Saturday night and folk-praying on Sunday morning. Approximation to or adoption of the other group's linguistic norms may be negatively viewed as crossover. Frequent interethnic rather than intraethnic communication hence may be regarded with suspicion or hostility; accordingly, there is little motivation for one group to adopt the other's speech norms (107).

Last, Rickford states that AAVE contains communicative function and stylistic purposes. Skilled AAVE speakers use AAVE's features, with distinctive AAVE prosodies and rhetorical/expressive styles, to

> inform, persuade, attract, praise, celebrate, chastise, entertain, educate, get over, set apart, mark identity, reflect, refute, brag, and do all the varied things for which human beings use language. It is because AAVE serves those purposes and serves them well that it continues to exist despite all the condemnations it receives from the larger society. For the preachers, novelists, storytellers, poets, playwrights, actors and actresses, street corner hustlers, church-going grandparents, working mothers and fathers and schoolyard children, rappers, singers, barber-shop and beauty-salon clients who draw on it daily, AAVE is not simply a compendium of features, but the integral whole which Claude Brown [1968] evocatively called 'Spoken Soul'. (12)

Finally, Rickford is concerned with educational implications of AAVE. He points out that teachers often have unjustifiably negative attitudes towards students who speak AAVE (Labov 1969, Bowie & Bond 1994). It is worth noting that teacher expectations are closely tied to student achievement (A. Rickford 1999). If teachers expect their students to do badly, the students are likely to do badly. Most African American children come to school fluent in AAVE, and hence AAVE will probably emerge in the classroom. How teachers respond can crucially affect how AAVE-speaking children learn to read and how well they master Standard English. Rickford stresses that ignoring or condemning the vernacular is not a successful strategy. He acknowledges that there are benefits in acquiring Standard English; however, he points out, based on experimental evidence both from the US and Europe, mastering the standard language might be easier if the differences between the student vernacular and Standard English were made explicit rather than entirely ignored (327). He proposes three approaches for helping AAVE-speaking children learn Standard English. First, teachers should be able to distinguish between mistakes in reading and differences in pronunciation. Second, teachers could employ contrastive analysis; the process of comparing the two varieties may lead to much greater metalinguistic awareness of similarities and differences between the vernacular and the standard and allow students to switch between the two varieties much more effectively (340). Third, teachers could introduce reading in the vernacular and then switch to the standard variety. Rickford cites many empirical studies (334–8) and claims that if teachers could not recognize the differences between the local dialect and SE, they could not help students to shift smoothly between the two varieties. By contrast, understanding these differences may improve teachers' ability to communicate and function effectively in the classroom. Rickford suggests that teachers might first discuss the systematicity of AAVE and then show films and videotapes in which distinctive social dialects are exemplified (e.g., *My Fair Lady*, *Daughters of the Dust*, the PBS television series of *The Story of English*, or the 19 November 1987 discussion of "Black English" on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*) to increase awareness of and sensitivity to social and stylistic variations (287–8).

Rickford reminds us that teachers' attitudes should not be characterized simply as positive or negative; they vary depending on the aspect of dialect use for topics, length of teaching experience, and other factors. He further remarks that attitudes toward AAVE are more positive now among working-class adolescents and young adults than they seem to have been two or three decades ago. Youths and their parents may now be more open to experimenting with dialect readers (309–10). Working-class speakers and adolescents often embrace Ebonics features as markers of African American identity, while middle-class speakers tend to eschew them (at least in public). Black teenagers are less assimilationist than their parents and especially their grandparents; they are more assertive about their right to talk and act in their "natural way" (274), and they are also outspoken in their criticism of black peers who act white in speech or any other aspects of social behavior (275).[2] Accelerated AAVE use – especially of salient features like *be* – appears to become a part of young black people's awareness of and pride in their African American identity. In a word, positive attitudes are emerging more often than most people might have predicted.

Last but not least, Rickford lists many empirical studies that present successful cases of the use of a vernacular as a tool to teach the mainstream/standard language. Accordingly, he contends that AAVE-speaking children should be assisted in developing their bidialectal competence between AAVE and Standard English and their sociolinguistic switching abilities. He concludes that it would be disgraceful to ignore innovative methods of using AAVE to help AAVE-speaking children learn Standard English.

