

BOOK REVIEWS

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CARMEN FOUGHT, *Language and ethnicity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xiv, 249. Pb \$35.99.

ROXY HARRIS, *New ethnicities and language use*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Pp. viii, 209. Hb \$74.95.

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Although the titles of the two books reviewed here are similar, each book serves a distinct purpose and academic reader in its own excellent way. The series to which each respective book belongs gives some indication as to the differences between them. Fought’s book is published in the Key Topics in Sociolinguistics series edited by Rajend Mesthrie, and Harris’s in the series Language and Globalization edited by Sue Wright and Helen Kelly-Holmes. Fought’s book draws largely on sociolinguistic studies, while Harris’s integrates concepts from cultural studies, sociology, and sociolinguistics. While Fought’s book is an introductory text, with each chapter dedicated either to an aspect of studying language and ethnicity, or to the language use of a particular ethnic group, Harris’s is a monograph focused on researching the language use of one distinct group in an area of West London.

The distinct aims of each book are also made clear by the respective authors, with Fought’s book providing a first rate “introduction to the relationship between human language and ethnicity, and “an overview of the main concepts, issues and debates, as well as a guide to the key research findings in the field” (p. xi). Har-

ris's is a detailed study of one group of speakers – the self-representations and patterns of language use of thirty 15–16-year-olds of South Asian descent, living in the late 1990s in West London, whom he calls the “Blackhill youth.”

Perhaps one major difference between the books is that Fought is writing for a reader already assured of the immense value of language in the construction of speaker identity, while Harris argues to convince his reader of this fact. Harris states more than once that his subjects' cultural lives are as important to research as their language, but that language has been a neglected but important means of investigating minority subjects' self-representations in cultural studies: “My argument is not that the Blackhill youth's new ethnicities are wholly constituted around their orientations to language, but rather that the constitution of these ethnicities is to be found in the densely entangled interrelationship between the young people's positioning through language, the intersecting communities of practice they inhabit, and the popular cultural tastes and practices with which they are involved” (170). In fact, many of the studies cited in Fought's book are also examples of such richly textured research, but her book is an overview providing an introduction to the key points of such influential studies. It is for this reason that it is a valuable starting point for references for language and ethnicity.

The titles of Harris's chapters reflect the focused character of his study, as well as the breadth and interdisciplinary nature of the research literature on which he draws: chapter 1, “Introduction”; 2, “Researching ethnicities and cultures”; 3, “Language use and ethnicity, mapping the terrain”; 4, “New ethnicities as lived experience”; 5, “How you talk is who you are”; 6, “‘My culture’, ‘my language’, ‘my religion’, communities, practices and diasporas”; 7, “Popular culture, ethnicities and tastes”; and 8, “What is a Brasian?”

Fought's book is divided into three parts and covers the following main areas: Part 1 (2 chapters), “General issues in ethnicity and language”; Part 2 (5 chapters), “Linguistic features and ethnicity in specific groups”; Part 3 (3 chapters), “The role of language use in ethnicity.” The titles within in each part are as follows: Part 1, “What is ethnicity?,” “Language and the construction of ethnic identity,”; Part 2, “African-American groups,” “Latino groups,” “Linguistic variation in other multiethnic settings,” “Are white people ethnic? Whiteness, dominance, and ethnicity,” “Dialect contact, ethnicity and language change”; Part 3, “Discourse features, pragmatics and ethnicity,” “Interethnic communication and language prejudice,” “Crossing: May I borrow your ethnicity?”

Fought's chapters can easily be read independently, although the book is also an excellent text to be used in its entirety for an introductory course. Harris's book is not as easy to dip into, as the reader relies on knowledge from earlier chapters to understand those that follow. His book also perhaps relies on a certain amount of cultural knowledge about the history of immigration in Britain, and the lives of the teenagers he is researching. The timeliness of the publication

of both books is to be noted, with many teachers looking for texts such as Fought's as a foundation for teaching.

While useful, a comparison of the books does limit the discussion to similarities and differences, so with this in mind, a short review of their individual strengths now follows. Harris's book is an example of how fascinating an academic research project can be when written in an accessible way for a diverse audience. Reading this book alongside Zadie Smith's (2004) novel *White teeth* showed that "truth" is often stranger than fiction. Smith's characters give voice to the Englishes of London in the 1980s, and from the pages of that novel one can hear the same connections with global diasporas to which Harris repeatedly refers in the data he collected for his academic monograph.

Harris makes a number of very important points in his book, one of the most important being the neglect of the speech of "black and brown speaking subjects" in Britain by the research community (p. 15), with Harris claiming quite correctly that these teenagers are "living out British identities which go largely unrecognized, as dominant voices both inside and outside their communities seek to foreground and hold in place alternative positioning of them as principally either Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims or as Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, or again as Panjabi, Gujerati, Hindi and Urdu speakers" (1). Harris claims accurately that work in British cultural studies has largely concentrated on the visual aspects of culture while overlooking the importance of language in the construction of identity. One of Harris's stated goals, therefore, is to provide a landscape of sound rather than vision alone, and this seems, in fact, to be an effective way of resisting the imposition of identities by others who attempt to tie the Blackhill youth and others into the straitjacket of ethnic absolutism (6).

