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TERRENCE G. WILEY, *Literacy and language diversity in the United States*. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, 2005. Pp. x, 267. Pb $19.95.

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Literacy and language diversity in the United States (henceforth, *Literacy*) combines perspectives from diverse linguistic disciplines, primarily studies of English as a second/foreign language (EFL) and English dialectology. *Literacy* investigates challenges faced by "language minorities" (people who speak as a first or only language a language other than English, and those who speak vernacular English dialects) in schools and communities, and the pedagogical and societal implications of these challenges. The primary focus is summarized in the introductory chapter: *Literacy* "explores the major issues that scholars and educators face concerning fair and effective educational policies and practices for language minority learners" (p. 4). Chap. 1 surveys several of these issues, including defining and measuring literacy; ideological beliefs about and attitudes toward literacy; and the political, social, and educational implications of such ideologies.

Chap. 2 critically examines six common misperceptions Americans have about literacy and how these beliefs relate to the issues surveyed in chap, 1, including the notion that the United States is "most appropriately described as an English-speaking, monolingual nation" (10); that the "predominance of English and English literacy is threatened" (14); that English illiteracy is on the rise because immigrants "are not as eager to learn English and assimilate as prior generations were" (17); that "many language minority adults favor English-only policies" (20); and that immersion and English-only instruction is the "best way to promote English literacy" (24). The examination of these myths raises questions about how to measure literacy: the U.S. has traditionally excluded people who are literate in a language other than English (this is examined in more detail in chap. 4). The myths examined in this chapter concern multilingual variation, and it should be mentioned that similar misinformation persists about English dialects (see, e.g., Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006:7–8), a topic that is not examined in detail until *Literacy's* concluding chapters.

Chap. 3 scrutinizes the existence of a "great divide" – the assertion that becoming literate has a beneficial cognitive effect – by reviewing numerous studies conducted throughout the 20th century that have either tried to prove or disprove its existence. One thing that complicates this debate is the fact that literacy is typically attained through formal education, which undeniably has cognitive benefits. Because literacy necessitates pragmatic competence – which is difficult for even highly literate non-native Americans (those with a strong command over the written language) to master – language minorities will typically be perceived as less cognitively proficient than literate non-minorities. This has important educational, social, and political implications, as *Literacy* notes.

Chap. 4 begins by examining historical practices of defining and measuring literacy. For example, the notion that English is the only literacy that counts is not new, as is illustrated by the English literacy tests immigrants were required to take in the 19th century. Also examined is how literacy was used as a tool to oppress African Americans during and following slavery. In these examples, as well as in educational testing and military entrance exams, xenophobic and/or racist groups were able to use English literacy as a gatekeeping mechanism to maintain the underprivileged status of socially disfavored groups. Wiley then moves to current understandings of literacy, rejecting the simplistic dichotomous distinction between people as either "literate" or "illiterate" in favor of a continuum of non-discrete literacies stretching from "illiterate" through "minimal," "conventional," "basic," "functional," "restricted," "vernacular," "elite," "analogical," and finally, "literacy as social practice" (i.e., ethnographic or pragmatic literacy). Wiley notes how this sophisticated approach to literacy makes measuring it in a population difficult (while also noting that there are other complicating factors such as defining the population, sampling methodology, bias in the tool of assessment, and reliability of data).

While the first four chapters survey questions of defining and measuring literacy, chap. 5 (coauthored by Mario Castro) begins the section of the book primarily concerned with detailing the social and economic implications of language diversity in various immigrant groups (particularly Hispanics), including connections among socioeconomic status, education, and academic failure (illiteracy). The authors note, "Illiteracy may be more a RESULT of socioeconomic problems than a CAUSE" (101). This, along with increasingly stringent criteria for what constitutes "literacy," contributes to language minority groups' perpetually lagging behind mainstream groups, despite real gains in literacy by the former. This revelation is pertinent given the current verbiage about an "educational crisis" in the U.S., a notion revisited in *Literacy's* conclusion.