NOTES

[1] Labov 1984 noticed that exposure to television, even four to eight hours a day, does not appear to have any effect on the BEV of isolated black speakers in Philadelphia. The kind of contact he considers relevant for facilitating dialect diffusion refers to "face-to-face interactions of speakers who know each other; who have something to gain or lose from the contact; and are not so different in power that the symmetrical use of language is impeded" (1984:14).

[2] Black adults, however, are usually affected by the demands of the workplace and thus seem to be impelled away from distinctively black patterns of language and behavior.

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(Received 2 February, 2002)

Language in Society **32** (2003). Printed in the United States of America
DOI: 10.1017/S0047404503271050

CEIL LUCAS, ROBERT BAYLEY, & CLAYTON VALLI, in collaboration with Mary Rose, Alyssa Wulf, Paul Dudis, Susan Schatz, & Laura Sanheim, *Sociolinguistic variation in American Sign Language*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 2001. Pp. xvii, 237, appendices, index. Hb $55.00.

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Sociolinguistic variation in American Sign Language is the successful result of applying sociolinguistic theory and methodology originally developed for spoken languages to American Sign Language (ASL). The product of several years of study conducted by a team of researchers, this book is more than just an exercise; both expected and unexpected findings are presented, thereby confirming and advancing the sociolinguistics of signed languages in particular and of language in general. Lucas and Valli bring to this work extensive experience with sign language linguistics; they are joined by Bayley, who is known for his work on Tejano English and Spanish variation among immigrants of Mexican descent. The statistical findings provide the necessary bridge between context and environment, on the one hand, and internal constraints, on the other, to explain the range of variation represented at phonological, syntactic, and lexical levels in ASL. Explicitly building on Weinrich, Labov & Herzog's notion of ORDERLY HETEROGENEITY (14, 193–94; cf. Weinrich, Labov & Herzog 1968), the book

provides useful examples and analysis for sign language linguists, and it would do well as a source for graduate and advanced undergraduate courses where materials beyond a primer of sociolinguistics are needed. For those more established in the field, the authors respectfully (and graciously) challenge several frequently cited findings concerning variation in ASL, such as Woodward & DeSantis' (1977) claims about negative incorporation and Liddell & Johnson's (1989) explanations for phonological variation in forms of the sign DEAF. They also demonstrate the usefulness of Liddell & Johnson's (1984, 1989) autosegmental movement-hold model for analyzing distinctive features of sign languages, especially when this is combined with statistical tools such as VARBRUL. Through such analysis, internal variation at phonological and grammatical levels is identified, and the influence of external constraints such as region, age, ethnicity, and gender are also revealed.

The first three chapters set up the context and purpose of the research, beginning with a useful and straightforward chapter on sociolinguistic theory, its history in the studies of sign languages, and how such studies relate to those conducted on spoken languages. The second chapter presents the issues and approaches involved in collecting and analyzing an ASL corpus, though it serves well as a model for spoken language corpora, too. The discussion in this chapter of the variable rule analysis software VARBRUL (Pintzuk 1988; Rand & Sankoff 1990) and other statistical tools for analyzing sociolinguistic variation is helpful, particularly for those coming to sociolinguistics whose backgrounds have focused on qualitative descriptions and who might need to have issues of quantitative methodologies involving multiple contextual influences made more explicit. The third chapter presents a brief sociohistorical account of education and pedagogical philosophies involving sign language in the United States, including changing policies at residential schools for deaf students, and the training and subsequent placement of teachers and students in these schools.

The study draws from five sites throughout the United States, picked as regional representatives. Subjects vary in age, though all were exposed to sign language at early ages (prior to 5 or 6 years old) to control for any effects of late or second language acquisition. All are considered to have native or native-like fluency. Ethnicity was restricted to Caucasian and African American because of practical limitations, although many other ethnicities are obviously represented in Deaf communities. Socioeconomic status and gender were also tracked, especially because these have been seen to be traits associated with sociolinguistic theories of language change. One variable particular to ASL signers is the history of pedagogical policy with regard to the use and status of sign languages in deaf education. The 20th century saw significant swings in the acceptance and use of sign language and oralist (speech) methodologies.