New ethnicities and language use clearly shows how the speech of the Blackhill youth is "an apt reminder of the overall argument that the Blackhill youth ethnicities are multiply constituted at the same instant, of both traditional London elements and Indian ones" (101), leading to Harris's adoption of the term "Brasian," from "British Asian." Rejecting the notion that these adolescents are caught between two cultures, he states rather that they live as Britons but retain "affective and concrete links with global diasporas" (2) with their everyday interactions "navigated through a rich polyphony of London English, common language like Gujerati and Panjabi, as well as Jamaican and African American English expression" (3). His study gives further evidence to the terms "new ethnicities" and "cultures of hybridity," showing how such concepts are embodied in language.

Chapter 5, in which Harris analyzes in detail his subjects' speech, provides ample data to confirm that the Blackhill youth construct their identities through the many linguistic resources available to them, including features of both London English and their community (or heritage) language. Harris notes that

the phonological and grammatical features occurring frequently in his subjects' speech are characteristic of London English (for example, the use of a glottal stop for intervocalic and word final /t/ known as T-glottaling [Wells 1986] and the replacement of dental fricatives with /f/ and /v/ known as TH-fronting). However, it should be noted that while originating in or south of London, these features have in fact been documented as spreading widely throughout the UK, and they may be markers of age and "coolness" rather than of locale (Foulkes & Docherty 1999). Harris also pinpoints other features that may serve as identity markers for the speakers as members of their respective ethnic communities. An example of such a feature is the sentence tag *innit* used frequently by Cockney speakers (e.g. *It's cold innit?*), but appended to any statement regardless of its grammatical features by the Blackhill youth (e.g. *She speaks Gujarati innit*). Harris observes that this has previously been associated with Indian forms of English, and with London forms of Jamaican language. Harris's point is that by examining the landscape of sound rather than of vision alone one can understand better who these speakers are on their own terms, as their language displays not only their local affiliations but also their links with global diaspora.

The great strength of Fought's book is that it brings together in one volume a variety of work in the field on both variation within a language and variation across languages. It is also a book that can be used successfully in classrooms other than those in the United States, as the research covered spans the continents, including work on language and ethnicity in South Africa and in New Zealand (Maori), as well as studies of more U.S. mainstream interest on language use by African Americans and Latinos. It also provides a very useful chapter summarizing the most influential literature on White studies. Chapter 8, in particular, which covers discourse features, pragmatics, and ethnicity, is an excellent resource for students setting out on a research project investigating such features. Chapter 9 on interethnic communication and linguistic prejudice is also welcome, as researchers often seem to feel obliged to leave aside their own ideologies to present their data objectively. Fought acknowledges her own ideological standpoint in the preface, acknowledging that ethnicity is a sensitive topic and that she has tried to discuss it in a sensitive and ethically responsible way. She has attempted to eschew essentializing language and write in her own voice "even if it means that I deviate at times from the level of formality we normally associate with academic styles" (xiii). If I were to suggest additional material for a second edition of this book, (and I am sure it will go to a second edition) it would be individual chapters on linguistic research on Asian Americans and Native Americans.

In sum, these books are not only examples of the exciting work currently being conducted into language and ethnicity, but also highly readable texts on a fascinating topic.

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LEIGH OAKES AND JANE WARREN, *Language, citizenship and identity in Quebec*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Pp. xiv, 260. Hb \$80.00.

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In Language, citizenship and identity in Quebec, Leigh Oakes and Jane Warren set themselves an ambitious target: to provide “a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between language and national identity, not only in Quebec, but also in a broader sense” (p. 2). The proposed structure and methodology are set out in chapter 1, and the theoretical concepts and positions to be considered (e.g., ethnic identity, national identity, globalisation and citizenship) are introduced and contextualized. The authors identify three main preoccupations, which lead to the formulation of the central research questions:

- “In its effort to maintain a distinct national identity, how is Quebec dealing with the new realities of ethnic diversity and globalisation?”
- What is Quebec doing to forge a sense of common identity through language?
- To what extent is official policy concerning these issues compatible with the diverse experiences of minorities in Quebec?” (p. 4)

The overall structure of the book is determined by the examination of these questions successively, in three main parts. This approach results in great structural clarity and coherence. Part 1 deals with the particular social context of Quebec as it faces the perennial issues of identity and self-definition, along with the increasing focus on phenomena such as ethnic diversity and globalization (“New challenges,” chaps. 2–4). Part 2 is concerned with more specifically linguistic issues: the status of the French language (“A common language,” chaps. 5–6). The final part offers three case studies of provincial minorities: immigrants, Anglophones and Aboriginal nations (“Diverse experiences,” chaps. 7–9).

Chapter 2 examines the development of the civic conception of Quebec identity, from the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s to the post-1995 referendum definition based on the notion of Quebec citizenship. The usual distinction is drawn between liberal and civic republican citizenship, leading to the conclusion that