

## REVIEWS

JOHN RUSSELL RICKFORD & RUSSELL JOHN RICKFORD, *Spoken soul: The story of Black English*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2000, xii + 267 pp. Hb. \$24.95.

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*Spoken Soul* is a very stimulating book to read, informative and solidly grounded in scholarship from several disciplines, including quantitative sociolinguistics, sociology, socioeconomic history, and African American literature.<sup>1</sup> It exemplifies the contribution that linguistic research on African American English (AAE) can make to African American studies. It is also a model for how scholarly findings can be shared with the lay public in a language that is vivid and accessible. Those who are familiar with AAE will appreciate the fact that this vividness is borrowed from the subject matter itself. Thus, the authors demonstrate implicitly that AAE is not an impoverished vernacular, and even scholarly discourse can benefit from it.

The Rickfords (henceforth R&R) begin by identifying the source of the title *Spoken Soul* and the speech it denotes in reference to AAE in a 1968 interview by Claude Brown, author of *Manchild in the promised land*. They are not offering it as an alternative to “Ebonics” and other names (which they also use); they use the term apparently to show how forms of communication considered particularly African American – from sounds to oratorical devices – can be identified in various discourses of this ethnic group. Even the most highly educated still invoke it “to laugh or cry, to preach and praise, to shuck and jive, to sing, to rap, to shout . . . to confide in and commiserate with friends . . . to get by and get over, to pass secrets, to make jokes, to mock and mimic, to tell stories, to reflect and philosophize, to create authentic characters and voices in novels, poems, and plays . . . to render our deepest emotions and embody our vital core” (p. 4). They note: “One purpose of this book is to help rescue Spoken Soul from the negativity and ignorance in which it became mired during the Ebonics debate, and to correct the many misconceptions people have about Black talk” (9). The name subsumes both Gullah (spoken in coastal South Carolina and Georgia) and African American vernacular English (AAVE, the continental variety of AAE).

Some creolists and dialectologists will wonder whether the adoption of *Spoken Soul* as an umbrella term for “Black talk” is an implicit admission that Gullah is as much an English dialect as AAVE is – which I think is the right position – even if it has been identified as a creole. The umbrella-term function of *Spoken*

*Soul* suggests kinship between the two vernaculars. They could be identified as two sister varieties, but they could also be interpreted – perhaps more adequately – as an individuation of what is otherwise a continuum in the outcomes of the restructuring of English among North American descendants of Africans. These are interesting research questions on which R&R’s discussion on the origins of AAE is silent, but which other scholars may want to pursue. Why? I would not be surprised to see “Spoken Soul” used in the future as an alternative to “Ebonics,” which Williams (1975:vi) defines, rather romantically:

**Ebonics** may be defined as “the linguistic and paralinguistic features which on a concentric continuum represents the communicative competence of the West African, Caribbean, and the United States slave descendant of African origin. It includes the various idioms, patois, argots, ideolects [sic], and social dialects of Black people” especially those who have been forced to adapt to colonial circumstances.

I need not devote too much space to a nomenclature question that is rather incidental. However, note for instance that Nigerian Pidgin English and AAVE are not mutually intelligible, and the average African American has a hard time understanding even educated spoken African English. African Americans who do not speak Gullah would ordinarily not understand Caribbean English creoles, let alone French ones. I would not fuss over this detail if R&R did not tie the book to the Ebonics debate of late 1996 and early 1997. Although they say nothing that should encourage equating Spoken Soul with Williams’s notion of Ebonics, I am concerned that nothing is said, either, that should discourage it, especially since they derive support for some seemingly Afrocentric positions from similar literature.

In drawing conclusions about these matters, it is to be hoped that readers will respect the obvious fact that the book is about English as it is spoken among African Americans, regardless of the fact that these forms of speech share some structural features and ancestry with Caribbean English creoles. Part 2 (11–88, chaps. 2–5) establishes that Spoken Soul is real and used even outside home, in various contexts, by distinguished writers and preachers, professional comedians, singers, toasters, and rappers. It provides an inexhaustible well from which these public personas fetch metaphors, figures of speech, special clichés, prosodic features, and oratorical strategies for “soul talk.” Regarding writers and performers, R&R healthily bring up the question of authenticity, exposing the negative stereotypes perpetuated by minstrelsy and authors such as Joel Chandler Harris.

R&R’s concerns in Part 2 also raise, for perceptive students of AAE, the following observations and a question. Not everyone who they claim speaks some form of Spoken Soul necessarily achieves this through those structural features on which much of the linguistic scholarship on AAVE and Gullah has focused.

Spoken Soul may also be claimed to include a Black acrolect – standard English with an African American “accent,” in the sense of “cachet.” So, what is it that African Americans themselves consider to be markers of African American speech? To me, R&R suggest correctly that there is no particular reason why morphosyntactic features should be privileged as identifying markers. A speaker can be identified as speaking “soul talk” provided he uses any of a number of features, chief among which may be prosodic ones – which the authors do not discuss explicitly. (It is perhaps also the most difficult one to describe, especially in lay language.) I surmise that one must sound African American in the first place<sup>2</sup> and then be recognized to use features that are identified as part of the African American communicative repertoire, which the book reveals very successfully.

Part 3, “The Living Language” (89–160, chaps. 6–8) is about structural features and the development of AAE. The description of grammatical features is made vivid by statements such as the following: “AAVE speakers sometimes ditch the plural *s*” (110); or “Standard English is somewhat fickle because it requires adding an *s* (or *es*) to verbs with third-person singular subjects” (111). Regarding the omission of this suffix in AAVE, R&R remark, “You might think of AAVE as making the rules of English more regular, or as an advocate of equal opportunity”; and “It’s quite common for [speakers] to chuck the possessive *’s*” (112). This part of the book is perhaps the only section where scholars of AAE may find the subject matter oversimplified and sometimes not accurately presented, though these are common pitfalls when scholarly matters are diluted to be accessible to lay people. For instance, R&R say that Spoken Soul has “rules deleting *l* and *r* after vowels, as in *he’p* for ‘help’ and *afta* for ‘after’” (103). Perhaps this accounts well for nonrhoticism, but I could think of words such as *all* (in which /l/ semivocalizes to /w/), *bell*, *hill*, and *full* which seldom occur without *l*. *Hold* and *old* are usually produced as *hole* and *ole*. It is also dangerous to present such phonological phenomena based on spelling, because some AAE speakers may start wondering whether the *l* in *walk* and *talk* must be pronounced, like that of *silk* and *tilt*.

According to R&R, “many English-based creoles” have a rule that deletes voiced stops when they are “the first consonant in tense-aspect markers or auxiliary verbs . . . Examples include . . . *didn’t* (*He ain’t do it* = ‘He didn’t do it’)” (105–106). Although the translation is one of the correct alternatives, we cannot overlook the fact that *ain’t* also alternates with *hasn’t/haven’t* and *isn’t*, as in other nonstandard English vernaculars. (Also, the explanation does not hold in those cases where *ain’t* must be translated differently, as in Gullah *Uh ain’ duh fun* ‘I am not kidding’.) Another problem with R&R’s generalization is that, in those creoles where *did* alternates with *ben* as an ANTERIOR marker, *did* does not undergo the proposed deletion rule. The connection between *ain’t* and *didn’t* need not be phonological.

