

## REVIEWS

John Myhill. *Language, Religion and National Identity in Europe and the Middle East*. Philadelphia &c.: John Benjamins, 2006. Pp. x, 300 with Index. \$168.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley  
President, American Society of Geolinguistics

The keynote speaker at ASG's international conference in 2006 was John Myhill of the University of Haifa. In his book in the series on Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture he presents a number of shrewd observations and convincing theories, perhaps the most original of which is that Big Languages (such as Arabic, German, Italian, and Pan-Turkic tongues). Big Languages have been closely associated with "massive conglomerates that were held together by political power rather than ethnic commonality" or by religion shared by people who, though they might have a common scripture such as The Koran in classical Arabic, spoke a number of languages and dialects. Big Languages, Myhill shows, have historically created more problems of nationalism leading to conflict than Small Languages (such as Norwegian and Ukrainian) have in setting up sovereign states. The Big Languages have not had the homogeneity and consequent close identity capacities of the smaller ones. More restricted, more "parochial" but also more "live and let live," also means better for religion in relation to national identity; religion creates a stable state best when it is national rather than catholic in intent or international in action (such as Judaism or Christianity) and the Roman or Ottoman or other empires that were praised for being tolerant of a number of peoples and languages and religious beliefs in the long run stooped to the diaspora of the Jews and the martyrdom of the Christians and down deep always considered the Roman ruling class, with its Latin and its *lære*, we may say, first among unequals.

The book ranges widely and in striking detail over the history of the Ottoman Empire and the fate of the Armenians, the breakup of states cobbled together (such as Yugoslavia) and the current instability in Lebanon (in which the loyalties of the constituent parties fall something short of the unity usually required of a nation-state), devolution and minority sociodynamics in the United Kingdom, various ethnic cleansings and the Holocaust, and much more. The author notes that "the yearning for national identity has not died, despite the advances of globalization" (the subject of still another recent ASG international conference).

The high price of this book may militate against its being read by as many as could benefit from its deeply informed, even-handed but candid, clear-cut and trenchant observations, case-specific to a useful degree but rising above detail to a kind of dogma, on how language contributes to personal and national identity. The book elucidates and weighs how national identity which, on the one hand, has brought pride and prosperity and independence to Greeks and Finns and others has, on the other hand, "brought war and genocide in its wake," whether the language involved be the vernacular and secular or the ancestral and sacred tongues of people. The focus is on Europe and the Middle East because it is there that "the ideology of language and national identity (that is, the ideology relating national identity to language) has had the greatest and most obvious effect". There are on the world now not only nation-states but also carpentered political blocs "regardless of actual commonality," coalitions of the threatened, or threatening.

Statements such as this concluding one resonate with the reader:

Nationalism that is based upon a standard language that artificially unites a large variety of dialects, many of which cannot be easily understood by other speakers, has been shown here, in exhaustive detail, to carry the seeds of destruction. The symptoms may vary, taking the form of racism, religious fanaticism, dictatorship, fascism, world war, or murderous terrorist attacks upon civilians, but the underlying disease is the same.

This reliable and nuanced study, fair-minded and occasionally a little frightening, limited to Europe and the Middle East but actually applicable to all places and times to one degree or another, zeroes in on the contribution and the complicity of *langue* and especially *parole* in the production over time of a multiplicity of kinds and conditions of nationalism along with, of course, the influence upon individuals and groups of faith in ancestors and in gods. Some work on nationalism and political borders badly drawn by imperial powers, autocephalous church and state in Russia and other countries, and irrational imperial ambitions driving large powers into delusion and disaster have been published before this. However, none has used linguistics this powerfully to show that nationalism can be both good and bad in its effects. The conclusion in this work is that “nationalism in itself is not inherently good or bad” and “not going to go away,” recognizes that nationalism can give ethnic groups independence and can also militate against the homogeneity towards which international trade and commerce tends and that nationalism sometimes is likely to work as did the Young Turks of 1908–1918 or the Norwegians in reviving past identity on the basis of sagas or the Germans creating the *Übermensch* monster or the Arabs now readying to take on the superior technology of the West with the same fierceness and the same costly results that Japan and German and even Italy (whose fascism was ethnolinguistically based) took on the Allies in World War II.

This excellent discussion of *Dachsprachen* and *Ausbausprachen* is geolinguistics, macrosociolinguistics, at its very best. It is admirably, firmly rooted in linguistic fact and in history and it is not afraid to face and state clearly the implications for the future of language in action.

Désiré Baloubi. *The Morphonemics of the Idaacha Dialect of Yoruba*. Charlotte (NC): Conquering Books, 2005. Pp. 183. \$49.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Born in Benin, where Yoruba is spoken by perhaps half a million people, Dr. Baloubi received his advanced degrees in the UK and in the US, where he now teaches. He is well known to ASG members who have attended our recent international conferences or read the proceedings. In this book he addresses a subject more specialized than he chooses for general talks. It deals with features such as tones and vowel harmony in one dialect of a language which has a number of dialects in Benin (where French is official but Barba, Ful, Somba, and Tem are also spoken), in Nigeria (where English is official but Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba are official regional languages among a great many unofficial ones), and in Togo (where French is official but Yoruba is among the half dozen other languages in use). Yoruba also is heard in Sierra Leone (where English is official but there are millions of speakers of other languages and Krio and other lingua francas are in use) as well as among displaced Africans in Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, and so on. Yoruba even had a bit of a vogue here when Black Power was at its height some time ago and African-Americans looked for personal names from Yoruba and even dabbled at learning the language of presumed ancestors, although it is difficult or impossible for African-Americans to be certain where their ancestors lived centuries ago in Africa or what languages they spoke.

The dialect on which the author here concentrates is “spoken by approximately 56,127 people” in the northern part of the hilly former Zou province now called *Département des Collines*. This dialect is called *Ìdàáchà* and by other names such as *Idaita*. History records a kingdom of *Daisa* (various spellings) in what is now Benin; it was formed about 1700 by people who fled to Benin hills from what is now Nigeria. The study of Standard Yoruba has been going on for a long while, chiefly, when not by Europeans by Nigerian not Benin linguists. The examination of this particular dialect, which this book bases on interviews with a number of native speakers, is valuable in that it regards the dialect as worth close and individual attention at last. The book is authoritative on “some analytical problems related to the phonology and morphology”. It is by a linguist originally from Benin and it is pioneering in fixing on this dialect. It concentrates on the high, middle, and low tone system and vowels in terms of constraints on nasalization and such things it and goes some way toward illuminating word formation and the structure of the language. Topics such as tense, aspect, and modality remain to be addressed, and it is hoped that they will be treated with the same erudition and precision as is evident in this original but necessarily limited

book. One might likewise study the way that dialects have been affected by the lay of the land in Benin, a nation of some 45,000 square miles, which is to say what the *geo* in *geolinguistics* means in this case.

Having studied French and Spanish and English in Benin and English in Britain and the US, this linguist is able to relate the linguistic features of African language to western language and is expert on teaching Yoruba folklore and literature in translation to Americans and on instructing geolinguists on African aspects of “arbitrary borders” and the “juggling for linguistic and ethnic identity” in Benin.

The book ends with the hope that we shall see in future “more interest in Yoruba dialectology across national boundaries,” because, after all, the countries that colonialism carved out were created without due attention to language and culture and from some of the countries people with those languages and cultures were forcibly dispersed to other countries far way, their languages and identities being largely taken from them in an attempt to make them fit better into the “peculiar institution” of slavery.

Robbins Burling. *The Talking Ape*. New York &c.: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. x, 286. \$29.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

I suppose the title of this shrewd and sophisticated, fascinating, lucid hardcover book was suggested by Desmond Morris' *The Naked Ape* but it may offend the large number of my fellow Americans who are utterly convinced that evolution is just a silly theory. So be it. Burling writes: “Creationists have fought for a century and a half against the theory of natural selection, but in the end, their battle is unlikely to be any more successful than was the resistance of the Catholic Church to the heliocentric solar system”.

For the rest of us the title and the book will be very acceptable if sometimes provocative. It has, one might say, intelligent design. It traces the evolution of the human brain's capacity to support the operations of language and details human communication from its origins to the present. For geolinguists it is especially interesting in the ways that it sheds new light on how individuals think learn, behave and relate to each other in human society. All animals communicate in some way or another but we manage to do it more and better than the rest, starting (this author says) with understanding not just gestures and facial expressions but speech, and that even before we can ourselves speak. He argues that “behaviorist biases have prevented us from taking ‘mere’ comprehension seriously enough” before now. “Nothing so decisively sets us apart from our primate cousins,” whose DNA is 98 percent like our own, “as our constant chatter”. “Serious or frivolous, wise or foolish, always there is talk,” even among Garo villages in India, where the author spent some years half a century ago studying very rooted populations of people who might spend long lives entirely in one place. People always find something to say.

Burling (Michigan, *emeritus*) is an expert on language in its cultural context. Of course the fact that speech, rather than writing, leaves no record hampers study of our earliest human ancestors but the evolution of speech can be guessed at. “We will never know all the details of how language got started or of how it got started in the human species, but the better we can guess, the better will be our understanding of the talking ape”.

The author is very convincing in his remarks, even his guesses, as he examines the links between signs and sounds and meaning and he traces the development of language structures and weighs language uses. We all have a foot or a *pied* or a *Fuss* if different words to name it and it seems likely that the earliest words were rather more connected to the things they described, such as onomatopoeic creations such as *whoosh*. Words less closely related to what they stand for require more explanation and are less easily learned, more arbitrary. But we need something to name each thing. The foot as it now exists in the human body is extremely complicated with, as any medical student will tell you, a surprising number of little bones, and the pedigree of a word in each language, depending on experience and learning, is equally surprising. Surprising, too, is the humor as well as exactness with which the arguments are presented in this study.

Keith Brown, ed. *Encyclopedia of Languages & Linguistics*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005. 14 volumes. \$5,600 print version, online to follow in 2006.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

You may want to know that some big library near you may now have the second edition—the first was published by Asher in 1983—of a standard reference book. It has a new editor, five new co-coordinating editors (Anne H. Anderson of Glasgow; Laurie of Victoria at Wellington, New Zealand and Jim Miller of Auckland, New Zealand; Graeme Hirst of Toronto; and Margie Burns of Purdue), and mostly updated entries, authoritative and alphabetically arranged. It is a reference source fully cognizant of the multimedia aspects of communication today. In a word, a magnificent publication, though with a steep price tag.

Matthias B. Lehman. *Ladino Rabbinic Literature & Ottoman Sephardic Culture*. Bloomington (IN): Indiana University Press, 2006. Pp. viii, 264 with Index. \$39.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This book by an assistant professor of Jewish Studies at Indiana deals not with geolinguistics' interest in language at work in the modern world but with the popularized rabbinic texts of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire to which many fled after expulsion from Europe. There some held high posts in the sultanate and spoke and wrote in Ladino.

We notice the book because of the interest in ASG, where we have had lectures and articles in Ladino on the survival of that language in modern Turkey and in which newspapers are still published and people continue to debate the issues covered in this study: religion and secularization, inequality in gender and other realms, conservatism in a world of change, and the clash between science and *musar* (rabbinic) knowledge.

Sandra Bermann & Michael Wood, eds. *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*. Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 2006. Pp. viii, 413 with Index. \$24.95 in paperback.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Sandra Bermann and Michael Wood, both of Princeton, who worked on this collection in the summer of 2002 at the Institute for Advanced Studies, edit 22 essays on the most interesting aspect of translation studies today, which is to say not the details of transferring ideas (and style?) from one language to another but the public role of those who do build these bridges, the ethics of translating into other languages and even producing translation that conceals the real meaning deliberately, national identities and how they affect translation or lack of it, “postcolonial Latin America” and the new international relations affected by a host of changes in means of communication and the mixture of peoples, the novels of De Lillo, and more.

The editors begin with this statement:

There probably has never been a time when issues of nation, language, and translation have been more important or more troubling than they are today. In a world in which individual nation-states are increasingly enmeshed in financial and information networks, where multiple linguistic and national identities can inhabit a single state's borders or exceed them in vast diasporas, where globalization has its serious—

and often violent—discontents, and where terrorism and war transform distrust into destruction, language and translation play central, if often unacknowledged roles.... Waves of migrating peoples have made the contemporary nation-state, and especially its urban centers, into global sites with multiplicities of languages and cultures.

I shall not cite any typographical errors (to prove I have read these sometimes demanding essays) but content myself with telling you that the authors include the late Edward Saïd and others from Columbia University, Emily Apter and others from New York University, and others from the US and abroad who have facts and opinions any geolinguist will want to read, whether professors of literature such as Henry Statton (Washington) or professors of law such as Pierre Legrand (The Sorbonne). This book brings together a distinguished team to address not only the bringing over of meaning from one language to another but the creating of an “instance” in which a new text in new circumstances is created in the act of translation.

Hana Wirth-Nesher. *Call It English: The Languages of Jewish American Literature*. Pp. xvi, 224 with Index. Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 2006, \$39.50.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Attention must be paid to those, you would kill me I should say Arthur Miller, who write in an American colored by constructions from Yiddish/ German. What’s not to like about this, already? This you’re going to kvetch about? What are you, crazy?

Maybe you are confounded when you encounter on Broadway, on radio or television or in the movies, all of them places where Jews are plentiful, or in newspapers and even books, supposedly in plain American, Yiddish words—*kvetch* is one--that are unfamiliar to you, but many other words you have got from the Jewish immigrants the same way that you got *out* as a verb from homosexuals and *uptight* as an adjective from African-Americans. That goes quite unnoticed. You may never have noticed anything terribly peculiar in such business slogans as “Nobody but nobody undersells Gimbels” (there must have been some problem, because Gimbels is long gone) and “What’s not to like about Sara Lee?” (don’t ask!).

Each a more or less spicy *tzimimis* (spelling of Yiddish in English is wide open to variation—you can do as you please) of *Mittel Europa*, Hebrew, and other languages, a mishmash, the extreme Yinglish of the old dialect comedians of vaudeville and writers such as Milt Gross and the still identifiably Jewish but closer to standard American, whatever that is, syntax and vocabulary of modern American Jews. These are part of the great American linguistic tapestry. Jewish-American writers are among the leading literary lights of the last half a century and more. They are influential on others as well as being colorful. It is only when Clifford Odets in a drama has a Chinese general speak like a Bronx taxi driver of old—Jews today seldom drive New York taxis—or a Puerto Rican says *shlepp* that we remark. Americans have been brought up on Jewish comedic *schtick*. Americans know it well even if they have never been to the Catskills, which used to be called the Yiddish Alps. They are fans of *Seinfeld* and Woody Allen.

Ms. Wirth-Nesher (Tel Aviv) does write a lot about immigrants struggling with learning and pronouncing a new language and with the trials and tribulations of dislocation and becoming very assimilated. She does note how and why Jews turn to subjects of Jewish-American experience as well as to the Holocaust. She does not seem to have the interest or the ear to catch whatever is Jewish in the language of non-Jews in the US or in Jewish-American playwrights such as Kushner or Wasserstein or novelists such as Henry Roth or Peter Roth, let alone the pretty much “Americanized” Saul Bellow. She tells us about writers of whom few people have heard, or care; these include Mary Antin, Abraham Cahan, and Aryeh Lev Stollman. They are, in order, the author of *The Promised Land*, a novel curtseying to acceptance in America; the editor of the *Daily Forward* and a prolific writer; and a writer I never heard of.

One (Jewish-American might say *a person*) can’t know everything. (For Americans to whom *one looks* too British the sentence might be better as “Nobody can know everything”. For African-American

kidding with *one*, see one of the great American philosophical reflections, "One never knows, do one?" ) This author does seem to know as much about non-Jewish America as she should but she commands Hebrew and Yiddish and English, and her study, a considerable amount of which is recycled, if revised, from previous periodical publication, carefully puts Jews in their rightful place among the many groups that have contributed to the American traditions of nativism and multiculturalism, regionalism and dialect writing, and realism and political action. She is a better advocate of Jews returning to the study of Hebrew if not to Zion than she is an analyst of the complex and considerable contribution of Jewish Americans to the entire nation's literature and life.

There is a Jewish history of vulnerable and anxious outsidership and also the triumph of the likes of Bernard Malamud becoming so quintessentially American that he wrote a fine book about baseball as well as a minority report on being a Jew in a non-Jewish college. There is the immense contribution to American humor that arose from the wry reaction of Jews to oppression and deprivation, ghetto and go-getting, smiling cynically at life's setbacks, if with a certain edge, so that American comic dialogue has been defined as "two Jews".

There is the Jewish contribution to the literature of dissent and commentary, though it was not a Jew who joked there was soon to be a new literary journal to be called *Dysentery*. Many of the disturbers of the peace in terms of rights for the downtrodden (workers, women, homosexuals, AIDS sufferers, even African-Americans, for Jews founded the NAACP from which they were eventually unceremoniously expelled) and the sharpest critics of both arts and politics have been Jewish-Americans and they have contributed much to the tenor and terminology of political debate and activist causes. This book doesn't note that nor the terminology of the "Jewish science" of psycho-analysis or even touch the Jewish contribution to the speech of actors in the US, the inheritance of the Group Theater and the Open Theater and the Actors Studio and all the Jewish-influenced troupes that turned out an American style quite at odds with, say, the way Maurice Evans played The Bard. (Stella Adler called Evans "the world's greatest cantor of Shakespeare".)

