

BOOK REVIEWS

is to move students and teachers toward more critical understandings of the relationships between language and structural racism, such that they can face the challenge of more complex social and political relations.

Articulate while Black is accessible to both general readers and researchers interested in the influence of Obama and his presidency in the US, especially with regard to relationships of race, language, and culture in the postcivil rights era. The book has much to offer to the areas of sociolinguistics, cultural studies, and rhetorical scholarship, and Ch. 6 is particularly useful for teachers and teacher educators who are interested in developing more critical pedagogies with regard to language diversity. Overall, *Articulate while Black* is a work that reveals and challenges the contemporary landscape of language and race in the US, while offering an example of the democratic use of language which the work advocates.

REFERENCE

Smitherman, Geneva (1986). *Talkin and testifyin: The language of black America*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.

(Received 29 July 2013)

Language in Society **43** (2014)
doi:10.1017/S0047404514000256

BETTINA MIGGE & ISABELLE LÉGLISE, *Exploring language in a multilingual context: Variation, interaction and ideology in language documentation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xi, 359. Hb. \$76.36.

Reviewed by NAOMI NAGY
Linguistics Department, University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 3G3, Canada
Naomi.Nagy@utoronto.ca

Using the quest for a definition of ‘Takitaki’ as an organizing principle, Migge & Léglise lead us on a cool, informative tour of western French Guiana. From the gripping introduction, which immediately sets up the relevance of their study, through a discussion of the urgent need to study and theorize from this community (§7.5), to the final chapter, which brings together many aspects of sociolinguistics in a well-written critique, this tour-de-force is a monumental description of a set of inter-related communities, languages, and interaction processes. Connecting Critical Discourse Analysis, Variationist Sociolinguistics, and Language Documentation, they triangulate among multiple methods to investigate a set of phenomena, none of which has a clear definition as its starting point. In the book, they describe (309):

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(a) the social profiles of the people that practice Takitaki, including their learning trajectories, their usage patterns, and their perceptions of it, and (b) the linguistic and interactional characteristics of Takitaki practices.

Necessarily, the initial definition of Takitaki is, both linguistically and socially, broad, even hazy. The challenge, as the authors lay it out, is “that there is no neat fit between the names used and the linguistic practices they are purported to identify”, for Takitaki as for most languages (21). By the end of the book, Migge & Léglise have described the language variety, its diverse speakers, and several usage patterns of Takitaki. They provide an even-handed description of what parts of which theories work in the present investigation, alongside global recommendations for using them elsewhere. My assessment is as a variationist very interested in learning more about other sociolinguistic approaches.

The documentation and description reported here stems from ample data: 2,000 ten-minute language surveys with school children and about forty hours of interviews in many languages. In addition, the authors contrast the views of speakers, scholars, institutions, academic texts, and novels (§4.3). It is useful to see explicit and conscious statements about “facts” as actually being subjective views of linguists or speakers, and to see these presented side by side and on equal footing (cf. p. 114).

The research plan, variables, and research questions are well laid out. The authors apply a “language ideology” approach, whose description will be useful to variationist sociolinguists not accustomed to work in that vein. This connects nicely to their contrast of linguistic and anthropological views (etic, emic) of language ideology, which they combine in their study. After describing the communities and settings that give rise to usage of Takitaki, the authors describe numerous lexical, morphological, and discourse patterns. They compare the morphology and syntax of forms in elicited speech (from interviews and recordings of various speech acts) to published accounts of local English creoles. Careful observations allow them to describe many types of (individual) multilingualism.

The chapters are helpfully summarized in the introduction (15–20). Conclusions to each chapter could nearly stand alone, though they resonate much more after reading the supporting documentation that precedes them. Ten figures, eight maps, and nearly thirty tables illustrate key points. The conclusion on language-naming practices is a particularly well-organized and informative summary (159–63).

Ch. 6 contains a rich description, with examples, of lexical and morphological variants, including some basic quantification of the variation. Variationists will find many enticing starting points for future investigations to better understand the intersections and overlaps of the implicated factors.

This summary of some key findings illustrates the success of their combination of methods:

- The lexicon of Takitaki comes mostly from English-based creoles and Eastern Maroon varieties, especially Sranan Tongo, but also contains elements from French, French Guianese Creole, Dutch, and English (229).