The three phonological variables studied include signs produced with the "1" handshape, the order and location of elements of the sign DEAF, and the locations of a class of signs that share common features (KNOW being a typical

example). The analysis reveals classic linguistic constraints on these variables (grammatical categories, phonological environments), and it shows that many of the manifestations of these constraints are explained in part through reference to sociohistorical factors of Deaf history and the social organization of Deaf communities. The authors suggest that the distribution of variations, when accounting for age, grammatical functions, social class, and ethnicity, indicates evidence of change in progress. Surprisingly, though, grammatical function plays a stronger role than anticipated, and the authors propose that this may be a direct reflection of the modality difference of signed languages (see chap. 6).

Of course, one of the trickiest aspects of linguistic analysis is the highly situated nature of discourse. The strength of the analysis done by these authors is that they weigh multiple factors to discern their relative influences on linguistic variation, and they produce quantitative findings that verify and challenge current explanations of patterns, some of which are based on qualitative studies. Yet even as they did so, these researchers encountered the perpetual problem that not all factors, whether internal or external (i.e., sociocultural), can be accounted for simultaneously, even where they are identified. Furthermore, they raise the epistemological problem that, when one is collecting a linguistic corpus and coding for various factors, the categories and terms used in coding (or even collecting) need to be already recognized in order to be explored. Thus, studies such as this one highlight the continuing need for a range of complementary approaches, including those that are psycholinguistic and anthropological, experimental and ethnographic. For example, the importance of the unique history of Deaf communities and the role of policy regarding the legitimacy of sign language hints at other issues that might be found only through more extended, naturalistic, inductive studies. Such studies would identify additional kinds of factors accommodated to through the ordered heterogeneity of language – factors that can then be tested quantitatively by projects such as that conducted by the authors of this volume.

It has been a pleasure to review a book so clear in purpose and successful in execution. This book demonstrates the advantages of carefully planned collaborative teamwork, drawing upon a vast range of expertise and experience, all the while modeling explicit methodology and theory for sociolinguistic analysis and exploration. The writing remains direct and accessible throughout, with technical terms and concepts supported by useful references, often summarized in ways that are helpful when introducing (or reintroducing) topics to readers not fully familiar with them. It suggests interesting avenues for future research. For these reasons, I strongly recommend this book for graduate and upper-division courses in sociolinguistic variation, especially courses in which the study of sign languages is included. I also recommend it to anyone interested in sociolinguistic variation, or the interplay between linguistic theory and pedagogy.

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(Received 18 July 2002)

Language in Society **32** (2003). Printed in the United States of America
DOI: 10.1017/S0047404503281057

THOMAS, ERIK R., *An acoustic analysis of vowel variation in New World English*. (Publication of the American Dialect Society 85.) Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001. Pp. ix, 230. Hb.

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Since the pioneering work of Labov, Yaeger & Steiner 1972, research in phonological variation has steadily grown more reliant on acoustic data – that is, on data resulting from instrumental measurements rather than from the auditory judgments of the researchers. This book from Erik Thomas demonstrates the fruitfulness (as well as some of the limitations) of this research trend.

The book opens with an introduction to the acoustic study of dialect variation. Thomas provides a very helpful and comprehensive review of previous sociolacoustic research on American English. This section highlights one of the great strengths of the book: its extensive bibliography, which references several unpublished dissertations and conference papers. Thomas offers some background on the nature of acoustic data, though the emphasis is clearly on instructing readers in how to read his vowel formant plots. The discussion assumes that readers understand something of the physics on which acoustic measurements are based (e.g., what a formant is). Chap. 1 concludes with an account of the methods used for measuring the data. Here Thomas provides a detailed description of his procedures – something that is unfortunately often missing from work by other researchers in this area.