More unfortunately, Ms. Wirth-Nesher does not venture into the rhetoric of politics or the language of literary criticism and indeed she is no Leo Rosten on Jewish words and expressions of the common man and woman. In the casual speech of all Americans there is a decidedly non-kosher mix up languages. Consider *opstairsnik*, a person who lives upstairs, and *nogoodnik*, which you far more likely have encountered. Worse, though she can summarize a plot with accuracy she is no reliable literary critic. She makes much of Henry Roth's only novel, but I would call it not *Call it Sleep* but *Call It Soporific*. That one-hit Roth is nowhere near as important in US literature as Emma Lazarus (her poem on the base of Liberty Enlightening the World is not very good but damn famous and, for my money, very Jewish-American) or even Michael Gold, Bud Schulberg, Meyer Levin, Tillie Olsen...and the list goes on.

Try Allen Guttman's *The Jewish Writer in America* (1971) or Daniel Walden (1984) in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* 28. And you will have to look elsewhere for a linguist who can anatomize the language in which Jewish-Americans speak and write in such a lively and influential manner and presumably have done so since the first Jews arrived in Nieuw Amsterdam in 1654. Actually, the real story of Jewish-American literature does not begin until the Eastern European Jews started to flock to these shores in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, much to the annoyance of the German Jews who came here earlier and considered German better than Yiddish and themselves better than people from a *shetl*. There were language fights even within the Jewish community/communities here and insults such as *Litvak* were often flung. Today some few Jews are trying to reclaim a heritage by bringing back Yiddish to a certain extent, a few still speak it, some speak Hebrew rather than American or both or a combination of the two. I have remarked before in these pages of *Geolinguistics* on signs in a Brooklyn neighborhood (Midwood) near me that are partly in English and partly in Hebrew and I suppose it is true that in the Orthodox enclave many people throw in an English word or two when they do not know the Hebrew for *modem* or *cell phone* or *big box store*.

Markus Egg. *Flexible Semantics for Reinterpretation Phenomena*. Stanford (CA): Center for the Study of Language and Information, 2006. Pp. xxii, 239 with Index. \$27.50.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

How do personal knowledge of the world (conceptual knowledge) and conventional rules of language (semantic knowledge) interact to construct meaning in communication? Markus Egg (Groningen) now at the CSLI in California. He examines metonymy (the part for the whole, as *hand* for worker) and the rules that distinguish between *it rained for two hours* and *I watched TV for two hours*. This deep study uses some challenging language, as when *reinterpretation* to obviate a semantic mismatch “not only refers to certain phenomena of natural language...[and] also suggests an analysis of these phenomena in terms of non-monotonic, destructive processes that act upon a fully representation of an expression and replace at least part of its original representation”. As we speak and write in ordinary language we all for pragmatic use perform both of interesting and sometimes complex verbal manipulations in order to derive meaning.

With *Amélie left for two hours* we have an ambiguity in *for* but we understand that her leaving did not occupy so much time but that she was away for that amount of time. This book explains what is going on, with close analyses of syntactic and semantic processes. It constitutes a pulling together of research and publication on the subject conducted over recent years, starting with a detailed summary of representation as it has been studied by others.

Those who learned in school to diagram sentences will have an advantage but if you have not learned how to do that you can figure out how it is done here. Those who have difficulties with linguistic terminology (LSC = Landing Site Coercion, *monotonic* = “no results of semantic construction are undone,” *quantized predicate* = “bounded, atelic, and non-punctual”) may find the book hard going.

Nonetheless, it is a major contribution to the study of the concept of duration and “an intermediate step in a larger enterprise of fully determining the meaning of reinterpretation candidates,” or, to put it more simply, as we receive or construct communications we all are working to decode and using rules of which we may not be fully aware and at the same time employing those in the light of our extralinguistic knowledge. There is more to language than syntax, grammar and lexicon.

Evelyn Nien-ming Ch'ien. *Weird English*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2004. Pp. 339 with Index. \$29.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

We seldom have room for linguistic studies that deal primarily with literature; these need to be better represented in literary journals. But here is one, for a change. Multiculturalism and multilingualism, realism and the emphasis on ordinary people and daily speech rather than artificial high style in fiction, films, TV, etc., have produced an aspect of interest to geolinguists as well as to critics of novelists Rushie and Nabokov and poet Derek Walcott and other foreign writers in English, and also people concerned with the Chinese-American or Chinglish of Maxine Hong Kingston and the various ethnic-influenced dialects of US streets, from “Porto”-Rican to Brooklynistani.

A Dominican immigrant here, Juno Díaz has not yet taken the diacritical mark off his surname although he was compelled by the *New Yorker* to italicize the Spanish words in his “Spagnol Americano” stories. However, still he writes the likes of; “His mother met him at the door and couldn’t believe his *sinvergüencia*,” no italics or translation. He points to fact that *hacienda* is already an American word and that a lot more Spanish words are on the way, so he is just speeding up a process that even the dictionaries will recognize eventually. His is language in action for sure.

Here is Ms. Kingston in *Tripmaster Monkey*, with a Chinese-American character:

Wokking on da Waywod. Centing da dollahs buck home to why-foo  
and biby. No booty-full Ah-me-li-can gal-low fo me.

The “no tickee, no lawnlee” speech has been mocked for a long time in the US. Newer here is Jonathan Safran Foer in *Everything is Illuminated* Russianizing the American speech or Nabokov Americanizing the Russian of Pnin. I lectured recently on American dialect in the comedy of the Yinglish *Nize Baby* by Milt Gross—and how that has definitely gone out of fashion along with calling the boy Milton. The Yiddish- and Irish- and German-American dialect comedians are verboten nowadays. We have ethnics and political correctness.

Don’t neglect to notice that so-called “weird English” recognizes the existence of various kinds of hyphenated Americans, democratically takes any concept of correct speech down a peg or two, convinces people that that they do have to assimilate completely and can hold onto some color of their origins, raises questions about how well one needs to speak American to get by in American society and, speaking of education, (if we insist that English and foreign languages be taught to all Americans) what *kind* of English or (say) Spanish will be the norm, and much more. Weird or not, this adding of chocolate chips of sweet other languages is the current recipe, and that is the way the cookie crumbles. “Weird English” is not very unusual these days and at all times it enriches the vocabulary, the experience and thought of English speakers. It stresses what all geolinguists know: that languages change, often by borrowing from other languages, that languages are enriched or replaced by other languages as circumstances demand.

Did it sound “weird” to you when Oprah said she had been “in hospital”? We all know she is not British at all. Do bits of Brits annoy you in American? In Britain hanks of Yanks have pretty much ceased to raise objections. At the moment the Londoners are worried about the many Middle Eastern and Asian words that they are hearing all over the city. But those go tight along with all the non-white faces. There used to be in Victorian times “the man on the Chatham omnibus,” the average British businessman. The horse-drawn omnibuses and now even the big red busses are no longer seen in London’s streets. Times change. You hear “weird English” on the BBC.

To conclude with some reference to home, without some command of “weird English” you cannot enjoy American writers. You need “weird English” for Mark Twain and William Faulkner and many more leading lights of our literature—not to mention pop music of today, black and white—and lately you need to be able to cope with unusual words hijacked from languages very different from English. You need to be fluent in them (or “fluid” as Foer has a character say). We may also point out that in the study of literatures in English one may need old-fashioned and new-fangled English, Scottish slang for *Trainspotters* and Australian for an action movie, a great number of high and low British dialects, a smattering of Singlish or Jamaican, and on and on. The English of Pakistanis in London or the Singlish of Singapore may look “weird” to you but in such tongues a lot of the most important modern writing is being done.

Noam Chomsky, *Language and Mind*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xviii, 190 with Index. \$24.99.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Literary critics contend that great works of literature change your life dramatically. Certainly great ideas can hit you, as people say, right between the eyes, in the solar plexus, where you live. Some tremendously important ideas delivered in lectures by Noam Chomsky way back in the ’sixties have had immense and lasting effect and led to both discoveries and debates.

A monograph of this title published in 1968 was based on the Beckman Lectures, three presentations on “the past, present, and future” of the study of language, delivered at the University of California at Berkley in 1987. They recast material delivered in lectures at the University of Chicago in

1966 and used again in contributions to *Explanations in Psychology* and *Columbia University Forum*. To that was added for a second edition of *Language and Mind* was added a chapter based on a lecture delivered at Gustavus Adolphus University in Minnesota in 1969 and another chapter which had appeared as an appendix to Eric Lenneberg's *Biological Foundations of Language*. To these university lectures the third edition now adds a talk ("a few words, about 10 pages) for a general audience on "Biolinguistics and the Human Capacity" first given to a general audience in 2004. It is a dense statement despite the statement that "I cannot try to elaborate here," dropped in as he hurries over a long history of linguistic theory.

Chomsky, professor of linguistics at MIT, with all this modern recycling has always adhered to his basic original belief in a genetic biological, built-in "universal grammar" which we all are said to have been given by evolution as a species some 50,000 years ago. This capacity for thought and expression is what Chomsky calls, because it is claimed to be innate, "I-language". Chomsky may be credited with inventing the study of biolinguistics, studying the mechanisms of thought as Darwin called it "a secretion of the brain...a property of matter". These capacities were thought by Thomas Huxley to be attributable to "predetermined lines of modification" so Darwinian evolution is not simply random but working under some sort of direction toward some kind of necessary outcomes. Older scientists argued that "nature is perfect". Theologians might say that is only natural, considering Who created it.

Perfect or not, scientists are ever more engaging in trying to discover the laws of nature, to make general discoveries, to see fundamentals. Chomsky, not without detractors as well as disciples, has devoted himself to addressing "some of the basic problems of the biology of language" that have followed from the brain being "re-wired" when, in the far-distant past, our early ancestors made what Chomsky calls the "Great Leap" that gave us the wonderful capacity for human language as we went from a two-word stage to a three-word stage and then, *zap*, to "unbounded generation". He asks us to focus on properties "termed mental" and the "organical structure" of the human brain.

Steven Poole. *Unspeak*. New York: Little, Brown & Co., 2006. Pp. 288. \$23.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

The very title of Steven Poole's lively, engaging book recalls the classic essay by George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language," and the demonstration of dishonest "persuasion by stealth" of language manipulation under the tyranny of *1984*. Poole's focus is also on "rhetorical weaponry," a topic with which in conferences on Language and Politics and elsewhere ASG has been much concerned. Poole undertakes to be the new "Newspeak" expert for the new generation. He is not nearly as furious as he might be under the circumstances, maybe even more tolerant than his targets deserve.

He gets to the bottom of misuse by politicians of words such as *community*, *pacification*, and *disengagement* and phrases such as *ethnic cleansing*, *rectification of frontiers*, and *peace process*. He is especially annoyed by the military language of *collateral damage*, *surgical strike*, and *Operation Just Cause*, and he might also have noted that the current *preventative strikes* abroad (war to prevent war? shades of "we must destroy this village in order to save it" of the Viet Nam debacle) have brought to the US public such terms as *insurgency* (civil war), *incursion* (invasion), *peacekeeping* (occupation that may create more violence), and new ways of talking about war crimes, torture (after kidnapping and *extraordinary rendition*). Have you noticed the fact that *freedom fighters* have gone back to being *terrorists*? What do you think of *spin*? Poole idealistically calls for direct speech even in areas such as self-serving government announcements, embarrassments and cover-ups. *Taking responsibility* these days is a phrase that occurs more often in terrorist claims to atrocities than political spokespersons statements in press conferences. He might have hit on *pre-owned* (second-hand) and *acquisition free* (an charge added to the price for buying something).

He does not quite make enough of the public's confusion over such words as *tragedy* or the distinction between *hero* and *victim*. When we refer to *9/11*, stressing the date rather than the deed in both

its motivation and its dire results both materially and in mindset, we ought not to confuse *heroes* (police and firefighter and similar *first respondents*) and those in the World Trade Center who were simply unlucky to be victims of the attack, not tragic unless you define them as actually guilty in some way of some error of judgment and personal actions that brought on the terrible fate they suffered. When an innocent person is killed it is never a tragedy; it may be an accident or a crime or the failure of some others but not a tragedy. The UK example is Jean-Charles de Menzies, an innocent man in the London Underground. He was shot dead by police who took him for a terrorist because he was wearing a bulky anorak which just might, but did not, conceal a bomb in the dastardly July 21 *incident* in the subway system. There were indeed several terrorists at work; he had nothing to do with them. The British government admitted that quickly but tried to fob off the event thus: “For somebody to lose their life in such circumstances is a tragedy and one that the Metropolitan Police Service regrets”. The MPS made a hideous mistake. Mistakes get made, especially in tense situations. (The word *situation* now means “problem”.) Some people even in the *coalition of the willing* say that the Iraq war was a mistake. It may even be a crime. But it is not a tragedy. It may not be politically correct to say that but in a society cherishing free speech, *political correctness* is not correct. If someone comes into your neighborhood to commit a crime (the victim has confessed his purpose was to steal a car) and is battered with a baseball bat, that is not a *hate crime*, whatever color the alleged criminal is. It is a vigilante action, but we do not seem all of one mind on vigilantes now. Think of the Minutemen on the southwestern borders. Think of them and describe everything with precision, not prejudice. There just may be two sides to the matter as there are two sides to the border.

Newspeak goes well beyond Orwell’s “euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness”. It also has despicable elements of downright dishonesty, lying. It may be useful for politicians to sloganize a *War on Terrorism* and for military men to speak of *attrition* rather than piles of corpses. It may be helpful to censor pictures of the war dead being returned to the US in flag-draped coffins. However, reality and truth suffer nonetheless. It may help some to say *passed away* or just *expired* instead of *died*, and sentimental to call the dead body *the loved one* or *the deceased*. It may be religious to say they have *gone to their reward*, but facts are at least as important as faith. Speak the truth though the heavens fall is almost always the right thing to do. There are white lies and damn lies, politeness and sin.

When you do not speak accurately you cannot think accurately and when you cannot think right you cannot act right. When you say the current political football is *immigration* when it actually is *illegal immigration*, you must expect bad debates and bad decisions.

The US came up with a weapon of war called the *Peacemaker*. When making war is making peace, *1984* is here. Or maybe it is simple recognition of the old definition of peace as war by other means.

Eric Fong, ed. *Inside the Mosaic*. Toronto (ON): University of Toronto Press, 2006. Pp. viii, 260. \$55.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

How is recent immigration,” asks Fong, a University of Toronto sociologist, “shaping the structures and processes inside the Canadian mosaic?” The so-called mosaic is the mix of races, and colors, creeds, and cultures, within the city of Toronto, fairly recently made much larger by the forced integration of formerly independent boroughs and, for some decades now, a magnet for New Canadians. Language played a major part in Toronto’s attraction to immigrants: if immigrants arrived in Quebec or Montreal and stayed they had to learn French and stay there, but if they pushed on to settle in Toronto—or, for that matter, on the west coast in Vancouver and such places—they would acquire English and then be able to move to many places, even the US. Toronto has now long been the most popular destinations of immigrants to Canada’s big cities. Between 1991 and 2001, “close to two million immigrants” arrived in Canada, no longer chiefly white. Now 27 percent of Torontonians are of Asian descent.

So the Toronto I visited half a century ago, a decidedly Anglophile, rather grim Scottish-Presbyterian place with a forbidding air along Bloor Street and cinemas and other places of entertainment

that were unattended on Sundays, has disappeared. In its place arose has arisen a very diverse city, 44 percent immigrant. *Mosaic* suggests that the pieces are not just thrown together, as in the US *tossed salad*, that replaces the *melting pot*, a term from a play by Israel Zangwill of the very early twentieth century, but actually cemented permanently into an overall picture, each piece forever in its designated place. Of course *mosaic* is not a truly apt word for a linguistic and cultural community.

The book has essays on social structure, residential apartheid, public policies and polemics regarding immigration, blacks in Toronto (up from 1.1 percent in 1971 to 5.6 percent in 1996 and considerably more since, most from the Caribbean), “new immigrants” as opposed to “old immigrants” (such as Jews), laws, employment, even ethno-racial differences in public health, etc. But were there an index—there is none—language might not appear at all.

Sociologists need to face the fact that even if all the minorities in a diverse society spoke the same language (which they don't) there would be communication and relation problems, because each group would have in effect its own language, a dialect which included some and excluded others and served both to identify and to distance. Geolinguistics is macrosociolinguistics, and sociolinguistics needs to be a much more used tool of social scientists. Men from Ghana, for instance, may not only find themselves nonplussed by having to do “women's work” in Toronto such as washing dishes and minding children; they may also find communication challenging in new ways. The younger generation of Italian-Canadians may place religion (Catholicism) higher now than Italian ancestry in choosing a mate, the Italian language having been let go. There are notable language differences between immigrants from so-called Charter groups (Europeans) and those from other origins. There are social dialects which ought to interest sociologists. Prejudice and discrimination, identity and interaction, in which sociologists are deeply interested, are language based. The “shared networks” of the “diasporic middle class” are based on communication. The immigrants who arrive speaking English get better jobs, and those who learn English in Canada have a better chance of returning to (say) China for a rise in employment and financial and social status. Sociology's “group dynamics” greatly depends upon language.

There is not nearly enough in this book about language and education (conducted in English in Toronto and, incidentally, teaching young people, it is said, such false ideas as that it is against the law for their parents to spank them).

Canada encourages newcomers to become citizens more than the US does. Irene Bloemraad (California at Berkeley) compares and contrasts the incorporation of immigrants and refugees in Canada and the US in *Becoming a Citizen* (University of California Press, 2006, \$55.00 in hardcover, \$21.95 in paperback). The province of Ontario does not have the sort of language laws that are so much of a discussion point in reference to the province of Quebec. Canada has, as you know, two official languages; the US, thus far, has no official language. However, English is favored by law in 17 states and new immigration laws are pressing for applicants for citizenship to qualify in English. English might be the grout that sticks the pieces of a “mosaic” together.