- Structural variation is highly conventionalized but not homogenous (229).
- Small linguistic differences are socially and ideologically important (127).
- Interdialect differences are noticed by speakers (125–30). (A more explicit discussion of how these match up with observations by the researchers would be a welcome addition.)
- No structural changes have been identified, possibly due to the lack of time depth of the study. In contrast, discourse-level changes are noted for greeting rituals, respect forms, and code-mixing practices (284).
- In contrast to the way language-contact phenomena are often presented as quite distinct and situation-dependent (e.g. in introductory linguistic textbooks), Migge & Léglise point out that the many types of language-contact overlap in reality, in terms of space, languages, and speakers (22).
- Co-occurrence of linguistic features is carefully used to define styles. This is best exemplified in their definition of the style of young, urban, male peer-group interactions (278). The focus on style and stylistic variation has considerably more complexity than traditional Labovian studies, in part due to the wider range of speech acts included in their observations (262).
- Unusual in these sorts of descriptions, as far as I am aware, is a careful discussion of how much different groups accommodate in various contexts. Accommodation is not presented as one-sided, or learner-centric. This provides clear support of their insistence on Takitaki as a nonstatic system (234).

The writing is clear and engaging, the data collected is ample, broad, and varied, and its interpretation thoughtful. Careful attention to detail stands this book in clear contrast to earlier descriptions of the English-based creoles spoken in the region, which Migge & Léglise pointedly critique (139). Seamless connections between different aspects of description and analysis are made. Occasionally, however, we find claims that could benefit from additional evidence. For example, we read that “practices are conditioned by a range of factors such as the local value of the languages, the degree of mixing among people, etc.” (68). While this appears plausible, it seems that the value of the language has been calculated by the authors from the very usage they describe, introducing some circularity. I was also left to wonder whether it is actual use or reported use that is conditioned by language values. This is a frequent problem in survey-driven research on language use, but one which is much mitigated here by the extensive observation and interviewing that accompanied these surveys.

A second instance in which clearer support for arguments would be welcome is in the discussion of factors relevant to choices of linguistic structures, which are noted to include (232):

speakers’ relative degree of exposure to the English-based Creoles, similarities between certain Takitaki structures and linguistic structures in people’s individual linguistic repertoires, learning trajectories, duration of the learning process and frequency of use, as well as their personal aims and ideologies in general and in specific interactions.

Although these claims are easy to agree with, we are presented with data relating to only some of the factors listed, and little analysis showing their effects.

The third discussion that left me confused was of the intersection between social class and ethnicity, an issue relevant to many sociolinguistic studies conducted in a wide range of locales. Migge & Léglise write first that “in a sense ethnicity means class in western French Guiana” (192), but then, “While social class overlaps with cultural background in French Guiana, it also cross-cuts ethnicity and culture” (192–93). This apparent contradiction becomes less bothersome when they note that “ethnic differences do not make much of a difference in terms of linguistic practices, which is an important finding since ethnicity is always foregrounded in French Guiana” (193).

The fourth instance is in the final summary of Ch. 8, an otherwise clear description of urban linguistic practices. The claim is presented that, while code-mixing is used both by speakers who are and are not fluent in Takitaki, the two groups use it for different purposes. For Maroons (fluent speakers), code-mixing “perform[s] important discursive and interactionally based functions,” “display[s] alignment with the world beyond the Eastern Maroon community,” and “project[s] stances of being urban, non-traditional and sophisticated” (305–6). In contrast, non-Maroons are reported to be (sometimes) unaware of variation and its use for indexing social stances (305–6). This may be true, certainly, but this difference does not come across clearly from the few examples of code-mixing that were provided.

It is nice to be able to count the instances of unclearness in a book on a single hand. These few cases only serve to underscore the authors’ point that the task of linguistic description is immeasurably more difficult when no linguistic description or codified norms exist for a language. The variationist approach, as applied in studies of majority languages, “implies that the researcher is able to define the speaker community and distinguish good or knowledgeable speakers from others” (8). The Takitaki situation raises key questions for variationists studying nonmajority and less documented languages, contrasting their ill-defined initial definition of the language and community under investigation to the “luxury” enjoyed by sociolinguists who study majority, well-documented languages such as English. While the description of Takitaki is important and stands on its own merits, the clear description of innovative methods may prove an even more useful aspect of this book. These methods are summarized in Ch. 9, a well-written critique of many facets of sociolinguistics: variationist approaches, contact phenomena including koineization, communities of practice, the creole continuum, and second language acquisition. It also recommends further areas whose inclusion would benefit documentation practices.

(Received 1 August 2013)