R&R also present “invariant *be*” as a form of “the verb *be*” (113), though I would argue that as an aspect marker it is probably a separate morpheme alto-

gether. Note that it is negated with the auxiliary *do* (Green 1998), unlike forms of “the verb *be*” (copular or auxiliary – here I agree that it is the same morpheme, which requires no auxiliary in the negative). R&R are, however, right in noting that there are different kinds of “invariant *be*,” which I am sure makes inadequate this common usage of the term in the literature, because it lumps together consuetudinal *be* (which is not an ordinary habitual marker like *dos* in Guyanese Creole<sup>3</sup>) and infinitival and imperative *be* (which is copular).

In any case, R&R manage to cover informatively in a few pages (91–128) most of the structural features discussed in the literature on AAE, including its different tense-aspect markers and serial verb constructions. They also devote an important proportion of this part of *Spoken Soul* to “History” (chap. 8, 129–160), in which they promote the position, already announced in chap. 7, that “AAVE may have had creole roots and influences” (116). Among other issues (see below), they discuss substrate influence and creole origins, and they also address the issue of divergence vs. convergence, concluding: “In short, while the twentieth century has witnessed the divergence of Spoken Soul from White vernaculars and Standard English in some respects, it has witnessed its convergence with these varieties in other respects” (160). It is not obvious to me that any arguments have been presented for convergence that distinguish that phenomenon from common inheritance from similar inputs in the nonstandard colonial vernaculars spoken by the indentured servants who constituted the majority of the White populations in the plantation colonies, and with whom (descendants of) Africans had the contacts that partially shaped the evolution of AAE’s structures. The historical background of the development of AAE is otherwise well summarized, though R&R and I disagree on whether there was a pidgin ancestor for Caribbean creoles and AAE (as they suggest on p. 132) and whether a Guinea Coast Creole English (GCCE) may have contributed significantly to the development of AAE (133).

The evidence for GCCE’s existence provided by Hancock 1986 dates from the 18th century. Huber 1996 doubts that it was widely spoken on the West African coast, because an older restructured European language, a Portuguese pidgin, served as the lingua franca of Euro-African trade in the region. The ethnographic conditions of the existence of both contact varieties prohibit thinking of their social significance in the same way we can of Nigerian or Cameroon Pidgin Englishes today, as deeply rooted lingua francas in the relevant communities. Besides, the proportion of their speakers who were enslaved along with other Africans was probably negligible.

R&R also enrich the debate on the development of AAVE by providing demographic information that should discourage us from assuming that a uniform variety of it, distinct from Gullah, must have developed on all tobacco and cotton plantations, where I assume it emerged (Mufwene 1999a, 1999b). It is useful to know that in three counties in Maryland, as early as 1712, Africans constituted the majority of the population and far outnumbered the White indentured servants with whom they interacted (134). The same is true of East Central Virginia coun-

ties (AuCoin MS). It is equally helpful to be reminded that, by that time, “Blacks increasingly learned English not from Whites, but from other Blacks, who may have been speaking highly vernacular dialects themselves” (134–35). What must be clarified here, however, is that those “vernacular dialects” must have been very close to what most White colonists spoke. Unless this position is utterly mistaken, then the question of whether the Africans who arrived in the 18th century learned English from Whites or Blacks is a moot one. Incidentally, literary citations of a deviant AAE do not really emerge until the 18th century, concurrently with newspaper advertisements (well cited by R&R on p. 137) identifying SOME runaway slaves as born or having been in the colonies for some time and speaking English fluently (Brasch 1981).<sup>4</sup> Those identified as speaking English poorly are typically runaways who were not “seasoned” yet. Similar observations on the fluency of early creole slaves in English are made by Berlin 1998.

R&R also suggest that, as a form of resistance, the African slaves would have deliberately developed a vernacular that was deviant from the emergent White vernaculars (135, 139). I would then have expected AAVE to be more different from White Southern English!<sup>5</sup>

Although very carefully stated, R&R’s position on the contribution of African languages and Caribbean creoles to the development of AAE needs clarification, too. According to them, the evidence they discuss “serve[s] to remind us that African, Creole, AND British English sources must be acknowledged as having contributed to the development of Spoken Soul” (157). Definitely, but one must also avoid overestimating some of those contributions. Intensive importation of slaves from the Anglophone Caribbean was significant only in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. By then, slaves imported earlier from Africa or elsewhere in the Caribbean already constituted 15% of the total population, especially in Virginia. R&R will certainly agree that those American creole and seasoned slaves must have stood as models in the transmission of their emergent local vernacular. Even if a creole had already developed in Barbados by the early 18th century, it would not necessarily have prevailed over the local American Black norm, except in places where Caribbean slaves constituted the founder slave population. Even in such settings – as in the Charleston, South Carolina, area – the living conditions of the early, small homesteads on which the slaves were the minority and integrated, though discriminated against, worked against the suggested early divergence of African American speech.

In any case, many of the Caribbean slaves must have come from small farm holdings put out of business by the emerging large plantations. Such settings were not conducive to the development of a generalized creole, at least not that early in the Caribbean. Although Barbados thrived on sugar cane cultivation in the 18th century, its initial, 17th-century industrial crop was tobacco. The tobacco plantations were smaller and also used large proportions of European indentured servants. The local population disproportions that are significant to the development of creoles did not really obtain until the late 17th century, precisely when

South Carolina was founded, and over half a century after Virginia had acquired African indentured servants.

Undoubtedly, some Caribbean creoles may have been developing already by the late 18th century (133) – perhaps more true of Jamaica than of Barbados. However, economic wisdom alone suggests that it was newcomers from Africa, rather than seasoned slaves, who were sold to other colonies. Doing otherwise would have been harmful to the local industry. Therefore, I surmise that most of the slaves imported from the Caribbean in the 18th century knew hardly any more English (Creole) than did the vast majority imported directly from Africa. As a matter of fact, the evidence of the Salem witch trials (133) suggests that Candy, a Black slave imported from Barbados, may have arrived from Africa not long before being transported to North America. She talks about her home in Africa. Notably, she has both “creole” and regular English features in her speech. Tituba, an Amerindian whose testimony is recorded, has more “creole/pidgin” features, but we do not know how long she had been captive before being imported to North America (Mufwene 1999a, 1999b).

Apparently, even without slave importations from the Caribbean, AAE would still share features with Caribbean creoles, owing to similarities of input from both African and European linguistic systems. Besides, many, if not most, creole features have English origins (as acknowledged by R&R), except that many of them probably would not have been selected AND RESTRUCTURED without the contribution of selective substrate influence (Mufwene 2001).

