

BOOK NOTES

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LILIAN L. ATANGA, SIBONILE E. ELLECE, LIA LITOSSELITI, & JANE SUNDERLAND (eds.),
Gender and language in sub-Saharan Africa: Tradition, struggle and change.
Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2013. Pp. ix, 331. Hb. \$149.

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This volume is a critical analysis of language and gender in sub-Saharan Africa. The editors focus on cultural continuity across the continent and historical continuity resulting from engagement with the West in the colonial and postcolonial periods (despite comprehensive critiques leveled against the concept of the ‘West’, in this review I adopt the term to reflect the edited volume’s usage). The introduction to the book asks questions central to nuanced understandings of the topic at hand: to what extent is the study of Africa a WESTERN endeavor? To what degree is the term *tradition* an accurate historical description of African cultural and linguistic practices, rather than a mask for contemporary hegemony and inequality? And what unique perspectives do Africans have to offer to the study of language and gender? Drawing from a wide variety of types of data, ranging from visual popular media to recorded everyday conversations, the authors engage in multimodal analysis of language and gender on the continent. As such, this volume is a welcome addition to sociolinguistic scholarship of and about Africa that too often relies on surveys and questionnaire data.

The volume is divided into four parts plus an epilogue: gender and linguistic description, public settings and gendered language use, mediated masculinities and femininities, and gendered struggles and change. Across these four parts, the intersections of gender with age, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, and sexuality are recurrent themes. In this way, diverse analyses remind readers that gender is not an isolated phenomenon for social differentiation, but rather is necessarily interconnected with other sociolinguistic phenomena that organize societies (very often hierarchically).

For instance, in Part 1, ‘Gender and linguistic description’, Mompoloki Mman-gaka Bagwasi & Jane Sunderland document and theorize how gender, specifically in the form of linguistic sexism, intersects with age and ageism in Setswana, a language spoken in Botswana. Analysis of a corpus of media sources, both written and spoken, yields the conclusion that gendered terms at age extremes

(e.g. *boy* and *old lady*) may be used ‘figuratively’ to assign culturally specific qualities associated with these terms to adults—e.g. *mosimane* ‘boy’, may point to inexperience and weakness if used to refer to an older man. Age, in both youth and old age, can reduce the importance of gender differentiation, while heteronormativity prevails in age sets where sexual activity is presumed. Also, in Part 3, ‘Mediated masculinities and femininities’, Tommaso M. Milani & Mooniq Shaikjee use television advertisements for a South African beer to critically evaluate popular discourse about the ‘New man’ in South Africa. The authors conclude that while public discourses and images of masculinity have changed, each successive understanding of the ‘New man’ ends up reinforcing traditional class-based, racially inflected gender roles.

This collection of chapters documents multimodal discourse practices of males and females in various African languages and national contexts, as well as the practices that constitute masculinity and femininity in these contexts. This, in and of itself, is a contribution to international scholarship on language, gender, and Africa. In addition, the edited volume contributes a number of distinct perspectives on what qualities African feminism(s) could or should have, especially African feminism(s) that could enhance research on language, culture, and society.

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VIJAY K. BHATIA & PAOLA EVANGELISTI ALLORI (eds.), *Discourse and identity in the professions: Legal, corporate and institutional citizenship*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2011. Pp. iv, 352. Pb. \$95.95.

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Discourse and identity in the professions explores in depth how professional identities are shaped and manifested in and through discourses produced in corporate, legal, institutional, and political contexts. The fifteen contributions included in the volume are divided into three sections: ‘Corporate citizenship’, ‘Legal citizenship’, and ‘Identity in institutional and socio-political domains’. Written by nineteen leading scholars from across the globe, this publication is an up-to-date and welcome addition to the field of discourse studies and should be of interest to graduate students, advanced undergraduates, and scholars engaged in discourse, sociolinguistic, and English for specific purposes research.

Section 1 comprises six chapters. In chapter 1, Vijay Bhatia presents four kinds of disciplinary and professional discourses and examines how they help writers