Chap. 2 sets about the ambitious task of describing the variants of all stressed vowels in "New World English," a term which is meant to cover North America

plus the Caribbean. This treatment is reminiscent of Kurath & McDavid 1961 in that it works through each vowel, discussing the main variants or "diaphones" associated with that vowel, and then moves to a consideration of the vowels in several phonetic contexts that commonly condition changes (e.g., before liquid consonants). Here too the strength of Thomas's bibliographical research is apparent, and he offers an impressive survey of vocalic variation. This survey will serve as a convenient reference that not only updates the material provided by Kurath & McDavid 1961 but also expands it greatly in terms of geographical coverage, since the earlier work treated only the Atlantic coast of the US. To be sure, Thomas's list does not represent a complete inventory of vocalic variation (e.g., the backing of /ɛ/ characteristic of the Northern Cities Shift is omitted), though, considering its scope, it is certainly more than reasonably comprehensive. Moreover, throughout his discussion Thomas offers observations about the historical developments affecting the contemporary variation. While he does not present fully fleshed-out arguments for his interpretations, his comments are nonetheless helpful in providing a context for appreciating the relationships among diaphones.

The bulk of the book (chaps. 3–8) is devoted to documenting patterns of vocalic variation in several dialects by examining the vowel systems of individual speakers. A total of 192 speakers is considered. The speakers are grouped ethnically and regionally, as indicated by the chapter titles: whites from the North, whites from the Southeast, white Anglos from the south-central States, African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans. Thomas discusses the notable features found in the varieties spoken by each of these groups and illustrates these features with vowel plots from one or more speakers. These plots map the mean frequencies for the first and second formants (F1 and F2) of every vowel and are oriented to resemble the common representation of vowel space. For diphthongs, the plots show the mean values for both the nucleus and the glide with arrows connecting the two points to indicate the direction of gliding. Thomas's discussion in these chapters wisely concentrates on general trends. Rather than attempting to analyze each of the 192 plots, he lets much of this material speak for itself. He includes comments in the caption to each plot, but does not clutter the main text with all his observations. This approach benefits readers seeking a concise description of a given dialect, but it also permits more thorough study, especially of those varieties (e.g., Texas) illustrated by plots from several speakers. It is also noteworthy that the formant plots show values for all vowels, not just those judged to be relevant for a given dialect.

The large sample size of this study is exceptional, but even more exceptional is the fact that the book provides portraits of the vowel systems of all 192 individuals. In many sociophonetic studies, readers see data from only a handful of illustrative speakers. Still, it is clear that the sample of speakers Thomas analyzes was not constructed for this particular project. Rather, it seems he has gathered together speakers from his previous research and filled out the sample with rep-

resentatives of certain key groups. Thus, out of 192 speakers, 150 come from three states: 38 from Ohio, 41 from North Carolina, and 71 from Texas. Many areas are represented by only one or two speakers. For example, two Canadians are included: one from Toronto and one from Newfoundland. Thomas justifies the underrepresentation of some varieties by noting that they have been examined extensively by other researchers (71). This is certainly the case with New York City and the Great Lakes states where the Northern Cities Shift predominates (see Labov, Yaeger & Steiner 1972). Still, this defense does not apply in the case of the western US, which is represented in Thomas's sample by two speakers: an Anglo from Sacramento, California, and a Navajo from New Mexico. Thomas downplays this problem by suggesting that western dialects are similar to that of central Ohio, which is well represented in his study. Nevertheless, he mentions in his text (103) features of California speech (e.g., lowering of lax front vowels) that are not seen in the data from the Sacramento speaker and are not associated with Ohio dialects.

To be fair, such gaps in coverage are inevitable, and Thomas deserves praise for the efforts he took to broaden his sample. Most significant in this regard is the ethnic/cultural diversity of the speakers. As the author notes (viii), his inclusion of vowel plots from 33 African Americans and 17 Mexican Americans represents the largest collection published for both groups. Moreover, he provides data from four Native Americans representing three groups (Lumbee, Cherokee, Navajo); from four creole speakers, including one Gullah speaker and three Caribbeans representing Guyana, Jamaica, and Grenada; from one white Bahamian; and from one representative of a Brazilian community founded by ex-Confederates after the Civil War.