I have dwelt on details of R&R’s account of the development of Spoken Soul only because readers should know why we disagree. I otherwise find their “History” chapter invaluable; it presents an interpretation of facts that should prompt skeptical readers to propose alternatives that are equally grounded in the socio-economic history of American and Caribbean colonies. The debate will remain open for perhaps a long time. Among the things that this chapter has led me to accept is that there must have been pockets in the tobacco and cotton plantation colonies where conditions existed that could have led to the development of something close to, but not necessarily identical with, Gullah.<sup>6</sup> We just do not have evidence of it yet. The fact that those plantations were smaller than the rice fields of coastal Georgia and South Carolina may be part of the explanation. In any case, if something close to Gullah did develop but has disappeared in those settings (as seems to have happened to the 19th-century Bajan basilect, according to Rickford & Handler 1994), we would like to find out why. R&R are informative in many other respects, such as in situating the cradle of AAE in the American Southeast (141f), in making clear that there are lexical developments that have made AAE quite distinct from White vernaculars (145–47), and in shedding light on the divergence of AAVE (157–60).

Part 4, “The Ebonics Firestorm” (161–218, chaps. 9–11), aptly counterbalances by its strengths the shortcomings critiqued above, starting with a contextualization and clarification of the Oakland School District Board’s decision to

use Ebonics as a means of teaching standard English more efficiently to its speakers. They expose the antagonistic bias of major media such as the *New York Times* in covering the polemic that ensued, as well the scorn of various segments of the American population,<sup>7</sup> showing aptly that most of the negative reactions had to do with the race of the victims, with power, class, and money, but little to do with the subject matter itself.

This is probably a context in which we linguists should recognize that our own scholarly discussions of AAE may be partly to blame. We should ask ourselves, for instance, why some African Americans thought Ebonics was “slang” and associated it with street and gang culture rather than with domestic life. Large proportions of African Americans just did not support the Oakland School District Board’s decision. We should reexamine some of the ways in which the term “vernacular” has been explained, often in reference to street culture rather than to the home – consistent with the etymology of the term. Our own failure to de-ethnicize the Ebonics polemic and show that the problem affects underprivileged of any race – including White children who speak Appalachian English, for instance – could have helped politicians look at things differently. From my desk here, this is one of the unwitting consequences of dealing with the development of AAE itself as a peculiarity so different from other cases of language evolution in North America. Sometimes it helps to exploit commonalities to reach one’s goals.

R&R do a great job in adducing evidence of techniques of second language teaching/learning that have worked elsewhere to explain to lay people why the Oakland School District Board’s decision was sound (despite some mistakes). In the context of the United States, the question of whether to use a nonstandard vernacular in the classroom is somewhat akin to that of welfare benefits – in both cases, there exists a silent majority of potential beneficiaries who are not Black. Reformulating the problem generally in terms of underprivileged status rather than ethnicity could have made some difference. I have learned a lot from this part of the book and feel indebted to R&R for all the effort and time they invested in following the whole national polemic on Ebonics, which came and went so fast, waiting for another punctuation of the equilibrium of apathy before capturing our attention again. I hope this book will make a significant difference.

The substance of *Spoken Soul* ends with Part 5, “The Double Self” (219–29, chap. 12), in which R&R underscore what AAE is, making clear that it is used by “youth and adults alike” and that “it is the language in which comfortable informal conversation takes place daily” for its speakers (222). They also explain why AAE continues to be spoken despite negative attitudes toward it, highlighting the effect of phrases such as “acting White” and “talking proper or talking White” against speaking in any other way (223). It really boils down to a matter of ethnic identity, with African Americans feeling comfortable with how they talk and wanting to remain themselves, and with using their vernacular as an identity marker.

This last chapter is followed by Notes (231–58) that scholars will find very useful if they want to read more on some topics. That is where useful references are identified and the breath of the impressive scholarship behind this book becomes more evident. The Index (259–67) is also very helpful.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to William Labov and Sheri Pargman for feedback on a draft of this review. I am solely responsible for the remaining shortcomings.

<sup>2</sup> R&R note toward the end of the book that people still sound Black while using standard English grammar (224).

<sup>3</sup> Both AAVE and Gullah distinguish between regular habits and repeated processes, as in the following examples: *Billy talk(s) too much* vs. *Billy be talkin too much*. The latter says that Billy is too often caught in the process of talking, whereas the former simply states what other English dialects express as habits and Gullah sometimes with *duhz/does* [dɔz], as in *Billy duhz talk too much*. It is perhaps not by accident that even hard-core stative verbs such as *have* must also be inflected in the progressive when they combine with consuetudinal *be*, as *I be havin these funny dreams when they travel*.

<sup>4</sup> That English need not have been standard. The beginnings of vernacular American Englishes are proletarian.

<sup>5</sup> My skepticism does not apply to the development of counterlanguage (Morgan 1993), which has to do less with structures than with semantic and pragmatic peculiarities developed to convey, even in the presence of Whites, meanings that they would not understand. Otherwise, new structures typically develop from the accidental ways a target language is appropriated, not by deliberate design. This is also true of AAE and creoles (Mufwene 2001).

<sup>6</sup> This position is not the same as Sutcliffe's (1998) claim that a Gullah-like variety must have been spoken outside coastal South Carolina and Georgia, which would support the creole origins hypothesis.

<sup>7</sup> Chap. 11: "Ebonic 'Humor'," is probably the most illustrative of this social scorn.

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(Received 10 October 2000)

NANCY A. NIEDZIELSKI & DENNIS R. PRESTON, *Folk linguistics*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2000. Pp. xx, 375. Hb.

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Linguists who teach introductory courses in their discipline routinely encounter the nonlinguists' knowledge, or lack of it, about language. Their students are fairly predictable in their ignorance of basic linguistic concepts: For example, they typically believe that there is one standard dialect of English, that a word's true meaning has little to do with its current usage, and that nonstandard dialects are primitive languages. In fact, teachers of introductory courses in linguistics realize that their principal responsibility is to correct the many and common misperceptions about language that prevail in their culture. In most respects, *Folk linguistics* is a systematic study of these misperceptions.

Niedzielski & Preston (henceforth N&P) define "folk linguistics" as what nonlinguists believe about language. They categorize "folk" (or the nonlinguist) to include a broad range of members of a speech community, including the educated and professional. They justify their work by claiming that folk linguistics deserves to be studied for three reasons: First, folk linguistics forms one of the ethnographies of a culture; second, it plays a role in applied linguistics; and third, it affects language use. Unquestionably, readers will agree that the work supports the claims of its authors.

N&P arrange their work into six chapters: Introduction, "Regionalism," "Social factors," "Language acquisition and applied linguistics," "Language and education," "General and descriptive linguistics," and "The last words." They also include a foreword, explanation of transcription conventions, appendix, notes, references, author index, and subject index.