Ans van Kemenade & Bettelou Los, eds. *The Handbook of the History of English*. Malden (MA): Blackwell, 2006. Pp. xvi, 655 with Index. \$149.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

If you want the detailed and chronological history of the English language you need the half-dozen substantial volumes on the topic published by Cambridge University Press. If you want a reliable single-volume collection of essays by experts who trace various aspects of change over time in terms of theoretical perspectives, you want this reference book, edited by Ans van Kemenade (an expert on syntax) and Bettelou Los (an expert on the infinitive), both of Radboud University in Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

The book is arranged not chronologically but by subject. Part I on “approaches and issues” asks, for example, if language change is for the better.

Part II on “words: derivation and prosody” deals, *inter alia*, with the influence of Old English on Modern English (from the “loaf ward” who cut the bread and distributed it we get the idea of “lord” who holds rank because he distributes the booty) and competition between individual words and word-formation patterns (for example clipping, which has created abbreviations which are now preferred to the longer word, such as *auto*, *flu*, and *piano*, and others that are in presumably ephemeral slang, such as those which, unusually, drop the first part of a word, while it is most often the end of a word that is dropped, to yield the likes of [neighbor]hood and [pa]rents, in English today. An end to competition between words occurs when one is specialized so that it ceases to be a synonym.

Part III becomes more challenging as the terminology comes to involve “case synchronism,” “discourse adverbs,” “inflectional morphology,” “OV order” (object before the verb), and so on.

Part IV on “Pragmatics” continues with word-order change (“SVO” Subject-Verb-Object is the English standard now), “scalar focus modifiers,” “Pragmatic marker in a matrix imperative clause” (Look here, child), etc.

Then comes the politically correct pre- and postcolonial section in the discussion of language change with attention to British influence on American dialects, “How English Became African American English,” and so on. That is Part V.

The final section, Part VI, speaks of eighteenth-century prescriptivism, the introduction of sociodynamics into linguistic study (here amazingly dated only from the 1980s), and English as the world’s second language in the article by Suzanne Romaine (Oxford) entitled “Global English: From Island Tongue to World Language”. It is this last section that probably will of greatest interest to members of the American Society of Geolinguistics. Will some day everyone speak English? Don’t count on it. The Internet does not use English exclusively and most use of the web is to order pizza or get a date locally. Large languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Hindi/Urdu, and Spanish are now almost as widespread as English.

True, English is the current language of much commerce (“the popularity of languages is mostly driven by the economic marketplace”), technology (“the relationship between technology and English is accidental” and “many minority languages have established a presence on the World Wide Web” and “internet growth is actually strongest in languages other than English” right now), and so on. Power and prestige can and certainly at some point will shift radically from the United States to some other imperium. The population of China (one fifth of all the world’s people) is vastly greater than that of the US and the US population is shrinking, unless you want to count the millions of illegal aliens coming in all the time—can/will that cease?—speaking mostly Spanish. It does not look as if English will become the language of the European Union. It does look as if more varieties of English will be created. (Already Microsoft spell-checker recognizes four varieties.) And a long time from now the world will speak some other language and history will lump English with classical Greek and Latin and eventually perhaps with Akkadian but never lose sight of English entirely as long as records of human society exist.

Remember that each and every world language has arisen as a result of particular historical circumstances and rises and falls as those circumstances change and disappear never to be exactly repeated. Right now “there is reason to question the continuation of the economic dominance of the US and Europe,” but global English in some form or other, always changing, and not without some inherent difficulties, whether for the worse or the better, will last our time.

Nan Levinson. *Outspoken*. Berkeley (CA): University of California Press, 2006. Pp. 372. \$15.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

An important geolinguistic matter is the extent to which communication is free under the laws of various countries. Even where the law guarantees free speech will always have to battle against those who

value their own opinions over those of others and are always willing and sometimes able to silence speech they find morally offensive, politically damaging, or otherwise unacceptable to them.

Nan Levinson (Tufts) has collected a number of horror stories and addresses them in the spirit of the popular films that praise the whistle blower and all the supposedly powerless people who fight The System and can defeat individuals who would make them shut up and stop disturbing the peace. These heroines and heroes stand up for the First Amendment, often with courage or doggedness in the face of opposition. They challenge Americans to accept the philosophy of Thomas Jefferson—not really very popular these days—that we are all entitled, short of treason and inciting to riot, to say frankly what we think and that this is good for us all as long as others are free to respond. Defenders of personal rights and even outrageous ideas have learned that despite the fact that entrenched corporations own the major media and the thought police and ethnic minorities are striving to eliminate all discussion which they unilaterally define as offensive or politically incorrect there are still ways in which individuals with sufficient determination can mount local and even national soapboxes and become celebrities, attracting journalistic attention to themselves and gaining the support of the huge army of bloggers and others who have created a whole new, free communications system.

Do you want to start your own blog (web log)? Go to one of these: Blog Drive ([blogdrive.com](http://blogdrive.com)), Blogger ([blogger.com](http://blogger.com)), or WikiHow ([wikihow.com/Start-a-Blog](http://wikihow.com/Start-a-Blog)). Please use your blog responsibly. Recently Karl Rove was found by the authorities investigating a famous leak of the name of a CIA agent to be quite innocent. He will not be prosecuted. However, for many months Rove was tried by bloggers who were sure the charges against him were “too good not to be true” or were simply using any and all means necessary to embarrass or hurt the Administration in the current very nasty political battle between Democrats and Republicans. That is a war that has seen huge attacks on both sides on the concept of what the satirical *Colbert Report* on television calls “truthiness”.

Tomi Adeaga. *Translating and Publishing African Language(s) and Literature(s)*. Frankfurt &c.: IKO-Verlag für Interkulturel Kommunikation, 2006. Pp. 393 with Index. \$39.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This erudite paperback deals with translating African languages and ethnic and national literatures into European languages, especially German. There are a number of African institutes there, as in Cologne, Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Mainz, but, she claims, such translations have been too few and inadequate, and many African authors have undertaken, of course, to bring the oral traditions to print and to write in the languages of colonization. She herself is a translator and knows all the technical difficulties. She also cites a number of problems of publishing in Africa where liars, cheats, and pirates are said to be rife in the book industry.

Ms. Adeaga concentrates on books translated into German, whether “creative writing” or scholarship but bypasses the autobiography in English of Kwame Nkrumah. She goes on to trace marketing, audience expectations and reception by critics and general public of African work in Germany, the impact of the Frankfurt book fair, and more. She lists the dozen “best books” out of Africa for that century. Those are: Meshack Asare (Ghana)’s *Sosa’s Call* (a prize-winning children’s book of 200), Chinua Achebe (Nigeria)’s *Things Fall Apart* (English 1958), Mariana Bâ (Senegal)’s *Un si longue lettre* (1979), Mia Couto (Mozambique)’s *Terra sonâmbula* (1992), Tsitsi Dangarembga (Zimbabwe)’s *Nervous Conditions* (1988), Asia Djebar (Algeria)’s *L’Amour, la fantasia* (1985), Naguib Mahfouz (Egypt)’s *The Cairo Trilogy* (1956– 1957), Thomas Mofolo (Lesotho)’s *Chaka* (1925), Ngugi wa Thiong’o (Kenya)’s *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), Léopold Sédar Senghor (Senegal)’s *Œuvre poétique* (1961), Chiekh Anta Diop (*Antériorité des civilisations nègres* (1967), and Wole Soyinka (Nigeria)’s *Ake: The Years of Childhood* (1981). You may wonder whatever happened to such better known African writers as J. Coetzee, Athol Fugard, Nadine Gordimer and Nelson Mandela, all of the Union of South Africa.

Ladislav Zgusta. *Lexicography Then and Now*. Edited by Frederic S. F. Dolezal & Thomas B. I. Creamer. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2006. Pp. xiv, 404 with Index. €118.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This reviewer confesses a personal interest in the lexicographer whose collected papers are presented, updated, in this expensive but extensive paperback in Max Niemeyer Verlag's *Lexicographia: Series Maior*, for I contributed more articles than any one else to a giant multilingual encyclopedia on onomastics of which Zgusta was one of the editors and remember his amazing erudition, stretching from linguistic theory to history and multilingual and infallibly exact, and his extreme care with all details, always with the practical and the reader of references clearly in mind. Here the editors (Georgia and Maryland), his grateful students, have done their work with full consultation with the great lexicographer whose career in his native Czechoslovakia (where Zgusta was born in 1924) and the US has done much to advance philological study and who knows as much about life and literature as he does about the history of literature and polyglot and monolingual dictionaries (whether for the learner or the native speaker) and names study and linguistic theory and practice and—well, just about everything connected with words. Who else could write in various languages (here English, German, Latin, etc.) on (say) a Sanskrit dictionary or on Mycenaean Greek, on Russian dictionaries and on the organization and style of Littré's *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, on a Czech-Chinese dictionary, on modern speech and computational dictionaries, on sociolinguistics and onomasiology, and on "Hocus Pocus vs. God's Truth or The Lexicographer's Creativity"?

You may know that Ursa Major himself (Dr. Samuel Johnson) in his great English dictionary defined a lexicographer as "a harmless drudge" but Zgusta can only be described as a scholarly treasure, a hardworking and wonderfully informed man who knows about the dictionary of Mexican Spanish, the dictionary of New Zealand English, and the reason why a dictionary of Newfoundland English does not challenge the Canadian standard. He knows and explains authoritatively and with charm, indeed, how all dictionaries relate to both the concept of standardization and the daily informal use and alteration of language in the mouths and blogs and books of the living.

Robert E. Denton, Jr., ed. *Language, Symbols, and the Media: Communication in the Aftermath of the World Trade Center Attack*. New Brunswick (NJ): Transaction, 2006. Pp. xiv, 226 with Index. \$24.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

The disaster of 9/11 brought us many fears, from a new sense of vulnerability to a new culture of victim celebrity, from economic dislocation to anxiety about inadequacy of first response in ever larger crises of the future inherent in American imperialism and the clash of religions. War came to our shores; up until now it has mostly "away games," although the event put into action a long-standing determination to effect "regime changes" abroad and prompted plans for an extended "war on terrorism" which promises to be very protracted if not permanent.

This paperback does not really deal in the wars of words between the *ad hoc* pressure groups of relatives of victims (pushing for their personal agendas in all details of rebuilding at the site, which is still basically a hole in the ground all these years later) and authorities local, state and federal, but it does address the limitations on freedom of speech and rationality of argument imposed by wartime conditions and the fact that very basically the question is of replacing millions of square feet of office space in downtown Manhattan. The book investigates the knee-jerk call for a return to "traditional values" and an end to an "age of irony," indeed a call to crusade in response to *jihad*. The way that politicians market themselves and other advertisers advertise, the way that civic pride and tourism ("hospitality crisis response") and many other enterprises present themselves in language, the new politically correct and the new saber rattling—all this and more spark the essays on "rituals of religious pluralism," democratic (and Republican) spin, the Patriot Act ("suspect, controversial, and many provisions challenged in federal

courts”), “healing” (somehow connected to the World Series) and “patriotism” (connected to displaying the flag on the anniversary of 9/11), political winners (such as former mayor Guiliani) and losers, and “electronic media self-censorship,” etc. About the only expectable index entry that is missing is *health*, although the disaster is the subject now of numerous lawsuits involving responders and others who claim to have been damaged by being at the site. The word *causes* is also missing, but, although “tragedy” is often used there is never any rumination over what prideful error the US might have made that might have motivated those who launched the attack to set out to wreak vengeance on us. The conventional wisdom is that “the attack was entirely without justification”. As to our actions now in response to the crime, we are told that we are no longer “selling democracy for its own sake, but exploring security”. We fight and we may in time come to settle for containment rather than nation building abroad.

The editor is chairman of Leadership Studies in the department of Communications at Virginia Tech. His concern and those of the team he has assembled is not on the causes of the “war on terror” and this first major military blow to us in that conflict but on subsequent political policymaking and communication (as key to “the cultural milieu”). This sociological approach to language is decidedly geolinguistic and leaves the rest to historians, international lawyers, ethicists *et al.*

Kristin Bührig & Jan D. ten Thije, eds. *Beyond Misunderstanding*. Philadelphia &c.: John Benjamins, 2006. Pp. vi, 339. \$138.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Bührig (Hamburg) & ten Thije (Utrecht) edit substantial essays, including one by the latter on perspectivizing (a psychological and sociological consideration) in intercultural communications research, on the basic assumptions underlying the theory of intercultural communication and the practice of analysis of that discourse beyond “misunderstandings” and “cultural stereotypes” and ethnic and social categorization and actual groups getting across to each other. There is talk of small talk in German telephone sales and German at the borders of Switzerland and Austria and so on, of intercultural ritual mourning practices in Caucasian Georgia, of problems in counseling and many other relations. There is special attention given to the relationship between languages and cultures. It all adds up to undermining the misleading fiction that misunderstanding is hardly to be avoided when one culture speaks of or to another, especially when some inequality or desire for domination may be involved in the exchange.

This is an expensive book for specialists seeking better pathways to intercultural communication through an improved understanding of the so-called gate-keeping of cultures. The general student of sociolinguistics can, however, make her or his way through the careful arguments here and pick up some clear principles of great use in thinking about communication between cultures. In that each and every language has within it a number of what may well be called cultures in these days of national diversity, and that modern times put a high priority on preserving peace and prosperity by ensuring that different peoples effectively understand each other, whatever languages people happen to speak, this book is truly important. The authors here are concerned also that “studies of intercultural communications may contribute to more general concerns within linguistics”.

Markku Filppula, Juhani Klemola, Marjatta Palander & Esa Penttilä, eds. *Dialects across Borders*. Philadelphia &c.: John Benjamins, 2006. Pp. xii, 291 with Index. \$138.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

ASG, which has held an international conference on Languages across Borders and, more recently, has heard a lecture in its annual series on dialects, will be interested in this major contribution to the specialized publisher’s eminent series in Current Issues in Linguistic Theory. The editing team, from Joensu and Tampere, has here collected papers from the XI International Conference on Methods in

Dialectology (5 – 9 August 2002, University of Joensuu, Finland) and those papers range over American dialects black and white, French dialects including Acadian French and Prince Edward Island French, German dialects including Swiss German and Mennonite *Plaatdeutsche*, Gaelic and Irish English, Glasgow dialect and Ulster Scots, West African Pidgin English and other varieties of English, Scandinavian languages, Russian dialects, so-called standard or Polder Dutch and pronunciation in “avant-garde Dutch,” and much more. We learn how areal linguistics operates in a world in which the concept of area is not so much a matter of physical layout as of mental constructs. We perceive how dialect borders which are real if not always perfectly clear are created and function, and, to be brief, above all we see how dialectology has in modern times moved far beyond the old “butterfly collecting” of data that pinned down examples but made no real effort to generate any general information. There is far more to be said than “languages vary in geographical space” and there is far more to dialects than the outworn idea that anyone who spoke “a dialect” was somehow inferior, too little educated to use the standard language.

This Benjamins series was established and has long been noted for—this is volume 273 in the series—“a forum for the presentation and discussion of linguistic opinions of scholars who do not necessarily accept the prevailing mode of thought in linguistic science”. In this collection scholars such as the leading American expert on the language of African-Americans (who have been in what is now the US since 1619, though only in later centuries in considerable numbers), J. L. Dillard, boldly test the frontiers of dialectological theory. Dillard comments on some theories of the origins of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). Other contributors look closely at the effects on language of political borders both national and internal (such as in certain US northern cities or in Glasgow or Dublin), some social and regional dialects, and other interesting topics.

International conferences bring together experts from all over to present and debate and academic publishers make it possible for the record to be made permanently and universally available to researchers who could not attend. Increasingly technology may transfer these meetings of minds from university campuses to the cyberworld, and permit of commentary and correction, argument or addition from other interested parties wherever they may be, but meanwhile universities such as the one mentioned in Finland and publication in hard covers by academic publishers, for the reference shelf as opposed to online, continues. The great, universal library of all human publication, and new ways of bringing forth and interacting with information of all kinds, with new ways of owning and distributing information and even easy translation of everything from any language into any other language, is, however, pretty soon, somehow, to come. And what that may do to strengthen standard languages and/or affect all sorts of dialects can now only be vaguely discerned if imagined at all.

Frederick Erickson. *Talk and Social Theory*. Cambridge (UK): Polity Press, 2005. Pp. xii, 228. \$24.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Another useful paperback from Polity Press is by a professor of anthropology at the University of California at Los Angeles. He relates speech (microethnographic discourse) to society. The book is a product of the author’s teaching and lecturing at conferences, etc., on discourse analysis of everyday conversation as social interaction. Erickson brings up many issues of interest to geolinguistics such as the connections between ethnography and economics, communication and commerce, language and society.

The book is sound enough for any specialist and straightforward enough for any educated general reader. It addresses both theory and practice. It calls for revisions in social theory and less deterministic concepts of social action. It talks compellingly about talk. It concludes by referring to the greatest American novel to date, Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*.

The story of Jack and Huck, like those of the persons from “real life” whose contemporary discourse practices have been reported in this book, attests to the viability and significance of wiggle room in the local, tactical conduct of social life, and to the need to take account of such wiggle room in constructing social theory as well as in analyzing the talk and listening that is done routinely in everyday life. Huck, as bricoleur (in the special sense I have used that term

in this book) became an agent of emancipation in spite of himself. In this, Jim was involved reciprocally.... Jim and Huck made history together, in small compass and without general notice, doing so opportunistically, from within prestructured circumstances not of their own choosing. For most of the novel the two companions are shown as adept in sliding by the panopticon.

If you can get past the wild shifts in levels of discourse or diction so evident in that passage from Erickson's summing up (I omitted a sentence in which words like *generativity* follow *wiggle room* and decline to stop to consider how *prestructured* differs from *structured*)—and after experiencing the numerous starts and stops and all the dialects, black and white, that appear in *Huckleberry Finn*—you will enjoy this careful study.