Also significant is the broad chronological range of Thomas's sample. In addition to contemporary speakers of various ages recorded during his own fieldwork, Thomas has taken advantage of archival recordings. For example, among the African Americans in the sample are former slaves born in the mid-nineteenth century and recorded in the 1940s. He also analyzes speakers recorded in the 1960s for the *Dictionary of American Regional English* project. Consequently, the work serves as a useful diachronic resource that allows readers to track changes through real and apparent time.

The vowel plots are central to Thomas's presentation, and it is somewhat disappointing that they did not receive more critical consideration. The use of such representations to examine vocalic variation relies on the assumption that F1 frequency can serve as a correlate of vowel height and F2 frequency as a correlate of frontness. Although these correlations are generally quite reliable, it should be kept in mind that other elements of articulation also affect formant frequency. Thomas acknowledges such factors at times in the text. For example, he notes that the apparent centralization of /ʊ/ relative to /u/ in some plots is due to the increased degree of lip rounding associated with the latter, an articulatory feature that lowers formant frequencies and thus makes /u/ appear more back (32). In his

captions for several of the vowel plots, Thomas notes that certain measurements may be misleading owing to such effects as coarticulation with an adjoining consonant or nasalization (e.g., 65). Clearly he is conscientious about providing readers with information needed to assess the data. It is surprising, therefore, that issues of interpreting acoustic data were not problematized more fully in the introduction.

In a similar vein, Thomas's decision to plot mean values instead of the individual tokens may raise questions for some readers. Since many of the features of interest are changes in progress, a plot showing the range of values associated with a given vowel might be useful. Shifting vowels are expected to show a wider spread across vowel space than are stable vowels. Nevertheless, plotting individual tokens would have meant a sacrifice of representational clarity. Each plot shows data on at least 14 vowels, often with separate points for contextual variants (e.g., back vowels before /r/). Moreover, the plots contain arrows indicating the direction of gliding with diphthongs. In short, the figures are already quite crowded; the plotting of individual tokens would have rendered them illegibly cluttered. With this style of research, representation is paramount because most conclusions are drawn on the basis of visual inspection of the plots.

In sum, Thomas's book is a welcome addition to the growing body of socioacoustic research. It should serve as a model for its careful discussion of methods and its responsible handling of the data. Moreover, it stands as a useful, up-to-date reference on vowel variation in New World English.

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(Received 3 June 2002)

Language in Society **32** (2003). Printed in the United States of America
DOI: 10.1017/S0047404503291053

JEAN BERNABÉ, *La graphie créole*. Martinique: Ibis Rouge Editions, 2001. Pp. 142. Pb. € 15.00.

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A signal event in the history of language policy in France was the recognition in 2000 of French-lexifier creoles as languages that students in secondary schools could select as subject matter. This decision by the ministry of education placed these languages on an equal footing with the heretofore officially recognized

regional languages, such as Breton or Corsican. For these languages to be taught in French secondary schools, teachers needed to be certified by an examination, the CAPES (Certificat d'Aptitude au Professorat de l'Enseignement Secondaire). This book by the leading creolist of the French Antilles is part of a series of handbooks for prospective candidates for that diploma.

The creation of the CAPES créole ignited a sharp polemic, opposing the early promoters of the diploma – members of the GEREC (Groupe d'études et de recherches en espace créolophone 'Study and research group in the creole-speaking area'), based at the University of the Antilles and French Guyana in Martinique – and other French creolists in France and in Réunion, the other creolophone overseas department of France (DOM). The controversy turned mainly on the issue of the singularity or plurality of French-based creoles. Members of the latter group, invoking the criteria of mutual intelligibility and community perception, argued for the recognition of a separate language for each of the four creolophone overseas departments: Réunion (R.), Martinique (M.), Guadeloupe (Gu.), and French Guyana (Gy.); on the other hand, as is indicated clearly in the title of the present book, the GEREC group firmly believes in the inherent singularity of the language. They also pointed out that, as opposed to Haitian Creole (HC), the creoles of the DOMs suffer from a low level of standardization, in particular from the lack of a generally recognized and utilized spelling system. It is this specific issue, then, that Bernabé addresses.