In their Introduction, the authors recognize that they are entering a highly suspect area of linguistic inquiry. They realize that "From a scientific per-

spective, folk beliefs about language are, at best, innocent misunderstandings of language . . . or, at worst, the bases of prejudice, leading to the continuation, reformulation, rationalization, justification, and even development of a variety of social injustices” (p. 1). Citing Bloomfield’s (1944) disdain of the nonlinguist’s views of language, N&P courageously take on the formidable task of justifying folk linguistics. As readers move through this book, they may become convinced that Bloomfield’s disdain may have been well placed.

N&P maintain that folk linguistics began with Henry Hoenigswald’s presentation at the 1964 UCLA Sociolinguistics Conference. While Hoenigswald outlined a “wide-ranging set of suggestions” for folk linguistics, N&P find that “very little in subsequent work, at least in any general or systematic way” (3) has been done. To explain the dearth of follow-up studies in response to Hoenigswald’s invitation, N&P challenge the two main objections raised by linguists regarding the lack of study of folk linguistics: impoverishment and inaccessibility of data. N&P cut through these objections by citing and illustrating Hoenigswald’s three-phase approach to folk linguistics: Study “(1) *what goes on*, (2) *how people react to what goes on*, and (3) *what people say about all this*” (1970:20).

To apply this framework, N&P studied the data collected by 11 graduate students at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti. These fieldworkers were trained to ask respondents for explanations and interpretations of their views of language while not revealing to them that the primary purpose of the interviews was to compile data on those views. The authors provide an appendix that indicates the details of the members of the study group, including their ages, backgrounds, and ethnicity.

In chap. 2, “Regionalism,” N&P tackle a common question: Do speakers believe that their speech is the standard, or do they believe that another speech community speaks a standard? Relying on a series of interviews in which respondents drew maps indicating their attitudes regarding standard English, N&P provide a wealth of impressive data drawn from respondents and supporting the notion that linguistic attitudes vary immensely from region to region. The variance is due to community self-esteem, historical prejudices, and the like. In short, one cannot conclude that every speech community thinks that it speaks standard English. Although N&P recognize that the English varieties of some areas – for example, New York City and the South – are consistently held in low regard by people outside those areas, they conclude: “Folk prescriptivist notions which play a large part in the formation and maintenance of attitudes towards regional varieties are still very much a part of the national linguistic life of the US” (126).

N&P devote most of chap. 3, “Social factors,” to their respondents’ attitudes toward social factors. Ethnicity, in particular AAVE (African American Vernacular English), heads the list, and the respondents provide no surprises as N&P point to typical prejudices regarding AAVE. The section on “status” reveals how attitudes about language can affect the language: for example, distinct pro-

nunciation, rich vocabulary, and less slang. N&P draw on their data to comment on other social factors, including style, slang, register, taboo, and gender.

As N&P point out in chap. 4, their respondents did not find language acquisition a remarkable achievement. Instead, they were more interested in who and what influences the development of language in children. Predictably, the respondents believed that children learn language because they are exposed to it, and the best way to teach language to children is speak correctly to them. As for second language acquisition, the respondents recognized that understanding the language structure and using it frequently are the most important influences on second language learning. Of all the chapters in the book, this chapter seems the most forced, since its content includes nothing at all unexpected. N&P attempt to make it interesting by pointing out that folk attitudes about language acquisition do not mirror linguists' views – for example, Chomsky's (1959) "autonomous language acquisition device."

Reminding their readers that they "define the folk only as those not professionally involved in formal linguistic study" (261), N&P focus on two main themes: folk responses to problem sentences, and passive constructions. Here again, N&P find themselves dealing with the same misconceptions about language that one encounters in a introductory course in linguistics, such as confusion between spelling and sound, levels of grammaticality, and prescriptive and descriptive norms.

In their "last words," N&P summarize their work: "We hope to have shown in the preceding chapters that, in the world outside of linguistics, people who are not professional students of language nevertheless talk about it" (302). But when they state, "Such overt knowledge of and comments about language by nonlinguists is the subject mater of *folk linguistics*," and add, "It is language about language, and it is just as much a metalanguage as the linguist's" (302), they have gone too far. They have placed ignorant observations about language on a par of importance with professional opinion.

In the last analysis, this forced justification takes on a momentum in the book that will leave most readers wondering if they have learned anything new about language. For the linguist, the book offers a summary of the most common misunderstandings of language, and little else. Nonetheless, the summary has merit because it has been arrived at by systematic study, and it explains many of the reasons for misunderstandings about language.

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(Received 1 August 2000)

JEAN QUIGLEY, *The grammar of autobiography: A developmental account*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000. Pp. xiv, 232. Hb \$49.95.

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In *The grammar of autobiography*, Jean Quigley makes a claim that one often hears nowadays: that the self is constructed in autobiographical narrative discourse. Two dimensions of the work distinguish her analysis of narrative self-construction from many other treatments of the subject. First, she offers a genuinely interdisciplinary account, drawing on functional linguistics, theoretical and developmental psychology, and accounts of language development. Second, she studies a particular category of linguistic forms – modals – as the key to narrative self-construction.

Quigley focuses on what Labov & Waletzky 1967 call the “evaluation” narrators do in telling autobiographical stories. A coherent narrative has a point, and this point often positions the narrator in some socio-ideological space. Quigley argues, convincingly, that autobiographical narrators use subtle linguistic cues like modals to position themselves with respect to salient others, or with respect to controversial issues in their social worlds. This positioning creates the narrator’s self, she claims, because selves are the kinds of things that are created “on line” in social interaction.

This account already draws on both linguistics – grammatical and discourse analyses of modals – and on psychology, for theories about the self. Quigley integrates one more perspective into her account, exploring how children develop narrative competence and how this developing ability to tell stories might interact with their developing selves. Instead of analyzing how particular instances of narrative discourse might partly construct a particular narrator’s self, Quigley analyzes how children’s use of modals develops, and how these developing linguistic resources might facilitate the narrative construction of self. This addition of developmental psychology to her account of narrative self-construction makes Quigley’s approach relatively unusual.

Any linguistically sophisticated account of narrative self-construction must describe how linguistic tokens influence or constitute psychological entities. The first step is to describe how speech creates patterns that can then influence the self. Quigley rightly emphasizes the creative power of speech, but she does not define precisely what it is that speech creates. She claims that speech “actually brings about certain types of discourse and contexts” (p. ix), but she does not develop an account of the many aspects of “discourse” and “contexts.” Sometimes she claims that “information” is the crucial product of speech: Narrators presuppose information about their beliefs and attitudes, and such presupposed information plays the critical role in narrative self-construction. At other times,

she claims that narrators accomplish speech acts and that such verbal actions do the essential work of self-construction.

As Quigley herself says, both presupposed information and verbal action undoubtedly play some role in narrative self-construction. But a full account will have to specify more precisely *how* the various functions of narrative discourse (denotational, conative, interactional, textual, etc.) create cognitive, interpersonal, or some other sorts of patterns that can then influence the self. Quigley considers, but does not clearly choose among, various possibilities. She claims that grammatical categories create possible worlds for speakers. This Whorfian idea has been elaborated systematically by Lucy 1992, and it offers one possibility for how language might create a pattern that could influence the self. Quigley also claims that a narrator “emplots himself or herself in an autobiographical storyline” (15). Labov & Waletzky 1967, among others, describe how linguistic devices create plots, and this offers another possible linguistic mechanism for narrative self-construction. Quigley proposes that narrators can position themselves with respect to their characters and the social voices that these characters represent. Hill 1995 and others use Bakhtin to describe systematically how narrators speak with and ventriloquate voices, and this offers yet another type of linguistic device that might contribute to the self.