John B. Thompson. *Books in the Digital Age*. Cambridge (UK): Polity Press, 2005. Pp. xii, 468. \$29.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This British publication by a professor of sociology at Cambridge University (Jesus College) is a brilliant survey of many aspects of the arcane world of university press publishing and ordinary trade publishing as academic, economic, and cultural practices, with a detailed review of the field and its vast changes since 1980 as irresistible publish-or-perish factors to meet the once-thought-immovable academic publishing institutions and hardcopy publishing copes with e-books and other innovations in communication. Here is a story of technological and economic realities clashing with age-old traditions in the marketplace of ideas and big business (a business bigger than the pharmaceutical industry, a matter of tens of billions of dollars annually) both in Britain and the US. Localization and globalization, the advance of knowledge and the desire to make money clash. Old ways of publishing give way to new as the revolution of the paperback is followed by the digital revolution and not only scholarly journals but also new books are available online along with massive amounts of non-copyright material of the past being made available at a computer near you. Pedagogy and the spread of all kinds of information are forever changed by huge new data bases and even the nature of authorship in the light of the possibilities of self-publishing.

In half a millennium or so since Gutenberg published The Bible in German and William Caxton published the first book in English from movable type, books have been the foundation of academic research and the educational enterprises. "It is difficult," says Thompson's Introduction, "to imagine what Western culture would be, or indeed the culture of any major civilization anywhere in the world today, without the wealth of resources that are preserved, disseminated and handed down from one generation to the next in the form of the book." Bookless are still a way in the future.

Whether you are interested in the Internet or the incredibly high cost of scientific journals and college textbooks or the deluge of information and the new kinds of readers and googlers, as well as the mergers and other, immense, changes in book production, there is a great deal here for you about the turbulent Information Age of today. It is all presented in a serious, sensible, highly documented and very readable paperback book that is certain to become a standard in courses in the culture and communication society.

Polity Press is represented in the US by Blackwell Publishing (350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148). Serious linguists ought to request catalogues from Blackwell, one of the leading publishers in the field along with Oxford and Cambridge and other university presses, Routledge, Multilingual Matters in Britain, Max Niemeyer in Germany, and others. The introduction of politics into (or, better, an eager new emphasis on politics in) educational institutions has given a significant boost to sociolinguistics and it is beginning to attract attention to the macrosociolinguistic concerns of geolinguists.

Jonathan Charteris-Black. *Politicians and Libraries: The Persistent Power of Metaphor*. New York, &c.: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2005. Pp. xii, 239. \$69.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This expensive little hardcover book by Charteris-Black, senior lecturer in applied linguistics at the University of Surrey, takes up a topic which was the focus of one of ASG's most successful international conferences, that on Language and Politics (2002). He demonstrates with reference to the political discourse of politicians such as Churchill and Thatcher and Blair in the UK and Clinton and Bush in the US as they engage in the age-old game of using metaphor to link realities to myth. This is a concise study of political communication and its metaphors of personification and depersonification, crime and punishment, death and rebirth, heroism, and so on. There is Lakoff's moral accounting metaphor, with the debt to this or that religious or secular principle, the price to be paid, our stake in the outcome, the cost of acting or failing to act, and so on, as well.

George W. Bush declared on October 7, 2002:

We have no intention of imposing our culture. But America will always stand firm for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity.

Sound to me like imposing our culture. Whether we have the right or the duty to try that or not we can leave for argument in some other forum. But clearly, it seems to me, that the second sentence (which goes on to hit all the nice notes of "the rule of law; limits on the power of the state; respect for women; private property; free speech; equal justice; and religious tolerance") makes a lie of the first sentence. Political language, as Orwell pointed out in "Politics and the English Language" is often, if not fundamentally, dishonest and frequently, by metaphorical devices, plays with myths rather than with reality.

Orwell was echoed recently in the UK by John Humphreys (*Lost for Words*, Hodder, 2005, £7.99) calling for language that is "clear, simple, plain and unambiguous," which (with the caveat that "simple, plain" may be redundant) is a good idea; Humphreys finds a lot of dishonesty in political language.

Churchill delivered (or had an actor deliver for him) a ringing "we shall never surrender" at the very moment the king was packing for a possible move from Britain to Canada. George W. Bush said "The United States will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most dangerous weapons" when Iraq, it turns out, had no such weapons of mass destruction; the US did and still does—and almost certainly will use them if and when it sees a need to do so. Martin Luther King, Jr., declared that Republicans "have a high blood pressure of words and an anemia of deeds." At least he was clear. The "Iron Lady" (later Lady) Thatcher said that the Conservative party was "dedicated to good housekeeping." Clinton complained while electioneering: "All I've been asked about by the press are a woman I didn't sleep with and a draft I didn't dodge." Adolf Hitler outrageously declared that if you were to cut cautiously into an abscess of "filth or profligacy, particularly in cultural life" you would find "like a maggot in a rotting body, often dazzled by the sudden light—a kike."

God save us from politicians and their misleading and mischievous metaphors, some more foul than others but all inimical to truth in communication.

The cleverest evasion in politics this reviewer can think of occurred when an unsympathetic member of the audience asked "Pappy" O'Daniel, campaigning for the governorship of Texas, a question designed to lose him votes whichever way the candidate answered it: "Do you approve of teaching Spanish in Texas public schools?" "Well," said "Pappy" O'Daniel, "I have read The good Book, and if English was good enough for Jesus Christ it's good enough for me!" The crowd cheered, the band played, and the shrewd politician's fag-draped, flat-back truck drove off.

G. Tucker Childs. *An Introduction to African Languages*. Philadelphia, &c.: John Benjamins, 2006. Pp. xx, 265 with Index. Includes CD-ROM. \$59.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Some expert on African languages ought to have written this notice but those we consulted were too busy to do so, so I shall try. Perhaps a general geolinguist's background is sufficient for the task because this survey by an Africanist at Portland State University is for beginning students anyway, although the price for this paperback may deter them and even reference libraries with the restricted budgets of today from making a purchase. It counts on the student having some knowledge of certain European languages and points up the differences in a number of details from the clicking sounds of Khoisan to African consonant alternation systems, downdrift, etc., with useful maps, charts and diagrams, etc.

The author has based this work on years of classroom teaching. He tries hard to make unfamiliar material easily accessible to beginners. He adopts a descriptive-structural-typological method rather than a formal-theoretical one. This is essentially a textbook for *The Variety and Nature of African Languages* 101 if one, only the instructor, not the students, will perhaps buy. Experts may learn something from it as well because the examples given are drawn from a wide range of sources. One thing that the experts may wish to look into at greater length in some other study is the importance of area in the classification of the large number of African languages. Because of historical difficulties of communication, exacerbated by tribal identities, even within a single modern African nation, with borders perhaps drawn from colonizers who did not understand or care about the local languages and language families, there can be hundred upon hundreds of different languages in use.

Laurel J. Brinton. *The Structure of Modern English*. Philadelphia, &c.: John Benjamins, 2006. Pp. xxii, 335 with Index. Includes CD-ROM. \$29.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Another useful and more mainstream linguistic textbook from John Benjamins at a price that reflects the fact that in this case there are a number of competing books already in the market. This publication is worthy and introduces the advanced undergraduate to the finer points of phonology, morphology, lexical and sentence semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. It is practical in its approach and is especially suitable for ESL (English as a Second Language) undergrads and graduate students. The CD-ROM addresses pedagogical questions and teachers will be grateful for the advice given clearly and concisely. I can see this book as adoptable in college courses and also as being useful for those interested in linguistics to review the subject of structure.

Students will be struck by terms such as *cleft sentence* (to put emphasis on the end of a sentence) and *left dislocation* (to begin a sentence such as "Annette, she'll be home tonight") but the writing is as clear as can be. Those of us who were brought up without sentence diagramming—what did we ever do?—may find those diagrams look odd but they are not confusing. A reader might find a dictionary of linguistic terms useful in reading this book. A reader might find a dictionary of linguistic terms useful in reading this book. The reader will note that Sapir and Fries and other classic accounts of English structure could afford to be a little more dogmatic than modern language description permits. Quirk *et al.* (1985) still offer the best general English grammar but ESL teachers need to know how and why the grammars of other languages interfere with the student acquiring correct English, not to say becoming able to speak and write colloquial English in a changing world which is increasingly difficult from the rigidly rules one in which Fowler and Strunk and others pontificated confidently and sometimes caustically about what was right and what was wrong.

Quick! Give half dozen major uses of the definite article. Can you explain why the stress involved in the adjective differs from “*Alex is an absent-minded person*” to “*Alex is absent-minded*”? Can you define a *non-factive* expression? Need help? Inquire within.

Wilson McLeod, ed., *Revitalising Gaelic in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2006. Pp. xiv, 322 with Index. US \$38.00. Distributed in US by International Specialized Book Service, 920 NE 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Portland OR 97213-3786.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

McLeod, senior lecturer at the University of Edinburgh, for this valuable paperback has assembled an expert team on the state of Gaelic in Scotland today in terms of cultural contexts and sociolinguistics, identity and community, education and the media, all with an undercurrent of national pride and devolution politics. (These papers date from before the Gaelic Language Act of 2005 but make it clear what was on the way.) Half a dozen of the 16 articles are in Gaelic, and for those English synopses are provided. Many of the articles arise from papers delivered at a conference held at the University of Edinburgh in July 2004 (in connection with which see also the next review here).

I wish I had been able to read McLeod’s piece in full in Gaelic because it deals with a topic of geolinguistic interest that came up in recent ASG conferences, which is the guarantee in the European Union that minorities be able to conduct official business in their own minority languages and the experience in Wales, for instance. The matter of the domination of state majority language domination of education and its effect on various matters from public diglossia to translation costs to personal identity is also involved, as is the juggernaut of English worldwide. This is but one of many factors, ranging from the unifying effect of a single language to the economic effects of the use of several languages if only in certain circumstances. (Even McLeod suggests that government documents be bilingual only in important cases, sidestepping the importance of recognizing all minority languages as equal to the majority language but at the same time cannily taking notice of the fact that practicality has sometimes to trump idealism when it comes to both politics and commerce.)

Language policies in Scotland have not to date received as much attention as in the cases of the likes of Eire and Wales, where some people are likely to ask why not English for everyone and won’t culture-wide bilingualism be either pretty much impossible or cost ineffective as governments attempt to compete in larger markets. This book, with its facts and charts and results of both attitudinal questionnaires and common-sense reflection, both helps to focus on neglected aspects of Gaelic’s situation in Scotland and also to remind us that the preservation of difference in a rapidly homogenizing world faces a number of obstacles, long-established and prejudiced and new and pragmatic.

Wilson McLeod, James E. Fraser & Anja Gunderloch, eds. *Cànan R Cultar/Language & Culture*. Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2006. P. x, 294 with Index. US \$38.00. Distributed in the US by International Specialized Book Services (address above).

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Papers of the third Gaelic conference at the University of Edinburgh (2004) are presented by three editors from that university. There is a list of all the papers read at the conference with those that appear in *Revitalising Gaelic in Scotland* asterisked. In this present paperback such papers as appear in Gaelic do not have an English summary and, in concentrating on matters of grammar and syntax and literary onomastics and literary traditions and folklore and such, this volume may be of less interest to geolinguists than the sociolinguistic pieces of contemporary focus in *Revitalising Gaelic in Scotland*. Here even the piece on demography by Jonathan Dembling, a postgraduate student in anthropology at the University of Massachusetts, is not a report on the current state of Gaelic in Canada but essentially an attack on the old

myth that there are more Gaelic speakers in Canada (in the Maritime Provinces almost exclusively) than there are “in all of Scotland”. Dembling takes a fresh look at an “old census” (1901).

One of the important aspects of geolinguistics as Mario A. Pei saw it was that it dealt with practical problems in the world of today and escaped from the fusty philologists who were more interested in etymology than in economics or syntax than society. Geolinguistics is more concerned with the sociodynamics of today than with history or the history of literature, although the conference in question demonstrates still once more the great interest there is in both. A mention of this conference brings to mind two points that geolinguists need to remember. The first is that there is a great deal of sentiment and personal involvement in all modern speakers, partly due to a long literary tradition preserving the pride of a people, and therefore makers of language policies that will work both fairly and fairly well must keep that fact clearly in mind. The second is that staging conferences generates scholarship which, when proceedings are printed, energizes the whole scholarly field.

Anne Betten & Monica Dannerer, eds. *Dialogue Analysis IX: Dialogue in Literature and the Media*. 2 vols. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2005. Paperbacks: Vol. I (Pp.xvi, 467) €55.30 and Vol. II (Pp. xvi, 383) €41.30.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

These two expensive volumes in Max Niemeyer Verlag’s series *Beiträge zur Dialogforschung* consist of well edited papers from an important conference start off in the first volume with a plenary paper by Emma Schmitz-Emans on “Literary multilingualism as Construction in Dialogicity” and indeed the whole collection is multilingual, with papers in various European languages reflecting the widespread interest among specialists of language in action in the subject of dialogue, both in books and in other media. Naturally they also bristle with words like *dialogicity*.

The conference drew experts from various countries and was held at Salzburg in April 2003. The papers that the conference produced in a number of sessions over four days will be welcomed by a wide variety of specialists, I should think, from names scholars concerned with literary onomastics in poetry, fiction and drama from the Greeks until the present to students of modern communications and even psychiatrists who deal in the talking cure. Here one can learn about literary games and interruption patterns in parliamentary debate, punctuation in literary dialogue, monologues and stream of consciousness as well as dialogues, “conflict talk in contemporary plays by women” and comic exchanges in Greek and Latin, just to mention some of the matters taken up in the first volume. Today we are getting novels written mostly, even entirely, in dialogue.

The second volume brings us linguistics closely examining a wide variety of topics relative to the *roman-photo*; television in a number of aspects; British, Swedish, Venezuelan, and French political interviews (of both politicians and talking-head gurus) and statements; radio broadcasting; film, and more, including consideration of contrastive, polemic, *argumentum ad hominem* and other rhetorical devices and the manipulation of the media. There is even some material on electronic media and language, but up to 2003 the experts had not caught on to the fact that on the Internet and especially in the blogs (web logs, where we get more of conversation, one might say, than of writing) there is a goldmine corpus of language as it actually is used these days nationally and internationally.

One of many interesting articles here in the second volume, and they range from “wordplay in audio-visual texts” to election-night broadcasts, is on job recruiting online and how language is used there. The experts miss out pretty much on periodical literature, and there is much that remains to be analyzed regarding the different styles of news and opinion magazines and the way that spin is used or value systems and agendas are revealed in the likes of *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Economist*, *Der Stern*, *The New Yorker* and the tabloid press. We need to look harder at, among other powerful media, *The New York Times* and the sensational British and American tabloids, too. They play immensely significant part in

shaping the modern mind. They are daily influencing people on every level from the individual mindset to the national and international political policies.

I wish these experts could have worked on the 2005 revelation of US bribery of Iraqi journalists in the propaganda war that is so large a part of the war on terrorism. The people who cast a piercing eye on dialogue will from now on have a field day looking at the legal transcripts of all the venal corporation executives who are on trial as I write or are scheduled for trial for stealing from and bringing down huge corporations at great cost to stockholders and indeed to society at large. And just today, as I write in the first week of 2005, a sleazy but long successful influence peddler in Washington has decided to rat on all his political cronies in Washington. This quite understandable deal the man has made to get a reduced sentence and by become a states' witness to help himself—it is a time for *sauve que peut*—promises to produce a lot of documents that a lot of people wanted to keep secret. We are in for a great deal of give-and-take courtroom drama. Already a significant number of congressperson have started to donate to charity—but this should not be permitted to keep them from losing office and going to jail—gifts or bribes they received to influence legislation. Expect that there will be many more revelations, with partisan fighting in the press as well, wild diatribes, hysterical defenses, a lot of mud slinging because there is even more mud than usual available. It looks as if, at long last, corruption at Foggy Bottom will become much more apparent to the general public, always getting the “facts,” of course, filtered through the printed media and the broadcast media and colored by their own political stances.

One television commentator says of his highly popular program, “The spin stops here”. With recent revelations of wrongdoing that include mismanagement of post-hurricane funds and public officials involved in various crimes (not all financial—the chief of staff of the vice-president is charged with “outing” one of our undercover spies) spin is going to be everywhere. There is in the US no greater source of verbal battle than the differences between Republicans in power and desperate Democrats. The scandals promise more of a war of words and a shaping of information than even an election year can provide.

Geolinguistics deals in language as it is used today not only in nasty national political arenas but also from the global perspective. In these two volumes there is a lot of information and perceptive opinions on how the crucial aspect of exchange in communication is revealed in dialogues of various kinds. What one can learn from these experts will assist one to judge the spokespeople and the anchorpersons and the reporters and the spin doctors' releases that are going to come down on us like an avalanche. That will involve the entertainment and advertising media (the cinema, radio, television), naturally, and the news (which most Americans get not from political experts but have read to watchers off of cue cards by well-groomed “reporters”).

With party politics at home and a war on terror worldwide, this is a great time for those who like to see people arguing with each other and attempting to win the battles of verbal exchanges, face-to-face or through the printed or broadcast word, etc.

Krisztina Karoly & Agota Foris. eds. *New Trends in Translation Studies*. Budapest: Akademia Kiado, 2005. Pp. 220. \$40.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Published with the participation of the Hungarian Association of Applied Linguistics and Language Teachers and the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, this is a *Festschrift* for the woman who established serious translation studies in Hungary, Kinga Klaudy. It offers essays in English and in other languages (with English abstracts) by the editors and 13 other scholars from Hungary, Scandinavian countries, Spain, and the European Commission, all bolstered by impressive references. It deals with TS (Translation Studies) strategies and “explicitation,” models and paradigms, terminology, translator education, findings and theoretical conclusions of TS workers, translation hermeneutics and stylistics, “the appearance of tautology in the target,” machine translation and other aspects of corpus studies.