Chap. 6 examines the denotations and connotations of various terms used historically and currently by the educational system to refer to speakers of other languages. Much like the evolution of terms referring to African American English (see, e.g., Green 2002:6), there has been development in the terminology used to describe EFL speakers, including "limited English proficient" (informally, "lepers"), "non-English language background," "English language learner," and the recent "heritage language learner" (which is the only term that does not imply English deficiency). This chapter also picks up the consideration of diversity within American English as opposed to EFL or multilingual variation, using the popular and media reactions to the Oakland, California "Ebonics" controversy of the 1990s as evidence of widespread misinformation about the nature of English dialect variation. Wiley provides a brief summary of the development of African American English from the point of view of the creolist hypothesis (see, e.g., Roy 1987; Winford 1997, 1998; Rickford 1998). Although this view is not universal among linguists (see, e.g., Poplack 2000, Wolfram & Thomas 2002), this does not weaken Wiley's argument, which relies primarily on the attitudes Americans have toward AAE, not its history. It is somewhat unfortunate that the Ebonics controversy and the Ann Arbor Supreme Court decision do not receive more thorough treatment; however, the discussion is effective in drawing together issues of multilingual and monolingual language diversity.

Chap. 7 examines the functions of (written) language in social practice, which helps "illuminate structural and institutional inequities that produce educational success and failure" (138). For evidence, case studies from New Guinea (Schieffelin & Cochran-Smith 1984) and Hmong adults in Philadelphia (Weinstein-Shr 1993) are examined. The chapter concludes with pedagogical recommendations for how teachers can improve their responses to language minority students' languages in order to facilitate their language development and academic success. This chapter serves as an important reminder that U.S. language diversity is not limited to Spanish speakers.

Chaps. 8 and 9 focus primarily on variation within English and how vernacular-speaking students and EFL students face similar educational obstacles. In these chapters, Wiley moves from considering written competency (traditional literacy) to more general language proficiency (i.e., pragmatic or "illocutionary" competency). This is crucial because pragmatic literacy is what vernacular-speaking students struggle with on prescriptive tests, which results in their being more likely to be labeled low achievers, semilinguals, or clinically disfluent, despite the fact that the grammatical variables observed in the natural speech of these students have been found not to differ linguistically in any significant way when they are compared to mainstream students (157). Chap. 9 summarizes language positions and policies of a number of institutions, including the federal government (through the Supreme Court and standardized testing), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the International Reading Association, and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. One position that is inexplicably absent is the 1974 CCCC/NCTE statement, "Students' right to their own language." Drawing on research (chap. 8) and policy (chap. 9), Wiley sketches a rationale for the importance of language awareness among teachers.

Chap. 10 draws together the major topics of the book, including prevalent attitudes, immigration and educational policies, and resource distribution in communities, as they relate to language minorities. Wiley concludes that current verbiage about a "literacy crisis," while perhaps not entirely accurate given increases in literacy, should be seen as an opportunity for linguists to assert recommendations on policy changes in schools and communities.

It is regrettable, though somewhat understandable, that *Literacy* draws so heavily on the Hispanic population for examples and data of U.S. non-English speakers. Speakers of other languages face similar educational and social barriers. Including more about these groups would more accurately reflect the true diversity implied by the title. Similarly, AAE is the only dialect examined in *Literacy*, excluding stigmatized regional (e.g., Appalachian English) and class-based dialects (e.g., working class Englishes), which is somewhat unfortunate, though understandable given *Literacy's* length (267 pages) and target audience.

One of *Literacy's* great strengths is that its conclusions about policy are data-driven, but that the reader is not bogged down in data analysis. To avoid this, Wiley makes use of copious illustrative figures and tables (34 in all). Six of the ten chapters (all but chapters 2, 4, 5, and 9) include "Further Reading" suggestions complete with brief annotations (it is regrettable that no suggestions are provided for these chapters, particularly 2 and 9, as numerous related texts exist that might be of interest to non-linguists in particular). Despite the technical nature of subject and the extensive review of linguistic scholarship, *Literacy* is appropriate for and readable by nonspecialists while still useful and informative to linguists in both EFL and variationist studies.

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EDWARD FINEGAN & JOHN R. RICKFORD (eds.), *Language in the USA: Themes for the twenty-first century*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. xiii, 502. Hb $85.00.

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Language in the USA: Themes for the twenty-first century, edited by Edward Finegan and John R. Rickford, consists of 26 articles commissioned from prominent language scholars. The collection offers brief chapters covering a wide variety of issues relevant to the sociolinguistic situation of the 21st-century United States. The chapters are organized into three sections: Part 1, "American English," Part 2, "Other language varieties," and Part 3, "The sociolinguistic situation." The editors hope that the volume's "perspectives will launch inquiries into the topics of interest among student readers, policy makers, and the educated public" (p. xviii). The primary intended audience seems to be undergraduate students who have some background in linguistics. However, despite some