Quigley would probably argue that all these linguistic devices can contribute to narrative self-construction, and I would agree. But she too often claims simply that “modals” do the essential work, without specifying which type of linguistic mechanism she is talking about – modals, after all, constitute grammatical categories, contribute to representations of plots, voice and ventriloquate characters, and more. A more compelling account will have to describe in detail how particular aspects of language work together to create patterns that contribute to the self.

Describing the relevant linguistic mechanisms is only the first step in an account of narrative self-construction. Whatever cognitive or interpersonal pattern gets created through narrative discourse must then influence the self. Any theory of narrative self-construction also presupposes an account of what “the self” is and how it can be influenced. Quigley does address this issue. She draws on social constructionist accounts of self (e.g., Harré 1995), claiming that the self is a “working concept” that is constructed “on line” while speaking. I agree with Quigley that a broadly constructionist approach to the self can support her account of narrative self-construction, but her theoretical discussions are quick and sometimes puzzling. Does she really mean that the self has no enduring aspects, but is created anew in each interaction? Is our sense of self-coherence merely an illusion? One could argue on both sides of these questions, but Quigley does not articulate any clear position. At times, she seems to be a radical constructionist (unlike Harré 1995), denying any metaphysical status to the psychological self beyond what gets projected from discourse in particular interactions. At other

times, she seems to support more traditional psychological theories of the self, like that of Damon & Hart 1988, who posit seven universal domains of the self and four universal developmental stages for each domain.

Quigley's data are a corpus of autobiographical stories, prompted by and told to an interviewer, narrated by 36 children aged 5, 8, or 12. The cross-sectional design yields some interesting findings. For example, the 5-year-olds use all the basic forms and functions that Quigley finds central to self-construction in narrative – though with varying frequency – so there seems not to be a qualitative developmental leap in the narrative construction of self. Younger narrators also tend more consistently to use one form or class of modals for a particular area of meaning (e.g., obligation or ability), while 12-year-olds have mastered the multi-functionality of particular forms. And, despite the stereotypical view of autobiography as concerned with the past, about one-third of the narrative utterances in this sample describe the future.

Such findings must be interpreted a bit skeptically, however, because of methodological concerns. Quigley does not provide any statistical significance tests for her quantitative conclusions. She simply gives percentages for each of the three age groups, then moves right to interpreting the differences. In many cases, the differences are clearly significant, but significance can be hard to gauge without calculating. In another puzzling methodological omission, Quigley calculates the mean number of modals per child (9.8 for 5-year-olds, 13.3 for 8-year-olds, and 18.7 for 12-year-olds). Then she gives an important qualification: 12-year-olds may not in fact use more modals, because they may simply have talked longer. But then she refuses to calculate the frequency of modals per minute or per utterance, saying this is “neither necessary nor desirable” (62). Although it's of course not necessary, it would have allowed the reader to see whether older children do in fact use more modals.

Further methodological questions arise from Quigley's coding system. Some of her categories are illuminating and not controversial. She counts, for example, the person and number of the subjects used with modalized predicates, the frequency of reported speech, the transitivity of the main verbs. But she also creates some categories herself, without clear theoretical rationale, like the “discourse goals” of the modalized utterances. There are eight such goals, including problem-solving, reporting, prescribing, “interpersonal narrating functions,” making theory-of-mind statements, and referring to unreal states. These eight are subdivided further, so that interpersonal narrating functions include apologizing, dismissing, boasting, dramatizing, accusing, blaming, and so on. Such coding schemes notoriously depend on the native language and social position of the categorizer, as shown in the lists of English verbs created by speech act theory. There is also the problem of overlap between these particular categories.

These various methodological concerns might lead a reader to agree with Quigley's claim that “the case made in this book is primarily theoretical rather than empirical” (109). Her central theoretical point – that narrators partly construct

themselves through systematic linguistic patterns in autobiography – is in fact a convincing one, but we need more empirical and theoretical work to realize the promise of her approach.

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(Received 25 October, 2000)

BERNARD SPOLSKY & ELANA SHOHAMY, *The languages of Israel: Policy, ideology and practice*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1999. Pp. 299. Pb \$49.95.

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Well known for its creation and adoption of modern Hebrew as its national language, Israel is still one of the most linguistically heterogeneous societies in the world. Bernard Spolsky and Elana Shohamy delve into this complex reality and describe a coherent picture of it, drawing from an updated model of linguistic policy which they elaborate. I found no few weaknesses in the book in regard to the sociological interpretation of sociolinguistic facts, but its major interest resides in the description of Israel's linguistic diversity and evolution. It is one of the very few attempts to date to do that, and it merits attention.

Following the revival of Hebrew and its adjustment to the modern era during the first decades of the 20th century, Israel's goal in linguistic policy since the creation of the state in 1948 was to ensure the acquisition of the language by Israelis – as a first language by the Jewish majority, and as a second language by the Arab minority. This effort has been successful. It has established Hebrew not only as a language capable of being used for the widest range of functions, but also as one that is effectively so used by the large majority of Israelis. This is the language that dominates public space, cultural life, politics, the arts – and especially literature. It is also the language most used in private, in the family and among friends. Moreover, what is true for the majority of the adult population is even more so for the young. Even Israel's Arab population, for whom Arabic is a first language, are bilingual in large part. Furthermore, whereas Hebrew was a marker of Jews in this country in earlier decades, opposing them to Diaspora

Judaism, Hebrew is now widely recognized as the language of Jews in general, and it is taught as such in most Jewish educational institutions throughout the world.

Nevertheless, the authors also reveal that this successful diffusion of Hebrew has not prevented – and has perhaps caused – a weak degree of control over the development and evolution of the language. They point out the discrepancies that exist between elementary and secondary language programs, unsolved problems in teaching reading, and feeble links between language teaching, the development of communication skills, and the use of computer facilities. They call for reforms in all aspects of language programs. I may add here, in a sociological vein, that in these respects, one once again encounters the well-known basic shortcoming of the Israeli public service: its much greater capacity to mobilize its efforts for urgent immediate tasks than for long-term planned goals. The rapid shift to Hebrew was carried out with undeniable success among hundreds of thousands of immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s, but the planning of language development has hardly awakened the enthusiasm of Israel's bureaucrats.

