

Language in Society 39 (2010)
doi:10.1017/S004740451000014X

MIRIAM A. LOCHER AND JÜRIG STRÄSSLER (eds.), *Standards and norms in the English language*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2008. Pp. xxv, 412. Hb \$137.00.

Reviewed by CHRISTINA SCHOUX CASEY
Linguistics, University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA 15260 USA
ces41@pitt.edu

The subtitle “Operationalizing Kachru’s expanding circles model” would be appropriate for this volume, as more than half the authors use Kachru’s theory of global Englishes in their analyses. However, the collection is dedicated not to Kachru but to Richard Watts and the wide scope of his work. The seventeen chapters cover two broad territories – historical issues in English and standardization of English in non-native contexts – with two final lagniappe chapters on politeness. The authors analyze historical records and contemporary data, using discourse, variation, and quantitative analysis in their arguments.

Within the section on historical English, Jürg Schwyter contributes an engaging chapter on the BBC Advisory Committee on Spoken English, tracing its history from 1922 to 1939, and its attempts to standardize pronunciation. Schwyter tracks the committee’s progression from a prescriptive body bent on standardizing pronunciation to a recorder of variation in English across the UK. With figures like Daniel Jones and George Bernard Shaw both serving on the committee, the glimpses of committee meetings and decisions are entertaining, as are the excerpts from listeners’ letters. Also within the historical section, Daniel Schreier contributes a chapter on the nonstandard nature of St. Helena English, spoken on a previously unpopulated island settled by the British East India Company with slaves and colonists in the late 17th century. He argues that St. Helena English offers a well-documented historical example of how the spread of English entails nonstandardization. Similarly, Adrian Pablé’s chapter, analyzing grammatical features in court documents from the Salem witch trials and letters from American Civil War soldiers and their families, traces the presence of nonstandard usage that later grew stigmatized. Peter Trudgill and D. J. Allerton contribute chapters on dialect contact and awareness as factors in the historical formation of English dialects.

Tony Bex and Urs Dürmüller address the teaching of English as a foreign language. They both recommend that EFL curricula be modified to reflect the needs of non-native speakers for English to serve business, scientific, and other lingua franca purposes, as opposed to the model of cultural integration and native-speaker proficiency that currently influences EFL instruction. While both suggest curricular change, Bex additionally argues for replacing native speakers of English with L2 English speakers as EFL teachers who may better address their students’ non-integrative language-learning needs.

Applying theories of English as lingua franca, Juliane House analyzes recorded talk between non-native speakers of English and finds that politeness strategies in non-native talk contrast with those in native-speaker interactions. She finds that postulated norms of English L1 speech are routinely ignored in non-native interaction, perhaps owing to a concerted effort by participants to suspend the salience of possibly face-threatening conversational moves. In a cross-linguistic survey, Mercedes Viejobueno, Carol G. Preston & Dennis R. Preston analyze the offensiveness of impoliteness strategies in Argentine Spanish and American English as judged by 130 speakers in a web-based questionnaire. Their study finds that social distance emerges as a crucial factor in determining perceptions of offensiveness.

Overall, this collection provides some juicy tidbits for variationist, historical, and applied linguists.

(Received 31 March 2009)

Language in Society 39 (2010)
doi:10.1017/S0047404510000151

MATTHIAS SCHULZE, JAMES M. SKIDMORE, DAVID G. JOHN, GRIT LIEBSCHER, AND SEBASTIAN SIEBEL-ACHENBACH (eds.), *German diasporic experiences: Identity, migration, and loss*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008. Pp. xix, 518. Hb \$85.00.

Reviewed by RITA SANDERS
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology
Halle/Saale, 06114, Germany
sanders@eth.mpg.de

German diasporic experiences provides thirty-nine chapters on different aspects of German minorities in a wide range of countries worldwide. Essays in linguistics, literature, history, migration, and minority studies are bound together by the concept of diaspora and its critical examination. The book is organized into three parts that focus on identity, migration, and loss. In examining how a German identity is constructed and expressed, many essays focus on language choices and practices. Articles deal with diverse aspects of language contact, language change, language community, language use, and language loss. Though language is often highlighted as pivotal boundary marker, other essays underline that people might very well identify themselves as German even if they do not speak German. Many chapters show that a German diasporic identity is hybrid and very differently interpreted and evaluated by Germans and their social environment. Next to language, the significance of religious communities for preserving both the German language and a German identity is shown.

The section on migration explores the diverse trajectories of German emigrants at different times and in different contexts. Again, many articles link up with the notion