This is by and for hands-on specialists and advanced TS theorists, people seeking accuracy and speed. It defends the importance of linguistics in carrying over meaning from one language to another, whether involving “friendly” or “unfriendly” language pairs.

Susie Dent. *Fanboys and Overdogs: The Language Report*. New York &c.: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. x. 163. \$19.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

A *fanboy* is of course a male fan, a geek who hides insecurities behind an obsession with comic books and such. An *overdog* is the opposite of an underdog. The author seems unaware of the use of the German *über* and the cartoon takeoff on Superman, the Underdog. Ms. Dent is a UK television personality who reports on mod language and the book may contain a great many pop words, drawn from *The Guardian*, *The Observer* and other British publications, words unfamiliar this side of The Pond.

E-mail has produced new terms such as *phishing* (seeking personal information for no good purpose and here appearing as *spear phishing*), *memail* (drawing attention to the self), *spit* (voicemail equivalent of *spam*), *slurpware* (computer techniques for financial fraud), *keylogging* (installing spyware to catch all keystrokes), etc. Britons would not know old-fashioned *doing a [Steve] Brody* and Americans are ignorant of what in the UK is called *doing a [Gerald] Ratner*. There is a dab at “British English in the US”. We could use the handy *fugly* (which is f\*cking ugly) but we do have as the Brits do not the expression *coyote ugly*. The British are picking up our gangsta *bling* and worse to supplement what they get from the local underclasses.

Some of this slanguage will catch on; most of it will go the way of *lounge lizard*. *Pig* (police officer) is British nineteenth century in origin and had a run in the rebellious US 'sixties. I like *Papa Ratz* (Cardinal Ratzinger became pope) and I see that the shorter *wong* has replaced *wonga* for what long ago was *the necessary* (cash). All this goes to remind us of the lively inventiveness of slang (marvelous things are found in the mud) and to some extent underlines the ways in which modern technology and American world dominance affect global English.

The book even takes a very brief look at newspaper headlines. It does not have the show-biz classic *Hix Nix Stix Pix* (Rural People Do Not Like Movies about Hillbillies) but presents the Australian *Ratbag Reffo Does a Rudder* (Vietnamese Refugee Tried to Escape by Boat). In New York, a tabloid once ran *Headless Corpse in Topless Bar*. In Britain, the tabloid *Sun* reported the sports news that the Celtics (Glasgow) lost to the Caledonian Thistles (Inverness, known as the Caley): *Super Caley Go Ballistic, Caley Are Atrocious*. As an undergraduate, I mocked sports headlines in a fake tale of the Montreal Fig Leafs (there was a Maple Leafs team) playing hockey at The Forum: *Figs Fight Furiously in Filthy Forum Puck Fray*. I would like to have a recount in the competition for the craziest headline of all time, the winner of which was: *Franz Ferdinand Found Alive—World War I in Vain*.

José Medina. *Language: Key Concepts in Philosophy*. New York: Continuum, 2005. Pp. viii, 216. \$16. 95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This series devotes a volume each to mind, logic, ethics, and epistemology, and now comes one that succinctly and lucidly, considering philosophers' inveterate pussyfooting and abstruse scholarly terminology, presents a brief inquiry into the nature and purpose of language.

Until the twentieth century philosophers looked at language in terms of communication but without due attention to all that the sender-receiver-context situation deserved. With the twentieth century

came less belief in God giving the gift of speech to Adam and Eve in Paradise and more credence in the scientific explanations of an evolution of mankind's physical and mental powers to comment on the world and communicate to others in speech and later writing. So grew up Communication Arts and Speech Act Theory and many theories and terminologies (locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary effects, a code as an organon of iterability, deconstruction, *différance*, illimitability of context, departures from intelligibility, attributive or referential descriptions, and much more, excuse the odd words) as well as numerous arguments (here dissected) from the spectator or participant point of view. Debates took up the extent to which language may be gene determined in humans, how exactness may be transmitted, and the pitfalls of confusion of words and things against which General Semantics warns. Most of all, language is seen as performance, a complex performance which interacts with the circumstances of communication, a performance with actors and audience and the conventions of a theater which reflects its cultural matrix, a performance creating a number of mindsets reflected in and limiting various languages, giving various peoples separate identities and demanding new sociolinguistic and cultural tools for the analysis of consciousness, cognition and communication in various individual and larger "life-worlds". The speech communities and their effects upon the large world of more or less small communities are our concern in geolinguistics. Consider Wittgenstein in *Zettel* (1980):

An education quite different from ours might also be the foundation for quite different concepts. For here life would run on differently. What interests us would not interest *them*. Here different concepts would no longer be unimaginable. In fact, this is the only way in which *essentially* different concepts are imaginable.

Ours is an ever-changing, post-Babel world in which groups of people with different languages, never completely translatable, must strive for peace and prosperity together and communicate as well as possible between sexes, generations, tribes, and nations. We must always have to face the fact that not everyone thinks the same way as we do and that what they say or write to us will be and has to be interpreted. We must continually be striving to achieve as nearly as possible a first-person plural We. We all are in Spaceship Earth, all on the same journey from we know not whence to we know not wither, and we are all equipped (how? why?) with powers to address our problems on the trip.

Thomas Ricento, ed. *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*. Malden (MA): Blackwell, 2006. Pp. xii, 371. \$34.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

In Blackwell's important series on Language and Social Change this paperback, edited by a professor of bilingual and bi-cultural studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio, presents 19 commissioned essays by experts on theoretical and methodological perspectives both broad and specialized. Readers of *Geolinguistics* will recognize the names of three scholars who have been keynote speakers at conferences staged by the American Society of Geolinguistics: Joshua Fishman, Robert Phillipson, and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas.

Language policy has always been a concern of governments, and in the twentieth century it came into its own as a significant branch of sociolinguistics attracting scholars from many disciplines (including economics, education, ethnology, cultural studies, psychology and political science) and countries (seven of which are represented here). Some other contributors to the book have been speakers at our conferences, their earlier work appearing in our various proceedings.

The editor here provides a useful introduction and overviews prefacing the two sections of the book on theory and method. Don Cartwright (University of Western Ontario, Canada) is of special interest to us as he writes briefly of plural societies in Wales and Belgium in "Geolinguistic Analysis and Language Policy," commencing thus (p. 194):

Geolinguistics seeks to answer the questions “what, where, when, who and why” of language (van der Merwe, 1993, p. 230). Geolinguistic analysis involves the investigation of historical processes that have contributed to the development of current patterns of human contact and interaction between and among different cultural groups. It also involves the investigation of the patterns of movement of people and the concomitant shifts in regional ethnic composition. Field research will be conducted into language use in the local community to uncover and analyze places (domains) where a minority language is used or not used. Geolinguistic analysis operates on the premise that cultural domains are significant to the retention of ethnic identity, and as cultural space between ethnic groups erodes through domain sharing as opposed to domain exclusion, it is possible to anticipate demands for cultural protection. This protection may be sought through ratification of language rights and the expansion of domains for exclusive language use as a means of fortifying one (important) element of the group’s eroding cultural identity (Veltman, 1977).

Cartwright provides an annotated bibliography and a set of discussion questions, as do the authors of other contributions to this interesting book. The whole addresses issues of topical areas and globalizing forces, legislation and policies of gradualism, majority-minority relations in both language and politics, theory and practice in both large multilingual societies (of which the United States and India are but two) and nations which would like to have a single language as a means of maintaining history and borders.

R. Clifton Spargo. *Vigilant Memory: Emmanuel Levinas, the Holocaust, and the Unjust Death*. Baltimore (MD): Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. Pp. xvi, 311. \$60.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

The title of this serious, erudite book by an associate professor of English (author of *The Ethics of Mourning*) on a significant Jewish ethicist and the general subject of crime and its victims, the mourning for them, the guilt and the justice demanded for them, right away involves us in the manipulation of language, because the Jews seem to have claimed the Holocaust (which traditionally meant “total destruction by fire,” not partial genocide by various other means) as their own. Look in the index and you will not find *communists*, *gypsies* or *homosexuals*. It is as if the terrible Nazi crimes involved not just a majority of Jews but Jews only.

The book is more about Levinas’ philosophy, much better known in France than here, and attitudes toward suffering and death than about language, but it does in fact have a few pages on “The Language of the Other” that might well have been a seed for a whole other study. That would have been an examination on how we all, in different languages, unethically describe The Other and how that differentiation or dehumanization permits us to act atrociously against fellow human beings. Language, of course, enables us to confuse our own minds and direct our own behavior, to influence the behavior bad and good of others, and to plan retribution or revenge or forgiveness as we recall injustice and weigh the damage it has done or plan to move beyond the past in reconciliation or plan to avoid similar crimes in the future. (“Never again!”) Neither *revenge* nor *forgiveness*, however, is in the index either.

I do not wish to be the kind of reviewer who writes at length about “the book the author should have written” rather than the one he did. The one he did is as awkward in English as Levinas is in French. Here are a couple of sentences of a passage quote twice in this book and translated by the author from the French of Levinas:

In the approach (*dans l’approche*) I am instantly a servant of the one who is near (*du prochain*), already late and guilty of being late. I exist as though I were put in order (*ordonné*) from the outside (*dehors*)—traumatically commanded—without interiorizing by means of representation and concepts the authority that commands me.

The one he did write will have a small but interested readership among philosophers, and those especially interested in language may wish to ponder whether the state of modern philosophy would be

better and more widely understood were philosophers in French and English and in other tongues were better able to write clearly, concretely, and concisely. For the small amount of material on language, geolinguists will probably not consult it. They will not want to wade through the jargon-ridden and technical prose nor suffer the constant references to academics of whom they have never heard, but Spargo's detailed study does bring up a matter anyone interested in language in action has to consider, more than he has set himself to do here. That is how language can create and broadcast dangerous characterizations and prompt despicable violence. Names can indeed hurt you, even more than sticks and stones.

Sufia M. Uddin. *Religion, Ethnicity, and Language in an Islamic Nation*. Chapel Hill (NC): University of North Carolina Press, 2006. Pp. xxii, 224 with Index. \$49.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

An associate professor of religious studies at the University of Vermont has written engagingly about a Muslim nation, set up as secular but facing, as all nations do, the questions of religion and ethnic and national identity. Bangladesh is a country in which identities align with, and sometimes come into conflict with, the *umma* or larger world of Islam. These identities arise from secular as well as religious history and are much colored by language, one of the most powerful creators of nationhood.

In the region, pre-colonial Bengal spoke Bengali and a number of other languages, each having its own ethnic identity, and practiced imported Buddhism, native Hinduism and the Islamic religion which had been introduced by Urdu speakers making inroads from northern India. Languages and cultures interacted, and from that arose local variation and local political situations. When Pakistan gained independence from India in 1948, Muhammad Ali Jinnah announced that "the people of the province can choose any language they wish" but that there had to be "only one lingua franca" or state language and that had to be Urdu, since the nineteenth century the pre-eminent South Asian language, because Urdu embodied "the best that is in Islamic culture and Muslim tradition and is nearest to the languages used in other Islamic countries". This despite the fact that then and now Bengali, the oldest modern Indo-European derived language, was spoken by most of the people in what was then the province of East Bengal.

From this book which focuses on Bangladesh we can understand that special diverse society but also gain some insight into the tensions between individual Islamic states and the larger world of Islam and, perhaps, the tensions between that large world of Islam and the West engaged right now in a "civilizational clash," people being called upon to advance, or die for, one "more authentic than the other". The author here says: "This analysis of the Bengali Muslim example demonstrates how language and popular ritual life play a central role in the formation of hyphenated, mutually influenced ethnic and religious communal self-perceptions."

To ASG, which held international conferences recently on Language and Identity and Language and Politics and this year (2006) addresses Language and Nationality, *Constructing Bangladesh* is right in line with some of the most vital of the American Society of Geolinguistics' interests. In Bangladesh a special dialect of Bengali had to be created (influenced by Arabic, Persian, and Urdu) for popular use and in Bangladesh ethnolinguistic nationalism, religious nationalism (religious reforms having to be discussed in Bengali for those who did not understand Urdu), and "the more international Islamist vision" (although "Islam in the Middle East is certainly not uniformly practiced") have woven a varied tapestry. There is much to be learned from Bangladesh about diverse and developing nations and the way that languages enter into the mix.

Aneta Pavlenko. *Emotions and Multilingualism*. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. iv, 304 with Index. \$90.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This more than usually expensive book for specialists is more than usually original in the field of linguistics on which the subjects of bilingualism and multilingualism. Those have traditionally been approached in terms of English as a Second Language and in terms of giving minorities respect for their ethnic identities, so tied up with their mother tongues. This book digs much deeper.

What about the fact that the mother tongue always has a great emotional appeal and the necessity to learn a more “important,” more “useful” language in this Babel of a world today may be resented? What about the fact that even teachers of bilingualism tend to look at linguistics from a single language aspect? What about emotions that are felt and expressed: how are they affected by the fact that a person may have more than one language in which to frame and communicate them? What are the cross-cultural emotional lexicons and what are the culturally formed vocal clues to emotions? What are the neurolinguistics and the sociolinguistics of second-language learning? What about Gerda Lerner and people forever damaged like her? She is mentioned in this thorough study as writing after the Holocaust:

The truth was I no longer wanted to speak German; I was repelled by the sound of it; for me as for other Americans it had become the language of the enemy....I ceased speaking German altogether.

Up until now emotions have been mostly the province of psychology but now Ms. Pavelnko (Temple University) brings the linguist’s attention to them in a study which is not only psycholinguistic but interdisciplinary and in fact reaches out to connect linguistics to anthropology, biology, communication theory and so on down the alphabet.

An old saying asserts that to acquire a new language is to acquire a new soul. Do you feel like a different person when using a language other than your mother tongue? If you command various languages, are there any customs you have established for yourself about when to think on one rather than another? Are there languages you feel are more effective in conveying certain emotions than your native language is? Is it easier or harder to discuss your emotions in Language X or Language Y? Do forbidden words and taboo topics go better or worse for you in this language or that? Are you more or less comfortable in one language or another in one situation or another? (This has had significant effects in the history of literature, for instance.) Precisely what explains that and what are the actual consequences of that? These are just a few of the important questions that this study asked in research and analyzes in detail.

This book is a model of solid linguistic research and straightforward organization and writing; it can interest non-specialists who will take it up and take it seriously.

Leslie Savan. *Slam Dunks and No-Brainers: Language in Your Life, the Media, Business, Politics, and, Like, Whatever*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005. Pp. 340. \$23.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Ms. Savan, who usually writes about advertising, is at the deeper end of the pool, far out of her depth, when it comes to linguistics, but no book that cobbles together a lot of examples on the vitality and occasional idiocy of modern American speech and writing can fail to entertain. It can even inform, if you stick with it despite the author’s rather off-putting personality and a radical left political stance that intrudes. That stance is one that, as our last election showed, a bare majority of those who bother to vote do not share.

The author does not like the fact that the liberals took a trouncing in an election which put conservatives (or *neoccons* or—whatever) fully in command of the Presidency, the Senate, the House of Representatives, the Supreme Court, the governorships of the most important states and the mayors' offices in most of the significant cities. Ms. Savan dislikes President Bush's plans for saving the world and even the United Nations. The latter may not be worth saving as it stands. The Israeli-Hezbollah dust-up produced a call for the UN to step in and do something and in fact a number of nations are going to provide troops to occupy southern Lebanon and (at no cost to Israel) to give Israel a sort of buffer zone on her northern border. Israel hails the UN order. But it is many years now since almost everyone in the UN except Israel and the US, whose veto scotched the deal and showed we do not care what more than 100 other nations want, return within its pre-1967 borders. Why should that UN idea be ignored? Answer: we all, especially the US and Israel, like to use the UN for our own purposes, and when most of the world disagrees with us, we ignore our fellow nations. We believe in our own best interests, not a democratic vote. Well, that's politics.

The engaged author here is clearly political, and why not? She deplores the whole world's shaky future. In addition to disliking the results of the US popular vote, quite as much as the US dislikes the results of the elections of a Hamas government in Palestine and Hezbollah representatives in the government of Lebanon, she detests the thoughtlessness or, as she says, "thought-foreclosing" aspect, of some speech of the populace. She is incensed by new world order of blink and the no-brainer. Hel-*OOO!*: she dislikes the average American and the favor would very probably be returned if Mr. or Ms. Average could be contacted. Except for the majority here, these days, who does not dislike the average American, justifiably or not?

In popular speech, if one digs deeper than this shallow collector, one can find evidence of a host of interesting American trends, from the failure of American education to the speed and complexity of changing culture in a nation ever more diverse and with ever widening gaps between the recent slackers and the current twixters, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the red states and the blue states, all that jazz. There are a number of American dialects and even new gestures that replace or enhance communication for us all, know what I'm sayin'? There are dim speakers and lazy thinkers. Wassup? Whazzup? What up? Howzat? "Speak that I may know you." Clearly, elocution and logic need to be put back somehow into the American curriculum. We need to wise up. Meanwhile we shall have to cope as well as we can with the mumbled, mangled, and mindless. We can also as far as that [is concerned] delight in the inventiveness of the slangsters who now and then come up with a winner of a word or a phrase that makes us wonder how we ever got by without it before. Americans have always been boldly entrepreneurial and wildly inventive. If once in a while they invent some cheap gimmick, or something like an expensive sold-silver anchovy unwinder, well, in the phrase that is one of the great American contributions to the art of dealing daily with reality. So What?