In regard to Arabic, the language of the non-Jewish minorities in Israel – Arabs, Druzes, Bedouins – the authors elaborate on the fact that “whether by chance or on purpose,” the Arab citizens of Israel were allowed to continue to use their own language in their schools, providing institutional support for resistance to language shift. They deplore, however, the fact that this policy emphasized separateness and inequality between Jews and non-Jews. Arabic, they say, is an official language in Israel, but its public use is not unconstrained. Exacerbated by continued political struggles with Palestinians outside its borders, Israel has not yet come to grips with the demands of an equitable policy vis-à-vis Israeli Palestinians, and it has yet to offer due recognition to their language. On the other hand, the authors also emphasize that inequality may actually motivate the continued use of Arabic by Israeli Palestinians, many of whom might be ready to shift to Hebrew in “normal conditions.” Although this assertion is questionable, there is a contradiction here between the authors' endorsement of due recognition of Arabic by Israeli institutions, and their implicit regret that Arabs are not able to concretize their assumed readiness to shift to Hebrew.

In my opinion, the status of Arabic as an official language is by no means accidental; it is the direct consequence of the very definition of Israel as a Hebrew-speaking Jewish state. This definition means that the non-Jewish minority is expected to remain distinct from the majority and is thus encouraged to retain Arabic as community vernacular. And Arabs too aspire to remain loyal to their primordial identity; in fact, they are more and more determined in this as the Israeli–Palestinian conflict continues. This as well accounts for the vitality of Arabic among them, as shown by Arabic mass media, local political activities, and cultural circles, and of course in all kinds of family, friendship, and community relations. This, however, does not prevent Arabs from being strongly exposed to and influenced by the mainstream of Israeli culture. They learn Hebrew as a



second language at school and as the major working language in the country, and through this medium they are able to experience Israel's version of modernity. Numberless borrowings from Hebrew in Israeli Arabic express this exposure as well as the evolution of their lifestyles. In brief, one finds here that cultural convergence may take place at the same time as identity divergence.

Arabic, however, is in Israel not only a first language in Arab schools but also a second language in the educational establishment enrolling the children of the majority group. The authors describe the (uneven) efforts invested by the Ministry of Education to implement its commitment to the teaching of Arabic to Jewish pupils. The success of these efforts, however, depends broadly on the political situation in the region. As long as the Jewish–Arab conflict persists, many Jews will remain reluctant to acquire a language that is of small use to them (the Israeli Arabs, as noted, are mostly bilingual in Hebrew) and that is resented as the language of the enemy. Hence, Arabic remains an optional, unpopular curricular choice for Jews, even among those students of Middle Eastern or North African origin, whose parents or grandparents often control a Judeo-Arabic variety. One point not noted by Spolsky & Shohamy is that the policy of the Ministry of Education puts Jewish students of Arabic-speaking background in a psychologically difficult situation. It indeed diffuses Arabic as the Arabs' language, to be studied by Jews because Israel belongs to the Middle East, but it completely ignores the fact that Arabic – in a variety of forms – is also a Jewish legacy. The Ministry thus fails to realize that it invites these students to learn as a school topic a language implicitly associated with the enemy, while ignoring the fact that it also belongs to the cultural heritage of the students' own families.

Pursuing their *tour d'horizon* of Israel's linguistic resources, Spolsky & Shohamy come naturally to English and detail its role in Israeli society and education. Despite the weak British colonial past, and with minimal encouragement from the English-speaking countries, worldwide developments – we may call them “globalization” – and special local conditions (a small population and a strong dependency on the outside) explain the fact that the power of English is growing to the point that it can no longer be considered a “foreign” language. I would emphasize at this point that the English that is so powerful in Israel is not British English but American English, and this says everything about the sources of its strength: the privileged relations of Israel with the United States as a world power, and the strong American Jewish Diaspora.

In their later chapters, the authors briefly consider the fate of many other languages – non-Jewish ones like Romanian, Polish, German, Spanish, Amharic, Hungarian, Persian, Georgian, Bulgarian, and Turkish, as well as Jewish languages like Ladino, Judeo-Persian, or Juhuri – that immigrants brought with them from the Diaspora. All these languages tend to disappear in Israel. The authors regret this state of affairs and see it as a waste of linguistic capacity. Sociologists, however, know that immigration in modern societies has most often brought about the vanishing of original vernaculars in exchange for the acquisition of local and

regional languages in target societies and worldwide communication languages. These people who lost Romanian or Judeo-Arabic in Israel have acquired Hebrew, English, and possibly some Arabic. In this context, it is remarkable that – as underlined by the authors – the case of Yiddish in Israel is somehow different, thanks to the existence of an ultra-orthodox community that has long been determined to retain this language as its major vernacular. Even here, though, the authors confess that Yiddish is losing ground to Hebrew. All efforts to retain Yiddish-speaking schools in this sector are unable to foster resistance to the penetration of the official language. In the streets, in the family, and even among rabbis, Hebrew is gaining importance. It is the authors' hope that Yiddish will still be retained and prevented from vanishing. I would remind them at this point that, unlike the ultra-orthodox communities of Antwerp, Golders Green, or Brooklyn, those in Israel are the only ones in the world that use the official language as much as their own vernacular. This is by no means accidental; it relates to the fact that the ultra-orthodox live here among Jews and not Gentiles, and they are both unable and unwilling to set themselves apart from the rest of their society. The ultra-orthodox aspire to play a role in the shaping of the social order of a sovereign Jewish setting, and they cannot fail to open themselves to the environment in exchange.

Last but not least, the authors dedicate a special chapter to the case of Russian among recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union (nearly 20% of the present Jewish population of the country). These immigrants have shown the strongest will, from the outset, to integrate into Israeli society on their own terms – that is, by retaining their language of origin in the contexts of family life, socializing, community, and many forms of entertainment and cultural activity. It is vain to speculate how many generations will stick to this retentionist attitude, but it is already clear that the present determination of the new communities of immigrants has caused Israel's educational authorities to adopt new perspectives toward language education. Israeli institutions, in general, increasingly recognize the importance of Russian in this society, contributing thereby to a new positive ideological outlook toward multilingualism.

Spolsky & Shohamy conclude, from their thorough description of both linguistic developments and variations in Israel's language policy, that there are definite signs of a transition toward the legitimization of linguistic pluralism. Language policies are less and less consistent and encompassing. In place of the coherent language policy that prevailed in earlier decades, one may rather speak nowadays of a set of specific policies affecting different aspects of an evolving multilingual language practice. I feel that this book would have benefited greatly from some deeper sociological insights and analytical perspectives, but as it is, *The languages of Israel* certainly constitutes a most important work for anyone interested in Israel's linguistic reality and linguistic policies.

(Received 3 October, 2000)

TAMAR KATRIEL, *Performing the past: A study of Israeli settlement museums*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997. Pp. x, 172. Hb \$45.00, pb \$24.50.