The book is divided into four sections: an introduction focusing on the nature of writing systems and criteria for the elaboration of orthographies; the presentation of an alphabet and conventions for the representation of compound words and for punctuation; an application of the proposed writing system to sample texts, including a comparison with an older GEREC system, and a discussion of its principal difficulties; and a brief conclusion.

For Bernabé, a writing system must first and foremost meet the basic criterion of readability: the extraction of meaning from a text with relative ease. This would involve maximizing the invariable representation of morphemes and would entail a certain degree of abstraction. In the particular ecolinguistic context of the creoles of the DOMs, the elaboration of an ideal writing system involves the accommodation of three often conflicting factors: economy, or the structural properties of the language, particularly at the phonological and morphological levels; ecology, in this case the diglossic relationship between French and creole; and subjectivity, or speaker attitudes about the nature of creole and its role in the society. It was by assigning a higher value to the third parameter, specifically to demonstrate that creole was a language in its own right and not a corrupted form of French, that the creator of the first phonologically based autonomous orthography for Gy. Creole (GyC; henceforth, Creole will be abbreviated to C when referring to a French-based creole), the French judge Auguste de Saint-Quentin, rejected an etymological, French-based spelling (1872:108). Reliance on this third parameter led Bernabé and his GEREC colleagues to formulate the principle of

maximal differentiation in the elaboration of the earlier orthography (1976) and in the lexical enrichment of the language. For example, to avoid the use of the widely used form /ʒãsiv/ identical to French *gencive* 'gum', GEREC proposed the neologism /dʒɛndã/ 'sheath of teeth'. Over the past two decades, the GEREC group has come to recognize the primacy of the ecological factor: In the sociolinguistic context of the DOMs, where most speakers are both francophone and creolophone and where literacy is generally first imparted in French, the criterion of readability requires a certain degree of accommodation to French orthographic conventions. Indeed, in recognition of this sociolinguistic reality the GEREC has now added *F* (*et francophone*) to its acronym.

In the light of his stress on the ecological factor, Bernabé's accommodation to French spelling turns out to be relatively modest in comparison to that proposed by Hazaël-Massieux 1993 for GuC, for example. For instance, she recommends the use of final *-e* to represent final nasal consonants and preserves the graph *in* for /ẽ/. Compare the sex-linked differentiation of 'a type of mulatto': *chabine* (female) vs. *chabin* (male) in her notation, but *chabin* (female) vs. *chaben* (male) in Bernabé's. Among the latter's few accommodations to French orthography is a departure from the monographic representation of /j/ with *y;* he notes it as *y* in syllable-initial and final position, but as *i* in prevocalic position: *misyé* 'mister' becomes *misié* (Fr. *monsieur*). A well-advised accommodation is the retention of *é* as a symbol for /e/, as opposed to the problematic use of *e* in the officialized spelling for HC, which has the disadvantage of leading creolophone learners of French to pronounce mute *e*'s as /e/. Less felicitous is the introduction of a complexity based on excessive reliance on phonological analysis: Invoking the neutralization of mid vowels in certain environments, Bernabé uses the graphs *o* and *e*, assigned to represent /o/ (versus *ò* for /ɔ/) and /e/ (versus *è* for /ɛ/), respectively, as default symbols in neutralized environments. Thus /solɛj/ 'sun' (Fr. *soleil*) is written *soley*, and /lekɔl/ 'school' (Fr. *l'école*) is written *lékol* because the contrasts are neutralized in final CVC syllables. As a result, monography is broken by having, for example, /ɔ/ represented as *o* and *ò* (*bò* 'to kiss', *lékol)*, and bi-uniqueness is violated by having the same graph (*o*) stand for two contrastive phonemes: /o/ and /ɔ/ (*bò* 'to kiss' vs. *bò* 'side'). Although Bernabé favors a minimalist vowel system, he does provide symbols for the front rounded vowel /œ/ *(èu*) and /ø/ (*éu*) but, surprisingly, none for /y/, although the graph *u* is available.