Ms. Savan is as a fan of language of the philatelic rather than professional sort, collecting but unable or unwilling to do much with what she gets except put the items in books, for show. Once the new words and expressions are noted, even by Ms. Savan or Mr. Safire or some other pop writer with Lexis/Nexis or Google at their command, the task becomes winking out (a useful UK verb!) what lies within the coinage, connecting words to mindsets. Or at least attempting etymologies (often difficult with slang) and identifying speech domains, etc. For serious investigators there is the daunting task of checking carefully to be sure that (say) US *crunk* really is from *crazy* + *drunk* (which seems to be the case) and whether (say) UK *chav* is really an acronym of Council Housed And Violent (which seems not to be the case). One has to research beyond computer trolling. One has to research, analyze and evaluate. This book stops short of any of that.

So *Slam Dunks and No-Brainers* is more of a no-brainer than a slam dunk. Perhaps we can say it was the peculiar kind of slam dunk that the war in Iraq was once said to be. This book does not dig very deeply into language. But there are many junk pleasures around in the media, in publishing as well as the big and small screens and such, and, with depression and joblessness about to increase and the dollar gets worth less all the time, we need and will increasingly have time for a little silly fun. This book is –OK (that is "minus-OK," a term I have this moment coined for something below par) if you don't have high expectations and you find novelty amusing. This book is the product of a particularly New York

conviction that one has “pressurized time” (as the author puts it) but quite enough to make a splash and/or a buck by dashing off some pop piece in which one *kvetches* in a rather *JAP* way as opposed to coming straight out and whining about the decline of old-fashioned standards in a rather *WASP* way. It could even make you realize that there is a big and truly important book to be written about the language of complaint at all educational levels and in all ethnic connections.

Nevertheless, as I suggested at the start and now repeat because readers these days need all the help they can get, as for the book in hand you can pick out the colorful examples and ignore the rest, much the way that as a child I used to pick out the raisins in the rice pudding, most of which I could not bring myself to swallow. Today there may be, to paraphrase Shakespeare, quickie books in the running brooks, empty but feel-good sermons in stones, and, thank God, a little good now and then here and there despite what Jimmy Carter used to call the “malaise” in these ever less United States.

A real Patriot Act would be to get real about what is going on and to think and speak with clarity and concision among ourselves and to the rest of the world we seem to have signed on to nanny. Let us be world leaders in thinking straight and communicating honestly. First, for that, we shall have to improve American education, drastically.

Kristyan Spelman Miller & Paul Thompson, eds. *Unity and Diversity in Language Use*. New York: Continuum, 2005. Pp. 221. \$24.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

The fourteenth annual conference of the British Association for Applied Linguistics held at the University of Reading in 2001 produced the papers selected here by two scholars from that university. The plenary session papers dealt with subjective dimensions of language learning (Claire Kramsch, California at Berkeley) and global English in applied linguistics (Barbara Seidelhofer, Vienna). Other papers address various pedagogical issues including genre as a sociologically constructed entity which presents a struggle for diversity within unity in linguistic pedagogy (Julian Edge & Sue Wharton, Aston), children of immigrants learning English as a second language and also children at the computer, university students’ persuasive texts and medical students as they interact with patients, the relationship of researchers to their research in applied linguistics, lexical complexity, “changing attitudes toward artifice in language and learning,” teachers’ gestures and how students interpret them, random association networks, and the Pit Corder Memorial Lecture by Keith Johnson (Lancaster) which tackles the fact that some researchers argue that there are “cognitive processes involved in writing that will be present in *any* writing” and others argue that “the processes are distorted if taken out of context”. Johnson says that we must move from one of these positions to the other—“*and back again*”.

These papers give us a lot of sound research and stimulating ideas as well as some surprising statistics, as, for instance, the German scholar J. Beneke’s estimate that “80% of all communications involving the use of English as a second or foreign language does not involve any native speakers of English”.

Such international conferences stimulate the conducting and presentation of research, put workers in the field in touch with each other, and, even if the conversations and some of the papers of the conference do not reach print, make available a lot of the material in a permanent record accessible to researchers throughout the academic world. That is why the conferences of the British Association for Applied Linguistics and indeed the conferences of the American Society of Geolinguistics are to be credited with supporting and disseminating important scholarship explaining language as it functions in the world today.

Michael Wex. *Born to Kvetch*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005. Pp. 320. \$24.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

*Kvetch*, as all New Yorkers know, even if they are not Jewish, is Yiddish for “complain”. The English does not have a hope of conveying the profound pleasure that bitching and fussing gives to those who *shlep* along in life in a state of constant annoyance. I can easily curb any enthusiasm for Larry David (as actor, not writer) and do not love Raymond but I think Woody Allen is a genius and I watch *Seinfeld*. So sue me.

Those who delighted in Leo Rosten's books on the joys of Yiddish will enjoy this book as well. They may find here a little more spice than usual. The vulgarity in words such as *putz*, *shutup*, *schmuck*, *shwantz*, and so on is here made abundantly clear for Semites, what I call New York semi-Semites (Jews who are “non-observant” or even Ethical Culturalists but may be Zionist or eat bagels with a *schmeer*) and *goyim* (a word as nasty as *kike* but Jews get to use it for us Gentiles) like myself, who sometimes use these words rather than the plain English ones. We thought we were being cute rather than crass, a little restrained. For example, I had heard of *buptkes* often and read jokes about it meaning “nothing” as in “I got paid *buptkes* for that job” in *The Joy of Yiddish*. But it was not until Wex swam into my ken that I got a translation of what he spells *bubkes*, which turns out to be “sheep shit”. Who knew? Don't get uptight (also vulgar).

Whining and insulting are standbys of Yiddish humor. They have, through all the Jewish comedy writers and comedians, entered into general American culture. Suffering is funny—very funny if it is the other poor *shnook*. You want to complain already about how I or anyone else spells a Yiddish word? Ha! What are you, crazy?

Rosten regales us with jokes showing the language in action. Rosten is less in-your-face than Wex or other post-Lenny Bruce stand-ups. One favorite joke of mine depends not on transgressiveness nor a single Yiddish word but an English rendering of a common Jewish, mindset-revealing expression. It seems that two Jews who know each other meet in the street. (Someone in Hollywood once defined comedy as “two Jews”.) One says “hello” and attempts to keep on walking. The other stops him and says, “So what is this hello? It would kill you, you was to stop and say ‘so how's business?’” “*Alright*, already. So—*how's business?*” “Don't ask!”

The most interesting thing about Yiddish is that it is spoken by comparatively few Jews today. Actually Jews are only 0.2 percent of the world's population, which you may find incredible if you live in NYC like me, or watch TV or movies. Yiddish and the translations that stick close to it continue to express the Jewish soul and to provide entertainment and vocabulary for a great many non-Jews. The census of 2005 found only 1.1 percent of New Yorkers spoke Yiddish at home. The number has likely decreased since; even those who did speak Yiddish in 2005 were born here and presumably speak English as well. Native English speakers find a touch of Yiddish useful and everyone understands the sign that Borough President Marty Markowitz put up on a bridge out of Brooklyn: “Leaving Brooklyn, *Oy, veh!*” Only an exceptional individual would not recognize the cry of pain. The story is told of a woman who fell down a flight of stairs into the main lobby of the “Fountain Bloo” hotel in Miami and cried: “*Oy, veh,*” then collected herself and added, “whatever *that* may mean!”

There is much more here because Jewish history and customs and beliefs are closely examined. Did you know that the chicken is “the single most prominent ‘Jewish’ animal” and medical school “the most important Jewish invention of all time”? Did you know that you must not pat the dog on the Sabbath? Did you know that religious Jews must not count Jews—but what happens when you need to check that you have 10 males for a *minyan*? Simple: you point and say “not one,” “not two,” “not three,” and so on.

We need Yiddish, in this book called “the circumcision of every German cultural assumption,” and no one should be ashamed of it. If you do not have a stronger word than English *loser*, how can you adequately convey the plight of the man who buys a suit with two pairs of pants and accidentally burns a

hole in the jacket? If you do not have enough Yiddish words in your vocabulary, you would be at (say) a Broadway show, up the creek without a knish. To a dog this shouldn't happen. By me, the influence on American colloquial speech of Yiddish (German) syntax and grammar have been shall we say not to like, but the individual Yiddish words from a very colorful lexicon indeed has been a *brucah* or blessing to us all. As times get worse, this dictionary of complaint increases in usefulness. Fortunately, *something happens*, Yiddish provides plenty of good words so you can celebrate the days—you should pardon the expression—of whine and neuroses.

Tanya Reinhart. *Optimal and Costly Computations*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 2006. Pp. x, 340 with Index. \$32.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This professional paperback contains a highly technical study of the interface of different cognitive systems of concepts and contexts, inferences and sound all based on the Chomskyan dictum that language ideally works to be as economical as possible in communication. Chomsky has written that “language is an optimal solution to legibility conditions”. Immediately in this book the reader is plunged into a tightly organized world of the scope of quantifiers, the resolution of anaphora, the importance of focus, and a little bit on scalar implicatures, all in terms of the way that aspects of meaning and use that cannot be adequately coded by syntactical systems are handled in terms of comparisons and choices made order to avoid “imperfections” in transmission, a process that challenges working memory and makes language acquisition more difficult. In coping with this experienced adults are better at the problem than children are. Adults have learned more about language. The examples on which this book are based come from language acquisition corpora.

Naturally geolinguists are as interested as other linguists are in how language is learned and how it basically is designed so that it facilitates thought (“conceptual/intentional systems”) and enables users to communicate that efficiently. However, geolinguists may believe that they may need to know not the details but simply the fact that specialists on universal grammar, focus and stress operations and interfaces, like Professor Reinhart (New York University), are able to relate several seemingly unrelated psycholinguistic phenomena. As geolinguists go along with their observations, descriptions, theories and suggestions about language operating in the real world there are indeed experts in linguistics up there in the ivory towers collecting information about and theorizing about the psychological realities (observed and made the subject of Optimal Theory and other specialized linguistic studies) that underlie the complex computational systems that make communication possible.

Ofelia García, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas & María E. Torres-Guzmán, eds. *Imagining Multilingual Schools: Languages in Education and Globalization*. Clevedon (UK) &c.: Multilingual Matters, 2006. Pp. xii, 332 with Index. \$64.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

At more than twice the price, though only perhaps offering half the difficulty for the average reader, is this paperback edited by two professors from Columbia University and the keynote speaker of ASG's 2005 international conference (who works at the University of Roskilde in Denmark and at Åbo Akademi in Finland). They offer an overview of multilingual schools around the world that serve indigenous peoples, immigrants, multiethnic and minority groups, etc., and address policy pedagogical, social and economic and political issues of various kinds in various circumstances and approached with a variety of goals and means and outcomes. At the heart of it all, as was Skutnabb-Kangas' emphasis in that keynote address I mentioned above, is high-minded and activist concern with doing away insofar as is possible with institutionalized linguistic inequality and encouraging the respecting, preserving and advancing of minority languages through bilingual and multilingual educational policies and practice in the

Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America, each of which is featured in this collection. Thus this book fits perfectly into the series of which Prof. Skutnabb-Kangas is general editor and which is called Linguistic Diversity and Language Rights.

*Yn y byd. Mae'r rhan fwy o bobl y byd yn gallu siarad  
mwy nag un iaith. A ô dysgu'r ail, mae'n haws dysgu  
rhagor wedyn. Mae Cymraeg yn rhoi dechrau da.*

Around the world. Most people throughout the world  
can speak more than one language. After learning two,  
it's much easier to learn more. Welsh gives you a good  
start.

Partha Niyogi. *The Computational Nature of Language Learning and Evolution*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 2006. Pp. xxviii, 482 with Index. \$42.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Partha Niyogi, professor of computer science and statistics at the University of Chicago, traces with many examples in this substantial and insightful, specialist but extremely lucid study the interaction between users of language and language change. It links language acquisition to both communication and development in terms of biology and evolution, politics and culture. The table of contents runs for pages even before he addresses “the macroscopic behavior of a linguistic population and the microscopic behavior of the linguistic agents in this population,” interacting “linguistic agents” work where “communicative efficiency provides Darwinian fitness that translates into reproductive success”. Niyogi detects subtle patterns. Pattern formation in life science and in physics is related to the complex development of language as “an adaptive system”.

For those not used to the symbols of mathematics and language such as “A memoryless learner requires  $O(n)$  examples for language emergence, while the batch learner requires  $O(\log(n))$  examples for the same” will prove extremely hard going for many readers. For those who can follow the close argument will be rewarded with a much fuller understanding of how language is acquired by the individual—he stresses children not inheriting but learning from their parents—and how a formal, mathematical and computational model can be constructed to explain the complex interplay between language learning and language evolution.

He concludes:

In the natural world, language and communication are grounded in the biology of living organisms. I hope that such an evolutionary perspective will provide a richer understanding of the fundamental nature of human language, and more generally of communication in humans, animals, and machines.

All this is mathematical in presentation but truly geolinguistic in that it puts the emphasis on language in action as the individual learns and communicates within the society and the ways of communications adapt themselves to the changes, as well as create changes, in that society.

Just a bit of the many points scored here that you would find fascinating: language learning cannot be perfect as children acquire it or language would never change and language must change to adapt itself to the communications climate and demands of a changing world around us. Sir Noël Coward sang about love:

Teenagers squeezed into jeans do it.  
Maybe we shall live to see machines do it.

Indeed machines are already communicating in languages that Sir Noël on the last century could not have imagined, and clearly immense progress lies ahead, machines introducing still another factor into the mix to which human beings must adapt and which they have power to alter.

Roger Blench. *Archeology, Language, and the Africa Past*. Latham (MD): Altamira [Rowan & Littlefield], 2006. Pp. xvi, 360. \$44.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

From the dim future to the murky past now we turn to the expert who spent the years 1979—1982 researching in Africa his Cambridge doctoral dissertation (completed 1984) and who edited four volumes that came out of the World Archeological Conference held in New Delhi in 1994. He co-edited a book on archeology and language in 2005 and this present book takes a specialist's look, but in a notably readable way, at archeological discoveries in Africa, at comparative ethnography (which he laments "has no lobby and academic respectability" since social anthropology triumphed), and at the need for major changes in the historical account of the many languages spoken in Africa, a quarter of all the languages spoken on earth now.

Archeologists have been attracted to the fact of the Bantu Expansion. All the languages spoken between southern Cameroon and Zululand are closely related and language expansion can tell us as much or more about the movement of peoples, their trade and culture and their interaction than can decorative styles of pottery or other physical objects. The Bantu family of languages (some 550 within the Benue-Congo group—which also includes the Cross River, Jukunoid, and Plateau subgroups, the last here having as many as 100 languages) of the Niger-Congo super-family (which Erik V. Gunnemark in *Countries, Peoples and Their Languages: The Geolinguistic Handbook*, 1991, said had 350 million speakers).

Most of all, Blench emphasizes that "reconstructing the African past is a transdisciplinary enterprise that must be both dynamic and collaborative". He states: "I have tried to write this book as much for archeologists interested in linguistics as for linguists interested in prehistory". In the book Blench has done a remarkably excellent job and, in fact, geolinguists interested in languages and life in Africa today (a continent that has undergone huge economic, political and cultural changes in pre-colonial and colonial times and that today in post-colonial times is changing more radically in all those aspects and more quickly than ever before) will find fascinating.

As a student and businessman in the field of agriculture as well as African languages Blench is well equipped to write how languages in Africa seal with the names of plants and animals. Those he covers here in a large number of pages of this expensive paperback. He is also very erudite and sensible as he digs into the past. At the same time as both an agricultural expert and a businessman in the modern world he is concerned with the crops and culture of today's Africans and what the future holds for them. Ethnobiology, ethnography, genetics and other sciences including historical and comparative linguistics can tell us a great deal about the history of the peoples of the continent which gave original birth to all the people of the world. However, the conditions there, as the twenty-first century begins, with the thousands of languages and the thousands of major problems facing Africans, are changing fast and not always in the direction of health, happiness, and prosperity. Africa is said to have many so-called emerging nations. Emerging from what, and into what?

Blench ends by saying that we should "reconstruct the African past with whatever tools are at hand". Meanwhile, unfortunately, the rest of the world is not supporting the African present or future with all the tools and help we could offer.

H. Dirksen Bauman, Jennifer L. Nelson & Heidi M. Rose, eds. *Signing the Body Poetic: Essays on American Sign Language Literature*. Berkeley (CA) &c.: University of California Press, 2006. Pp. xxviii, 264 with Index. \$29.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

American Sign Language (ASL) is so crucial a part of the culture of the deaf that many deaf people have been adamant in resisting not only lip reading but recent scientific advances that with cochlear implants can give the deaf normal or nearly normal hearing. The three editors here, the first two on the faculty of Gallaudet College which has recently been in the news because of the ouster of its president (perhaps because she was not as dedicated to ASL as was desired) and the third from the communications department of Villanova University, have turned to William C. Stokoe to provide a forward and W. J. T. Mitchell to contribute a preface, the latter considering this publication to be “pathbreaking”. The text uses capital letters for DEAF WORLD as it discusses a culture with its own language, beliefs, and traditions, a silent language handed down from one generation to another and capable of presenting song and a “visual scream” as well as much more, if (to be brutally frank), “sounding” in transcripts presented here a trifle like Amerindians speaking in old westerns with a stilted but moving simplicity, simply by handshapes. You know that the Amerindians used a sign language to communicate between tribes and nations separated by spoken languages. It may be said that long before any peoples came to North America from Asia mankind naturally developed gestures and signs to communicate without words. Concepts such as *there* and *me* are easily understood by what may be universal finger pointing. The idea of using handshapes to convey letters of an alphabet to spell out words must have come a great deal later and still is not extremely efficient, I think it might be granted. Well, granted by some; there is much that is controversial when it comes to the deaf communicating and the deaf may or may not speak but in one way or another are often determined to speak their minds.