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In this excellent study of guided tours through two Israeli kibbutz museums, Tamar Katriel comments that for her, “tracing the construction of Israeli culture is as much an act of recognition as it is one of deconstruction” (p. 116). Katriel, a native Israeli Jew, is telling us that for her, moving through these museums, looking at the exhibits, and listening to the guides is an emotional experience. The recognition of which Katriel writes is, one may say, that moment of connectivity in which one orients oneself to person, space, and time in ways that evoke (perhaps suddenly) an awareness that is related to one’s very sense of self. The intersection of person, space, and time creates place and the emotions associated with it. When these moments of intersection occur in museums, the practice of taking objects out of their native contexts and infusing them with the purpose of presence within exhibits is successful. The purpose of guides in these museums is to create this sense of place within the people who visit these sites, to engender recognition within these visitors, even if they know little or nothing of the representations that constitute exhibits. Creating the feeling-tones of place is at the heart of guiding in these museums; and the narration of representations is the primary medium through which recognition is evoked.

In recent years, numerous studies of museums have appeared, written by anthropologists, folklorists, and cultural studies scholars. In the main, their work is characterized by deconstruction, by the spelling out of messages (about social order, about periodicity and history) cleverly encoded and hidden in museum representations, reading these visible forms as texts to be taken apart, interpreted, and critiqued. Museums are excellent sites for the deconstruction of culture as text, since in their exhibits process itself is turned into representation, frozen within particular parameters of space and time, and therefore highly amenable to interpretation in a textual mode. However, a focus on guiding in museums brings attention to the verbal performance and discourse that are used to evoke the recognition of place within visitors. Thus, Katriel’s study puts the process of representation through discourse at the forefront of the encounter between museum and visitor.

The museums in question are the Museum for the Beginning of Pioneer Settlement in the Land of Israel, situated in Kibbutz Yifat in the Jezreel Valley, and the museum of the Old Courtyard in Kibbutz Ein Shemer, on the Sharon coastal plain. The exhibits of the Pioneer Settlement Museum represent Zionist settlement history in the Yifat area, while those of the Old Courtyard represent the

particular local history of Kibbutz Ein Shemer. Both museums are ideological arguments for the importance of DOING, of the socialist-Zionist credo of actualizing ideas through deeds; and both are versions of the making of histories that are given form through the art of speaking and storytelling. The museums alternate classificatory displays (agricultural tools, kitchen implements, etc.) which encourage the analytical perception of differences among objects with mimetic displays (reconstructed settings of pioneer life) which encourage the immersion of visitors within contexts of the past.

The styles of the tour guides are central to verbal performance. Their style differs principally according to their age. The old-timers derive their narrative authority from their active participation in the events they narrate. They come to life in the museums as protagonists or witnesses who narrate the pioneer past with authenticity. However, the old-timers have difficulty establishing the relevance of the museums' versions of the past to the present, a connection crucial to guiding younger audiences, for whom the events of history are distant. In contrast, the younger guides obtain their "storytelling rights" from a more reflexive positioning toward the past, calling forth the self-doubts of the younger generation that derive from the fact that they no longer live in those pioneering times. In contrast to the emphasis on fidelity to the past that characterizes the verbal performances of the old-timers, the younger guides play with the connections between past and present, fictionalizing their self-presentations (through their dress, through introducing the mannequins in mimetic displays by name), and generally playing with the museums' claims to authenticity, though without decrying their Zionist roots.

Katriel argues that the verbal performance of the guides sets up "interpretive frames" through which visitors perceive exhibits and their sequencing. I would add that these frames are linear and hierarchical. Although Katriel argues that these interpretive frames are dialogical in encouraging give-and-take between guides and visitors, the framing of discourse by guides tends strongly to exclude content that they themselves have not included. Thus, she notes, "Only on rare moments are any oppositional readings offered or allowed to come through" (148). The framing of discourse, then, resonates strongly with the way the exhibits themselves are framed visually. Katriel distinguishes between "object narratives" and "frame narratives." The former are stories of the past about the objects on display and the meanings they held for the pioneers; the latter are stories about the museum-making enterprise itself. Both kinds of narrative are quite tightly controlled by the guides. Together, these two kinds of narrative reflect a metanarrative that tells how the past is found, heroically rescued, and nested within the presentness of place and within the guides who tell the stories of these objects.

Nonetheless, one should point out that the framing of discourse within museums begins with the very buildings that house them. Buildings themselves tend to constitute lineal frames that subordinate their contents to their architectonics. Katriel writes of "the dialectical tension between the individual and the commu-

nity, the private and the public” that is dramatized in narratives of the settlement museum – for example, in the contrast between the dining room, the symbolic heart of communalism, and the tent, the domain of private, conjugal life (47). Yet both exhibits are encompassed by the architectonics of the present, by the museum building that forces dining room and tent into close proximity but stark contrast. The entirety of these kibbutz museum projects is infused with hierarchy in the invention of otherness, and in the contrasts and continuities they promote. The present shapes the past in the very conception of these museums, and the guides further inflect the relationship of present to past. Katriel rightly argues that these museums participate in the cultural negotiation of images of otherness – of the Diaspora Jew, the pioneer, the Arab, the woman – and that this invites visitors to refigure themselves in relation to these images. Yet these dialectics can also be overdone, especially if the overwhelming hierarchization of the relationship of present to past is not continually emphasized.

Katriel points out that the discursive choices made by tour guides are not ideologically neutral, and that the premises shaping these choices jump out when the museums become sites of contestation (140). Then there is some challenge to, for example, the narrative of Arabs who helped the pioneers but who themselves were conservative and culturally static through time, or to the narrative of Jews from Muslim lands who are perceived as immigrants rather than as pioneers. Yet, though much attention is given to strategies of storytelling, there is little discussion of the power differentials between guides and visitors that are built into the very practice of guiding. Power rests with the guides because they control the museum discourse. However, one wants to know more about whether visitors use other senses than sight and hearing – for example, touch – as well as paralinguistic modes to respond to the storytelling of the guides.

Thus, one wants to know more about the aesthetic dimensions of guiding, and of the interaction between guides and visitors. Performance is not only verbal, and experience certainly involves more than the oral and the visual. Aesthetics, I would argue, is critical to how the practice of guiding is done. But it is difficult to get at the aesthetics of guiding only through narration. One needs more information about how visitors are positioned in space, how they move about, how they interact with exhibits, and so forth.

This fine book becomes doubly rewarding when Katriel’s insight probes beyond the more formal apparatus of museums and narration. In the concluding chapter, she suggests that the growth of settlement museums in Israel is related to their function as “houses of memory” for secular pilgrimage, in counterpoint to the saints’ tombs that are venues of religious pilgrimage for Jews from Muslim lands. This kind of analytical perspective opens up issues of comparative work in qualitative studies. One should question whether similarity of form should be the major basis for comparison, and thus, whether museums should be compared solely with museums under the rubric of “museum.” Perhaps the comparison of different cultural forms with one another – museums, pilgrimages, ethnic festi-

vals, religious revivals, and so forth – within a given social order will tell us a good deal about how these forms are related to social order.

(Received 5 October, 2000)

MICHAEL CLYNE & SANDRA KIPP, *Pluricentric languages in an immigrant context: Spanish, Arabic and Chinese*. (Contributions to the Sociology of Language, no. 82). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1999. Pp. xxi, 360. Hb DM 248.00, \$160.00.