Compared with other orthographic proposals, Bernabé's signal contribution is an attempt to devise a rule-governed use of devices for the representation of various types of compounds. He operated principally with the criterion of prosody: multi-word sequences containing an oxytonic word stress, such as *viékò* 'aged person' ('old' + 'body'), are written as a cohesive unit whereas those containing more than one stress, such as *gwo lannuit* 'middle of the night' ('big' + 'night'), are treated as word strings. The numerous lists of examples he provides serve as useful models. It would appear, however, that his second criterion – the

relative degree of semantic transparency or opaqueness – provides a better indication of the degree of lexicalization in multi-word sequences. In this regard, in his uniform representation of apparent serial verbs by the use of a hyphen, he fails to distinguish between true serial forms like *alé-vini* ('come' + 'go') 'to come and go continuously' and idiomatic compounds like *raché-koupé* ('tear out' + 'cut') 'to act without pity'; the latter would be better noted as *rachékoupé*. His use of the hyphen to indicate the dependency between nouns and immediately following determiners (*kay-la* 'the house') represents a questionable departure from the earlier GEREC orthography and from the spelling for HC. Whether it facilitates readability is a moot question, particularly since the hyphen is deleted when determiners are separated from the head noun in modified NPs (*kay blé a* 'the blue house').

The issue of the singularity or plurality of French-lexifier creoles surfaces several times in the book. Although, in his conclusion, Bernabé waxes somewhat sentimental about "la grande famille créole, réalité toute virtuelle" ('the large creole family, an altogether virtual reality') (130), he alternates between the singular and the plural in referring to the members of this large family. In fact, the orthography proposed is tested almost exclusively against MC. Its "pandialectal" nature is broached briefly in the illustration of its application to the representation of texts in the other two creoles of the American DOMs (GuC and GyC), and in the discussion of some of the problems presented by intra- and interlinguistic variation. For example, he argues that although in GuC there are fewer instances of palatalization in sequences velar + /j/ (/kjɛ/ vs. MC /tʃɛ/ 'heart'), the pandialectal representation should be based on the latter variant: *tchè*. A pandialectal orthography might be workable for the American DOMs, but it would fall far short of taking into account the numerous particularities of Réunion Creole. For example, the archiphonemic solution for the notation of the mid vowels would work perfectly in that language because of the presence of post-vocalic /r/; compare RC *po* and MC *po* 'skin' versus RC *por* [pɔr] and MC *pò* 'port.'

One of the objectives of this book is to familiarize prospective secondary school teachers of any of the creoles of the DOMs with the historical development of suitable orthographies for these languages. In his one-page treatment of this aspect, Bernabé rightfully credits the mysterious Cayenne (Gy.) scriptor who wrote under the pseudonym Alfred Parépou (1885) and the Trinidadian schoolmaster John Jacob Thomas (1869) with bold departures from the etymologically based tradition to represent their respective creoles. But in fact, few of even his 20th-century successors have improved significantly upon Auguste de Saint-Quentin's phonemically based system (1872). GEREC's original orthography, itself greatly inspired by the Faublas-Pressoir orthography used in Haiti between 1945 and 1980 prior to its replacement by the current officialized notation, differs very little from that of this genial innovator, and neither does the revision Bernabé presents in this book.

Wisely, Bernabé stresses that no notational system for a language in process of standardization and instrumentalization should be set in stone. Instead, it should evolve as the linguistic ecology changes. The fundamental criterion for the evaluation of such notational systems is readability – in the case of the DOM creoles, the degree to which, while respecting their structural characteristics and the attitudes of the intended readers and scriptors, they are compatible with the conventions of the standard spelling of the dominant language, French. As I pointed out in the case of Haiti, elaborators of orthographies have tinkered without submitting their proposals to the test of readability as evaluated by controlled psychopedagogical experiments conducted by reading specialists (Valdman 1989, 1999). The merit of the book under review is that it brings to a nonspecialist audience an eminently readable and well-reasoned proposal that needs to be put to this type of test.

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(Received 7 June 2002)