In this paperback, which comes with a DVD and so has “visuals,” ASL is regarded as a heritage and a language never to lose and a vehicle for artistic as well as daily communication. Indeed there has for some time been a Theater of the Deaf and we see signing characters onstage in ordinary plays. Many public speakers these days are accompanied by, at the side of the stage, a signer communicating in ASL. There are ASL performers on stage, in films, on video.

All this relates to gesture as language and to the early cinema with its silent film. It also involves a great deal of language and politics and so has a geolinguistic aspect much in line with ASG’s international conferences on Language and Identity and Language and Politics and the forthcoming ASG international conference (2007) on Language and Minorities. You can see the belligerence of some ASL “speakers” in such terms used among signers as *speech freako*. “Can your eyes hear this OK?”

It may interest geolinguists to know Gallaudet University Press has recently published Jean Ann’s *Frequency of Occurrence and Ease of Articulation in Sign Language Handshapes: The Taiwanese Example* (2006, \$75.00). This discusses Taiwanese Sign Language (TSL) and asks if it could be that the easier the sign is to make the more frequently it will be used. Guess at the conclusion reached by this research. This might be better put like this: the more frequently a sign has to be made the more pressure there is to simplify the handshape. A somewhat deeper question involves the extent to which, over time, simpler methods, whether handshapes or (for instance) the “pictures” of Chinese ideograms, have an inescapable tendency to become simpler, easier to sign or draw/write.

The forward mentioned, by the late William C. Stokoe, is, in fact only two brief paragraphs but I want to quote a little from it: “A people’s language and culture are inseparable” as language “preserves their memories, encapsulates their hopes and desires, and safeguards their values—all the more so when its use involves art”. Signing is not capable of all the nuances that speakers can put into tone of voice, and ASL poetry cannot capture all the effects of alliterations, assonance, rhyme, and so on, that speakers (or readers, who speak the words in their heads) enjoy, but do note that any message or emotion can be conveyed by handshapes and that the deaf can “speak” in rhythms. There is Deaf Poetry as well as Def Poetry these days.

J. Clancy Clements, Thomas A. Klingler, Deborah Piston-Hatlen & Kevin J. Rottet, eds. *History, Society and Variation....* Creole Language Library 28. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2006. Pp. vi, 304 with Index. \$138.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This very expensive hardcover *Festschrift* for the Albert Valdman (Indiana) as creolist and student of pidgin has been put together by a team, two from Indiana University, one each from the University of New Mexico and Tulane University. An earlier *Festschrift* honored Valdman as foreign language teacher and was edited by Gass, Bardovi-Harlig, Sieloff & Walz in 2002 even before Valdman's retirement in 2004.

Because Valdman is working on a *Dictionary of Cajun French* now and earlier published Haitian-English and Louisiana Creole dictionaries, the book begins with those subjects and their history. Then comes language and society with articles on creoles in relation to capitalism and colonialization, Mauritanian creole numerical slang, and more. Finally there is a third section with articles on Valdman's work (200 articles and quite a few books), more on Louisiana and Haitian creoles and French, "the story of a loser" (gender in French creoles) and a specialized study of tense, mood, and aspect (TMA) and the Dexis Ordering Principle and offers "a plausible alternative to semantic and historical explanations of TMA ordering".

Ordinarily this reviewer is not very happy with collections of articles put together by teams of anthologists when the articles might better and more efficiently have reached scholars who are interested if published in the specialized journals, of which there are many and where peer review tends to keep up standards. This collection, however, although its price militates against it becoming very widely available in university libraries, does gain something by the cross-fertilization of articles, is incontrovertibly reliable and at least by experts readable, and certainly is an earned tribute to a linguist who for 40 years contributed to and advanced the concerns of creole and pidgin studies and produced not only textbooks of considerable use but students with great respect for him.

Elly van Gelderen. *A History of the English Language*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2006. Pp. xviii, 334 with Index. \$39.95.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Why still another textbook on this topic? For the best of reasons: the author has taught the course in the history of the English language for a decade and has found no textbook wholly to her liking, so she has written her own. I suppose that \$40.00 or so is not considered extortionate for a paperback these days.

The approach here is more grammatical and typological than you will find in Thomas Pyles & John Algeo and other histories of the language. It does a lot of analysis (phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic) of texts from Anglo-Saxon to Modern English (or are we postmodern now?) but it does not stress the sociological as much as Barbara Fennell did in her *History of English* (2001) and it is more American than hers.

This book guides the student through the development of the whole world's current second language and even tells the student how to use the *Oxford English Dictionary* which, first conceived in 1858, has become the greatest dictionary of any language ever and since 2000 has been online. In the chronology of historical events the author here ends with "2003 in Wales, 20% speak Welsh, up 2.4% in 10 years".

Once again the term *geolinguistics* is missing from an index but there is plenty of good material here for those geolinguists who teach the history course of our language and Peter Trudgill and other sociolinguists appear in the text and the bibliography. There are exercises and questions (with suggested answers) and tables and illustrative cartoons and the whole thing would unarguably prove to be a very sound basis for a demanding but not impossibly difficult course in linguistics at the undergraduate level.

Ana Deumert & Stephanie Durrleman, eds. *Structure and Variation in Language Contact*. Philadelphia &c.: John Benjamins, 2006. Pp. 376 with Index. \$150.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This expensive book for experts presents 15 papers selected from those read at meetings of linguists in Atlanta, Boston and Hawaii 2003–2004, edited by Ms. Deumert of Monash University and Ms. Durrleman of Geneva, two institutions particularly interested in language development and languages in interaction.

Of course languages interacting are what geolinguistics is all about, and today the fact that language is social is brought forward to challenge many old ideas, including the idea of language as a Darwinian development, for how could something as social as communication and in the long run as contributive to social development have started with something as individual as a single variation?

Some of the articles collected here might be hard going for most non-specialists but Chris Collins (New York University) on “the habitual *be*” on African-American Vernacular English and some writing on creoles and pidgins would attract non-specialists if they could find these articles. Also Chinnpook jargon and Yiddish are topics that always attract general interest.

Fortunately, today online bibliographical searches make scholarship widely known and interlibrary loans make it accessible to institutions of higher learning worldwide. Publish anywhere and the world of scholarship will be able to hear of your work.

John Tak. *Significant Gestures: A History of American Sign Language*. Westport (CT): Praeger, 2006. Pp. 225 with Index. \$44.50.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

John Tabak is a mathematician and author of a *History of Mathematics* but here he takes up the history of American Sign Language (ASL), our own country’s development of a language of gesture earlier introduced by Charles-Michel de l’Épée (1712–1789) used in French schools in the eighteenth century. He identifies the deaf and hard of hearing as a new “social class,” a minority with its own language and agenda. ASL proponents even venture to define as handicapped those who *cannot* sign. Developed by the deaf (here called Deaf and blacks might be Blacks) for their own use, ASL is being pushed as a means of communication that even the non-hearing impaired really need to know in order to grant the deaf and hard of hearing their full civil rights. If a deaf person comes into the post office and signs a question, should that deaf person not receive a reply in ASL, just the way that in Wales of someone comes into the post office, even in areas that are predominately English-speaking, and asks a question in Welsh she or he is guaranteed by law a reply in Welsh? How far can this go?

Does that mean that a larger minority, such as Spanish-speakers should be entitled to being able to use Spanish and demand a response in Spanish anywhere in the US? Does it mean that anyone has to command broken English and/or ignorant dialects so as to deal with those who speak English incorrectly? And is White English more correct than Black English—or Asian English, a matter of far more importance at the highest levels of education as Asian-Americans are in a majority in such places as Berkeley, one of

the most distinguished of US universities? What language rights do minorities deserve? What language rights can we afford to give them, economically or culturally? To what extent are minorities to be granted by law not only rights to use their own languages among themselves but also rights to use and demand that others use those systems of communication in all aspects of public life? Are any minorities more disadvantaged or more entitled to special privilege than others?

In recent times a single person who did not smoke could veto all smoking in a meeting, even in a building, and a single person who had to use a wheelchair might force the village taxpayers to provide wheelchair access to all public buildings. All the corner curbs between my house and the subway stop have been cut to facilitate wheelchair use although once one reaches the subway, which is above ground at this point in Brooklyn, there are stairs from the station to track level. There are elevators at some other stations. Recently elevator repair at the 34<sup>th</sup> Street station in Manhattan required the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to post notices in all the stations of t all the lines that connect to the 34<sup>th</sup> Street hub multiple copies of notices that for the month of January 2007 the elevators at 34<sup>th</sup> Street would not be in service. I noted that these notices were solely in English. Those used to notices in Spanish, Russian and Chinese may well have already filed complaints with the MTA. The fact is that as more attention is paid to any single minority the other minorities compete for equality and, if possible, advantage and the majority is supposed to underwrite the “improvements” to an unlimited extent.

Here in this book you will learn less of the politics of privilege and fairness to to the disabled and more of the tabs, dezes, and sigs of Stokes’ system of writing ASL as well as all about the use of ASL in “conversation” among the deaf and between the deaf and those who can also sign.

“Interest in the signed languages of the Deaf,” writes Tabak, “is out of all proportion to the total number of individuals actually fluent in a signed language.” Thus far, however, the question has not been strongly argued as to what minorities can ask of the rest of us. The time will undoubtedly come when we have to prioritize the apportionment of limited resources, and then we shall have to face squarely the deeper question of the extent to which the belief that “all men [and women] are created equal” presupposes that the disadvantaged always must become advantaged. No one questions giving ASL users help because that makes them even more productive members of the society, but today there are rumblings about (say) giving octogenarians and even centenarians hugely expensive bypass surgery, or illegal immigrants expensive health care and other privileges of citizenship, or speakers of all languages translations in multinational organizations, or “special education” students lots more money than ordinary students in the public schools where the brightest students get the least attention, or adopting a system of meritocracy which produces all those Asian-American students in higher education in California (sometimes a majority, out of this small minority in the state). What I think is worth stressing is that out culture’s attitudes regarding abilities and disabilities and the privileged and underprivileged need extensive examination and that one important aspect in each and every case is the matter of access to communication within the group and between groups for individual and group identity and pride and outside the group for national coherence and power.

Florian Wolf & Edward Gibson. *Coherence in Natural Language*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press. Pp. 160, 71 illustrations. \$36.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Sociolinguistics is working increasingly with the technology that has produced the Bank of English and other corpora (large bodies of language examples) and has concerned itself with data extraction and scholarly analysis of structure and applications. In this book under review, Gibson (a professor of cognitive science at MIT) and Wolf (a businessman in Germany developing algorithms for information management) collaborate to test on the basis of coherence-based algorithms the impact of discourse structure on the problems of identifying the most important of segments of documents. They have examined language in action on a large scale and identified useful data structures as well as venturing into the psycholinguistic to examine how information can be extracted from texts and how texts can be summarized effectively. They also wanted to know the extent to which preferences in pronoun processing

could be analyzed. Instead of tree structures, they like to make use of labeled chain graphs, the better to deal with the interactive complexities encountered. Their aim is always at once scientifically theoretical and cautious yet with an eye on practically applied information handling.

This book also offers a detailed examination of pronouns as keys to coherence and of various approaches of the word-based, layout-based, and coherence-based sort. The results, with some more “fine-grained” texture than ever before and with hints that casual coherence relations might be more important than elaborative coherence relations, increase our understanding of how language is used and add also to our growing interest in the cognitive science that undertakes to delve into the causes of the results we see as we process the like of similarities and contrasts in a complex system of classes and subclasses by which we attempt to make our inner and outer worlds more understandable in what has been rightly called the Information Age, an age in which technology’s changes have become so swift and so numerous as to create an alteration in kind in attitude as well as in number. A huge increase in data means new ways of data extraction and analysis must be employed if the data is to be of practical use.

Roland Breton. *Atlas des langues du monde*. Paris: Autremont, 2003. Pp. 80. €15.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Roland Breton is well known to ASG members, having given the keynote address at one of our conferences and published in our journal. This small but concise and ingeniously illustrated book in French comes to our attention at this time because there is some talk of translating it for publication in the US. It certainly is authoritative and very striking in the way it uses color and computer-generated graphs and tables and maps to present information at a glance about the 6000 or so languages of the world. It notes that the *Académie Française* in 1929 stated that there were 2796 languages of the world. Since then some languages have been created, many more have been discovered and many more have been lost. It is a world of Darwinian survival of the fittest, a world of constant change.

In the financial markets recently there has been mention of a new instrument that goes by the acronym BRIC. That stands for Brazil, Russia, India, China. I suggest that those may well be the areas to look to for unusual growth in language in the coming years. Of course English, Arabic, Hindi, and Spanish are going to spread and in 2002 L.-J. Calvet in *Le marché aux langues* said that Russian, German, and Japanese are going to be losing speakers. Breton points up the “market” in world languages, one in which the cultural heritage and the current politics interact. His book enables us to see, for instance, by the use of color and graphics the diversity of Canada, or the spread of Esperanto, or the multiplicity of the languages of Africa at a glance. An excellent volume, it sorely needs an English-language version.

Heidi Byrnes, ed. *Advanced Language Learning*. New York &c.: Continuum, 2006. Pp. x, 268 with Index. \$150.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Ms. Byrnes has assembled an expert group. She for the first time brings together a distinguished set of essayists on systemic functional linguistics (in which field M. A. K. Halliday was a leader for four decades), sociocultural theory (“the nature of human cognition and learning in relation to language”) spearheaded in the early twentieth century by Lev Vygotsky, and second or foreign language learning at advanced academic levels (with clear advice drawn from the experience of those who have been successful in the classrooms as well as approved in the scholarly journals). This book, which is so specialized that its readership must be small and its price therefore large, summarizes the history and explores the current theories and practices of the experts who manage to relate all three of these areas of study in an effort to maximize “*ab initio* upper levels of language teaching,” the “gaining the freedom to create” in college curricula, and the connection to the cognitive semantic approach to teaching.

Starting with discussing “what kind of a resource is language” and theoretical considerations concerning advanced instruction in “languaculture,” the book moves on to pedagogical considerations of “agency and collaboration,” “grammar as a resource for the construction of language logic,” “the grammar of exposition,” “grammatical metaphor,” “the complex theme,” “dialogic construction of meaning,” and instruction in advanced French as an example, concluding with a section on programmatic and curricular issues and the setting up of curricula for intermediate and advanced learners. It is clear that second and foreign languages are taught in today’s colleges and universities with insufficient theoretical knowledge on the part of instructors and that this produces students who are less well informed and less fluent in languages than they need to be if those languages are not to be mere accomplishment but tools for modern careers. The number of students who take French or Spanish or any other foreign language and graduate with honors and yet still cannot make full daily use of their studies is far too great. A native speaker of the language in question soon can determine inadequacies in these students. Professional bilingualists and translators and so on must of necessity continually improve and keep up with the inevitable changes of all languages. They are set on a course to be learners for life. The basis of their knowledge as they gain their first degree has to be solid and they must not only be adequately learned but also equipped for a life of continual learning.

Here the contributors, from Pennsylvania State University (Paratou Feiz, James P. Lantolf, Susan Strauss, Xuehua Xinag), Australia (Alice Caffarel, Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen, Kazuhiro Teruya), Canada (Merrill Swain of Toronto), United Arab Emirates (Nick Moore), and various US institutions (Heidi Byrnes of Georgetown, M. Cecilia Colombi of California at Davis, Marianna V. Ryshina-Pankova of George Mason), Mary J. Schleppegrell of Michigan, Cory Crane of Illinois at Urbana, James V. Wertsch of Washington at St. Louis) all are highly qualified. Each one strongly believes that “language is not a domain of human knowledge” but “the essential condition of knowing, the process by which experience becomes knowledge”. They are all convinced that the expansion of linguistic resources in language teaching must connect to and inform “expanding understanding in the various subject matters of education through enabling learners to participate in this reconstrual of reality through language.” Students must learn to read and write across the curriculum, connecting their first and regard second or foreign languages as keys to the history and culture of those who natively speak those languages.

Drills in grammar and expansion of vocabularies are not nearly enough to equip students to think and work in languages. Always and ever that goal must be foremost. Languages are to be learned for use, not simply to meet curriculum requirements. The languages to study are those which have the most use for the student’s planned career and the courses that are taken must not be chosen simply because a language other than English is, because of the student’s particular background, “the easiest”. Nor should each course’s matter be forgotten as soon as a grade is obtained but the edifice has to be built brick by brick on strong foundations, the way one would build a house not for a façade but as a place to live in. It is a very businesslike matter. That is where geolinguistics comes in, with its focus on languages in use for practical purposes and languages as having their pragmatic justification in their influence on culture and commerce, in the possibility of understanding other mindsets and communicating with, interacting with other people of other cultures.

Peter Auer, Frans Hinskens & Paul Kerswill, eds. *Dialect Change: Convergence and Divergence in European Languages*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. xvii, 415 with Index. \$75.00.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

In dialects, “mainly used orally” and “‘roofed’ by a structurally related standard variety,” change is constant, either in the direction of convergence or divergence, short-term or long-term, and this has linguistic and sociodynamic significance, for much depends upon the basic language and the social and physical geography. Dialects can generate new words and structures dependant upon intrasystemic factors, borrow from outside, be governed by sociopolitical factors and what Trudgill has called “urban hierarchy” (the influence of large cities) and mark the origins and present status of users, the demographics, isolation

or connection, etc. New words or clinging to old words that are no longer standard (*char* for *voiture* in *québécois*) and old or new pronunciations and even basic changes can result, such as the replacement of the auxiliary verb *être* (to be) by *avoir* (to have) in Quebec and Vermont French. There can be local or regional dialects and social dialects. Some dialects, like some languages, can suffer attrition or even disappear or change in particulars and in their social status over time. The subject is related to many non-linguistic as well as language matters and is subtle, because of multicausality phenomena, not to mention some vagueness in the concept of standard language. The whole is intimately connected to the very fundamental issues of geolinguistics: language in contact and conflict, language and the social construction of reality, language in action and language attitudes, language in connection with “marking social identity” and communication as it impinges on national and international issues.

