BOOK NOTES

RONALD WARDHAUGH, *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. 5th ed. Oxford & Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006. Pp. 418. Pb $41.95.

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Wardhaugh's textbook has been one of the most popular ones in sociolinguistics for two decades. Its fifth edition was published in 2006, four years after the fourth and 20 years after the first. The 16 chapters are divided as follows: 1, introduction; 2, languages, dialects and varieties; 3, pidgins and creoles; 4, codes; 5, speech communities; 6, 7, and 8, variation and change; 9, words and culture; 10, ethnographies; 11, solidarity and politeness; 12, talk and action; 13, gender; 14, disadvantage; 15, planning; 16, conclusion. The coverage of sociolinguistic subjects is broad: multilingualism and its consequences, regional and social dialectology.

A comparison with the second edition of 1992 reveals an increase in pages from 400 to 418; the number of references has gone from 400 to 800, and the index has remained at four pages. The table of contents is, except for some details, identical to those of earlier editions. A few terms have been changed in the index (*Black English* > *AAVE*, as in the text), added (*accommodation*), or deleted (*Ukrainian*, even though it is still discussed in the book). Overall, only a limited number of subjects, authors' names, and languages are listed in the index, and no system can be detected for their inclusion.

The bulk of the examples are from English, which is a disadvantage in the non-English-speaking countries in which English textbooks are often used. Many references are old, sometimes outdated. Newer and added references are more often taken from other textbooks and readers than from primary literature in edited volumes and journals. There are many points for discussion for students to solve throughout the book, but these are often much too time-consuming to solve between two classes. The author is an excellent compiler of knowledge from (mostly) secondary literature, but his apparent lack of having done primary sociolinguistic research probably contributes to his optimism with regard to students' capabilities.

The first two parts and the final part of the book deal with communities, varieties, and understanding/intervening, respectively – the more traditional sociolinguistic concepts. In the third part anthropological subjects are also dealt with, such as kinship and color terms. The section on Whorfianism does not discuss the remarkable results on the alleged connections between spatial terminology and cognition from the cognitive anthropologists around Steven Levinson (though he is listed in the bibliography). In the first part of the book, I felt that Wardhaugh was over-estimating his readership ("introductory level"), since a lot of background knowledge – for example that Sanskrit is an Indic language of several thousand years ago, or that French and Italian are related Romance languages – is not provided. Many subjects are discussed from different angles throughout the book, however, so uninitiated readers probably will be properly informed in the end.

Wardhaugh only occasionally displays his own opinions and often leaves conclusions to the reader. Despite being a revised edition, the text is coherent. There are plenty of suggestions for discussion. The author is well read and has a clear style. This is a good sociolinguistics textbook, but not the best.