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This volume is a highly detailed and thoughtful analysis of the language use of Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese speakers in one of the major cities of Australia, Melbourne. Bringing together census findings and other empirical data, this study addresses the issues of pluricentricity and language maintenance and language shift in an immigrant context. Australia, as one of the world's more successful countries in its national bilingual policy, has been a catalyst for local research in community languages. The present volume complements the earlier works of both authors, for instance, Clyne 1991 and Kipp 1981.

The book consists of five chapters and an index of names and subjects. In the opening chapter, the authors sketch the theoretical, methodological, and historical basis underlying their study. Chaps. 2, 3, and 4 provide research findings and interpretation of each community language. The volume concludes with a chapter on "Multiple dimensions of language maintenance," in which research data are examined in relation to findings in Australia's 1966 census and other data on cultural variation. I will summarize each chapter, focusing mainly on issues related to language maintenance and language shift.

Chap. 1, "Establishing the context of the study," articulates and describes the context. The authors not only explain the "pluricentricity" of Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese speakers but also sketch the historical background of Australia's immigration program and the concomitant changes in its linguistic demography. Tracing the progress of Australia's national language policy from an "implicit assimilationist policy" to that of the National Language Policy of 1984, where bilingualism was explicitly accepted based on "social equity, cultural enrichment and economic rationalism" (p. 20), the authors successfully paint the big picture of Australia's linguistic diversity and education system.

The theoretical foundation underlying this investigation, not surprisingly, includes many scholarly works – for example, Heinz Kloss's model of language maintenance, Jerzy Smolicz's theory of core values, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of marketplace value, Joshua Fishman's (1985) predictive model, and

the last author's model of reversing language shift (Fishman 1991). As to methodology, the authors combine a macrosociological and quantitative approach (using a written survey) with ethnography (meetings of focus groups). Focus groups were drawn from a broad cross-section of the community, including key members of organizations as well as nonmembers. Meetings were held before and after the survey to discuss topics of "interest in or use of the community language." Input from pre-survey meetings was used in the questionnaire for the written survey of first- and second-generation speakers of each community language.

The research findings in chap. 2, "The Spanish-speaking groups," present patterns of language use inside and outside the home, media use, contact with country of origin, religious affiliation, attitudes to bilingualism, language and ethnicity, motivation for language maintenance, and perceptions of language support. The written survey data show much commonality between the language use patterns and attitudes of Spanish speakers from the two birthplace groups, Chile and Spain. They also show that, for both groups, music and rhythms play a dominant role in listening to tapes, cassettes, and CDs. Data from focus groups indicate a strong emphasis on aspects of diversity and links between language and culture.

Chap. 3, "The Arabic-speaking groups," begins with a profile of the Arabic-speaking community in Australia, categorized as originating in either Egypt or Lebanon. The former, a relatively highly educated group, mainly Christians, arrived much earlier in Australia than the Lebanon-born group. The research findings show some strong links between religion and language maintenance among Muslims in Australia, access to the Quran being one of the main factors (155). Language preference among Egyptians of all age groups was overwhelmingly English, but for the Lebanese group over 35 years old, overwhelmingly Arabic (169). Over all, the results show overwhelming support by both groups for bilingualism.

In chap. 4, "The Chinese-speaking groups (Cantonese and Mandarin)," the two background groups selected for the survey were Chinese speakers from Hong Kong and Taiwan. The chapter begins with a description of the Cantonese- and Mandarin-speaking communities in Australia, followed by comparisons of the research findings on both groups. In language use, findings show a greater predominance of English used by Hong Kong and Taiwan speakers under 35 than by those over 55. In media use patterns, videos were the most widely used by first-generation Hong Kong and Taiwan groups. Both groups show a positive attitude toward bilingualism, although there were more speakers from Taiwan than from Hong Kong who felt it was helpful to speak two languages.

Chap. 5, "Multiple dimensions of language maintenance," concludes the volume. In this chapter, the authors draw some broad conclusions from a synthesis of the research findings of the three preceding chapters, identifying commonalities and constraints. Elaborating on the 1996 census findings, the authors highlight a

number of sociolinguistic issues. For instance, the survey shows that a high incidence of community language use among adults does not necessarily lead to a corresponding pattern of language use among the younger generation. On the contrary, this study indicates a strong correlation between language preference and social networks. On the question of literacy, survey data show that a greater proportion of Spanish speakers than Arabic or Chinese speakers in Australia read their community language. Religion was found to be a more influential factor than cultural symbolism.

In this final chapter, the authors seek to link the theoretical elements to the empirical data. Factors that have been found to affect language shift or maintenance in the Australian immigrant context are identified: PRE-MIGRATION EXPERIENCE, CULTURAL DISTANCE, NUMERICAL STRENGTH, and ATTITUDE OF MAJORITY TO LANGUAGE OR GROUP. These factors do not, however, hold true across the language groups. For instance, the larger Chile-background and Lebanon-background groups provide a context and an impetus for language maintenance that is not found in the Chinese group as a whole.

The volume is largely devoted to the presentation of data from the focus groups and written survey, which admittedly are crucial to an understanding of the language use of these community language speakers. This comprehensive coverage, however, has taken away much of the authorial voice in the text, which as a consequence appears relatively muted. A more in-depth discussion of the process of language shift and the interaction of underlying factors in the context of Australia's immigrant setting would have been fruitful. Further, given the scope of the investigation and the recent immigration of these community groups, would it be theoretically possible to construct a predictability model? Could such a model utilize Joshua Fishman's Intergenerational Disruption Scale?

Over all, this is an extremely well-edited book. Despite the numerous groups and subgroups, first- and second-generation speakers, there are hardly any typographical errors related to a mismatch of terms of reference. However, one example in which the written script of Chinese is described as "written from bottom to top" (311) is misleading. Generally, the Chinese from Taiwan prefer to write from top to bottom and PRC Chinese usually write from left to right, similar to English.

*Pluricentric languages in an immigrant context* is meant for a mixed readership drawn from across disciplines such as sociology and linguistics. It is therefore helpful to have specific linguistic terms clearly explained at the outset. For instance, in the opening chapter, the authors define "pluricentric languages" in plain English as "languages which have been brought to Australia by people from different countries, with separate national varieties and with different sets of linguistic norms" (2).

The greatest contribution of this volume is the rich empirical data documenting the use of three international languages in an immigrant context. Although the authors seem to aim for an objective description of the sociolinguistic situa-



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tion in Australia, the book nevertheless has appeal and relevance for the wider community outside Australia, particularly in countries where bilingualism is hotly debated.

In today's accelerating trend toward globalization, the concept of "ethnolinguistic vitality" deserves greater attention from researchers. *Pluricentric languages* demonstrates how research in this area could both inform and affect policymakers and communities who do not wish to speak only a uniform international language. It is a book I would strongly recommend to policymakers, language-program planners, educators, sociologists, anthropologists, and linguists interested in pluricentricity from a practical and theoretical perspective.

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(Received 1 November, 2000)