The editors here (from Freiberg, the Vrije Universiteit, and Lancaster, respectively) have assembled papers from the international research network (1995–1998) funded by the European Science Foundation and in which linguistic experts from 11 countries (and dealing in this book under review with language in Northern Ireland, the Irish Republic, England, Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Belarus, Romania, Hungary, Italy, and Spain) participated. There were workshops held in Nijmegen, Ghent and Heidelberg, a conference at Reading, and a summer school in Málaga. Some results appeared in the journals *Sociolinguistica* 10 (1996), *Folia Linguistica* 22: 1–2 (1998), and *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 145 (2000) as well as in the book *Dialect and Migration in a Changing Europe* (edited by K. Mattheier, 2000). Now, with a positioning introduction by the editors, we have expert and highly reliable statistics and statements on internal and external reasons for phonological conversion, mixing of languages in contact, grammatical differences and convergence, standardization in Scandinavian languages, birth of new dialects (in one town such as Milton Keynes, over larger areas), *Sprachinsulen* or dialect differences in the German islands, political borders and their powers, urban centers and their influence, subjective factors and young *versus* old in dialect differences, the question of “how similar are people who speak alike?” and “the role of interpersonal accommodation in a theory of language change.” This is first-rate material.

Norman Fairclough. *Language and Globalization*. New York &c.: Routledge, 2006. Pp. viii, 187 with Index. \$18.99.

Reviewed by  
Leonard R. N. Ashley

An *emeritus* professor of Lancaster University (UK), an expert on critical discourse analysis, examines the effects of globalization on language, and *vice versa*, in this well-organized and well written paperback. It offers both beginners and advanced students a fair overview of a topic which has been one of the most popular of the international conferences staged by the American Society of Geolinguistics, even though in studies of sociolinguistics the term *geolinguistics* seldom or never appears *per se* in any index. *Geolinguistics* meaning macrosociolinguistics needs to be better known.

Here we have political, economic and cultural as well as linguistic analysis of a high order. The arguments are persuasive. The style is eminently readable. However, as with many political matters, “the truth of the matter is” (as politicians like to say, even when lying) that minds are made up, closed, in many professional circles because there are turfs to be defended, ideas or goods to sell, and clichés to be taken as gospel.

Fairclough ranges widely, and his examples are drawn not only from the US and the UK but also from Hungary, Romania, and Thailand. He does not shy away from remarks on the War on Terror (where he judges the discourse to have been a “smokescreen” used by “hard power” large countries) or the impact on international trade and commerce as well as national economies. He illustrates very well the inescapable point that discourse reflects and controls mindset and its practice has practical results regarding what politicians might call “very real issues”.

Social events, social practices and social structures produce or hinder communication and definitely produce texts, which can involve the creation of new, hybrid discourses, generations, and styles. “Texts constitute the semiotic moment of social events.”

Texts are what Shakespeare calls “paper bullets of the brain” in what Fairclough calls the “hegemonic struggle,” the push and policies for power internationally, globally or regionally (as in Europe), nationally and in smaller entities. This assertion of globalization can be imposed from above or resisted from below by those who argue or take stronger action. To some extent Fairclough seems to be on the side of the anti-globalization activists national and trans-national. He certainly is on the side of those who want to focus on the role of language in the march of globalization that, because of the policies of nations and international business, crucially is affecting and will continue to affect national ambitions and international peace and prosperity. Textual analysis will, if properly conducted, not only reveal what is going on politically, economically, and culturally but will give us what R. Williams has called “a grasping of reality through language”—insofar as our limited gift can accomplish that, or we want to be “real”.

Geneva Smitherman. *Word from the Mother: Language and African Americans*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Pp. 172. \$82.95 hardcover, \$24.95 paper.

Radław Dylewski  
Adam Miciewicz University, Poznan

African American Vernacular English (AAVE) has been discussed abundantly in the subject literature since the early part of the last century. The book by Geneva Smitherman, an unquestionable authority on the language of the African minority in the US, is an essential read for students of not only African American language but also its culture worldwide. The book presents a definitive statement on AAVE and constitutes an attempt to offer all-embracing and updated information on this variety of English. Moreover, *Word from the Mother* conveys an unambiguous message that the language of African-Americans is on par with the mainstream varieties of English and both its structure and grammar are fully logical, to say the least. The whole discussion is enlivened by a delightful wealth of quotations from literature, political speeches and hip-hop lyrics.

In seven chapters the book first tackles the legacy inherited by general American English and AAVE’s lexicon and distinctive grammar “pushing the linguistic envelope.” Some Ebonic features appear in mainstream English as in pronunciations of *Deee-troit* or idiosyncratic spellings/meanings as in *phat*. Following chapters are devoted to a discussion of the educational programs for AAL-speaking youth, the sociopolitical context from which AAVE emerged, a list of some 50 words, idioms and sayings of AAVE provenance along with their definitions, a discussion of the *N*-words, an analysis of language play and manipulation, the question of hip-hop and its linguistics components, the issues of absorption of language, fashion, music and attitudes of African Americans by whites and media use and internationalization of African-American idioms.

In addition to these matters, the author’s political ideas active throughout especially surface in the last chapter where racism and injustice are stressed as the education of the black minority is criticized. The book ends with suggestions for political rather than linguistic improvements affecting “brothers and sister.” One idea is to incorporate hip-hop lyrics and culture into the curriculum.

However interesting, the book is not devoid of drawbacks. The title suggests a more language oriented study and the discussion of culture far outweighs that of language. The book is replete with propaganda and praise of African American genius, inventiveness of the *brothahs* and *sistahs*. The purpose of chapter two seems unclear: the criteria governing word (phrase) choice have apparently not been specified. Hence it is unclear why certain words/phrases/definitions are included while others are omitted. A scrutiny of numerous dictionaries available online did not retrieve the offered definitions, for example, the meaning *marijuana* assigned to the word *gangsta* has not been encountered in any of the numerous ‘marijuana’ and hip-hop dictionaries or the urban dictionary.

Despite its faults mentioned above, *Word from the Mother: Language and African Americans* by Geneva Smitherman is an important contribution to the discussion of language and culture of African Americans. It provides a wealth of information for laymen and linguists alike and is enlivened by numerous real-life examples.

Theresa A. Antes. *Analyse linguistique de la langue française*. New Haven (CT) & New York: Yale University Press, 2006. Pp. xvi, 240. \$45.00.

Reviewed by  
Jesse Levitt  
Editor *emeritus*, *Geolinguistics*

Theresa A. Antes, Assistant Professor of French and linguistics at the University of Florida at Gainesville, writes on the back cover that her book

provides a complete examination of the French language, in French, at a level appropriate for non-native speakers and non-linguists. It introduces readers to linguistic analysis, using modern French as its target of study and covering the linguistic subfields of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. It provides self-check questions and could easily be used for self-learning by an individual for teaching students in a classroom setting.... The book includes exercises placed strategically throughout each chapter, which allow the reader to verify his or her comprehension of each concept before moving on to the next topic.

Except for a prologue and acknowledgments in English, the book is written entirely in French.

The first chapter offers a review of the phonetic transcription of French, using the International Phonetic Alphabet. The graphies representing the sounds are placed next to the phonemes as they appear in initial, medial and final positions. Chapter two deals with phonetics and includes, among things, the rules for pronouncing or dropping the mute 'e', which is especially useful for students of French and even foreign non-native speakers.

Nevertheless, the author does not offer any systematic treatment of French orthography. There are linguists who deny that orthography belongs in descriptive linguistics. But such an attitude is completely unrealistic in an age of universal literacy, when the written form of the language is so important for education and every life activity. The French system, with its dependence on etymology and its preservation of thirteenth-century spelling, is especially difficult. There is a strong need for non-speakers to learn whatever rules exist.

The fourth chapter, on morphology, explains the notions of morphemes and allomorphs. Professor Antes distinguishes no less than five morphemes in the plural noun *chanteuses*. I would disagree: I find only two *chant-* referring to singing, and *euse*, referring to women doing something. Professor Antes sees a plural morpheme in the final *s*. But that is only a grapheme which is never vocalized. The notion of plural is indicated by a preceding article *les* or *des*, or some adjective, like *quelques* or *plusieurs*.

In chapter five Professor Antes attempts to explain French grammar according to transformational grammar. That seems to me an unnecessary complication since transformational grammar is not universally accepted. A structural explanation would have sufficed. The French term *emphase* is incorrectly used as a translation for the English *emphasis*. In French *emphase* means *bombast*. A possible equivalent of English *emphasis* might be *accent* or *accentuation*. To emphasize something is rendered in French as *mettre l'accent sur quelque chose*.

Chapter six deals in great detail with semantics, including, among other things, synonyms, antonyms, metaphors, grammatical persons and moods, gender of nouns and aspects of verbs.

Despite some reservations, I consider this volume a very useful and commendable work of descriptive linguistics that should enlighten teachers, students and non-native speakers of French.

Max Oppenheimer, Jr. *Is That What It Means? II. Metaphors: Our Most Fertile Power*. Manhattan (KS): KS Publishing, 2007, Pp. 185. \$19.95.

Reviewed by  
Jesse Levitt  
Editor *emeritus*, *Geolinguistics*

This volume, like its predecessor, contains 101 short essays, drawn from Dr. Oppenheimer's Arizona newspaper columns, on words and their metaphoric contents. In a statement on the back cover of this volume, Dr. Oppenheimer describes this book as "a continuation of the linguistic guided tour and exploration begun with the previous volume through the miracle of language."

Dr. Max Oppenheimer is a President *emeritus* of the American Society of Geolinguistics. He is fluent in French, Spanish, German and Russian. He learned German as a child living in Hamburg, and French as an adolescent in Paris, where he earned a *Bachelier ès Lettres* degree. He earned his doctorate in 1947 from the University of Southern California. During the Second World War he participated in five military campaigns, from Utah Beach in Normandy to the meeting with the Russians on the Elbe.

In 1976 he retired from the State University of New York at Fredonia, where he had taught English, French, Spanish, German and Russian. He moved to Arizona, where he has continued his writing career in retirement. On the back cover of his book Dr. Oppenheimer writes, referring to himself, "Throughout his life, language and meaning have gradually evolved from being a tool for survival to an endless fascination—a head-over-heels love affair."

In his introduction to this volume, Dr. Oppenheimer writes that most words contain or are entirely formed by images known as metaphors. "Metaphors arouse cognition of the unknown through suggestions from the known." He cites as an example a ship *plowing* the sea. Language is inherently metaphorical and for some may be "fossilized poetry."

While it is impossible to summarize 101 essays in a short book review, this reviewer will cite a few interesting examples. "Language, even used perfectly, can never say it all" (61-62), that is the title of one essay, in which the author writes: "Whatever we may try to say about anyone or anything we should always add 'etc.' to show there is always more we have failed to express."

Another essay carries the title: "Un the USA language is low on the totem pole" (75). "The study of language, for its own sake, has never enjoyed a high priority among Americans."

In an essay titled "About deconstruction," Dr. Oppenheimer takes issue with the recently deceased French philosopher Jacques Derrida, on whose passing French President Jacques Chirac's office described Jacques Derrida as "one of the major figures in the intellectual life of our time" (78). Dr. Oppenheimer has a negative judgment about Derrida, who, he says, "preached the meaninglessness of meaning... to attract academics eager for trendy intellectual shockers and radicalism" (78).

In an essay titled "The Story of O. K.," Dr. Oppenheimer cites shortcomings in Dr. Allen Walker Read's explanation of O. K. as a humorous distortion of "all correct," misspelled "oll korrekt." In 1840 the New York newspaper *The New Era* mentioned the Democratic O. K. Club, so named after the birthplace of Martin Van Buren, Kinderhook, near Albany, New York. Van Buren was affectionately known as Old Kinderhook. Dr. Read, Oppenheimer says, did not have his curiosity aroused by the fact that O. K. has assumed a non-political meaning and has been adopted in French and German with a non-political meaning. The *German Etymological Dictionary* defines its origin as "clouded." Dr. Oppenheimer postulates that the wide popularity of O. K. is due to its phonetic and graphic appeal (78).

In two essays, “Giving Hell Its Linguistic Due” (25) and “One More Linguistic Trip to Purgatory” (27), Dr. Oppenheimer deals with ancient classical and Teutonic notions of hell and with words and expressions using the term *hell*: *go to hell, come hell or high water, hell bent for breakfast, a hell on earth*.

Throughout this volume, Dr. Oppenheimer reveals his enormous linguistic and historic knowledge tracing English word origins and their metaphoric significance from many languages. This book is written with perfect clarity for the non-specialized, general reader, but will at the same time appeal to serious linguists by the breadth of linguistic knowledge that Dr. Oppenheimer displays.

Joan C. Beal. *English in Modern Times*. London (UK): Hodder Arnold, 2004, 220 pp.. £14.99.

Keming Liu  
Medger Evers College (CUNY)

Global English in a time of rampant globalization generates contentious debates between the neoclassicists and the liberals. As English permeates cultures and crosses borders, it inevitably takes on different forms and structures, phonetic representations, and locale specific pidgins, reflected in such hybrids as Singaporean English, aka Singlish. In her level-headed, thorough yet extremely meticulous study, *English in Modern Times*, Joan Beal shies away from the fiercest of these current ideological spats and instead focuses on a description of the changes that occurred in Later Modern English, defined in this book “as the years from the beginning of the eighteenth century through to the end of World War II” (p. 1). Recognizing the fussy nature of boundaries that define the periods of “Modern English” and “Later Modern English,” Beal specifies the period covered in this volume as what historians view as the “long” eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (1660-1815 and 1789-1918 respectively).

Beal primarily takes a sociolinguist’s stance in her delivery of *English in Modern Times*. By studying English variations through time, Beal adopts a vogue sociolinguistic approach to the scientific analysis of language change, often considered an informal epistemology. Beal’s approach is nothing new, of course, as most British sociolinguists agree on the notion that Standard English is simply one variety of the language among many; however, Beal’s contribution lies mainly in her case by case study of varieties of English both on and off the British isles.

In concurrence with prominent sociolinguists whose theorizing is followed through closely by Beal, the text traces the history of modern English and provides detailed accounts for the genesis of Standard English, which is purely a social dialect just as all other variants of English are. What makes this dialect standard or RP is, according to Peter Trudgill (1999), determined by the users of this variety who possess the highest degree of power, wealth, and prestige. Beal reverberates Trudgill’s sentiment in Chapter 1, which lays the groundwork of the social, political, technological, industrial and cultural changes that gave rise to the introduction of new words to the English language and the upward moving tendency of the masses who stressed not only manners but correct speech as well. Public schools became the “breeding ground for Received Pronunciation (RP)” (p. 5). During the early stirrings of globalization, speakers of different dialects and languages adapted to as well as influenced the language of the other. While “it might be fair to say that the strictly ‘linguistic’, *i.e.* structural, foundations of Modern English had been laid down by 1700, the socio-linguistic foundations were the product of the later modern period” (p. 12). Beal contends that the later modern period, especially the eighteenth century, is a period in which the English language went through stages of standardization, thus earning the characterization of the “Age of Correctness”. Indeed preservation of a standard is often the result of fear that “other” varieties of the language may “corrupt” the core, thus occasioning the need for overreaction and ultra-righteousness. Beal attributes the developments of RP and other varieties of the English language such as American, Canadian, and Australian Englishes to social and political factors, whose influence “is nowhere more transparent than in lexicon” (p. 13), the very topic of Chapter 2.

While there is no doubt that external factors affect the internal structure of a language, both in the rise of newly minted or borrowed words and in the resistance of such influence, Beal provides in the beginning of Chapter 2 a useful chart that indicates the stagnation of lexical innovation during the mid-

eighteenth century, which, as Beal explains, is the result of both an exuberant lexical innovation in the preceding centuries when “English was taking over higher functions which had previously been the domain of Latin.” (p. 17). As the gap in the vocabulary of English was filled, its growth naturally slowed down in the eighteenth century. The significance of Chapter 2 is reflected in Beal’s categorization of “invading” lexical items from foreign languages. One extremely valuable observation of Beal’s claim is that words of Greek origin that entered the English language during this time “tend to have technical and/or scientific referents” while words of French origin “are in the semantic fields of politics and philosophy” (p. 26). Another interesting observation in this chapter is the standardization of eponyms with the formula of adding the suffix *-ite* to a proper noun to form the names of minerals in the new science of geology: *bromlite* from Bromley Hill where the mineral was discovered and, *proustite* from the discoverer Proust. As a result of exploration and colonization, words of a more exotic nature entered the English language as well, such as Italian, Spanish and words of more distant origin, such as *kiwi* from New Zealand. New fields of science and scholarship in the early twentieth century stirred a wave of new terminologies seen in words such as *abstractionism* and *addict*. With her meticulous examples of newly created words, Beal proves in this chapter her argument that external influences, such as foreign or technical innovation from within, drive neologisms and the addition of innovative lexical items.

Changes bring fear in conservatives who would naturally rush to measures of preservation, and such is the case that gave rise to the English dictionaries. Popular wisdom has it that the first dictionary of English was Johnson’s *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). In actuality, however, the record of the earliest such attempt is traced back to the last quarter of the sixteenth century when the need for a monolingual English dictionary arose as the result of “a large influx of learned vocabulary mostly adapted from Latin” (p. 35).

Johnson’s *Dictionary*, however, set the pattern for English lexicography, though later attempts adopted distinct differences in selections of lexical items. One noted lexicographer whose work was conducted far from the European continent is the American lexicographer, later a household name, Noah Webster, who promoted the idea of a new dictionary for a new nation. Webster’s *Dictionary of the English Language* (1828) created a separate standard for American English. “Webster’s mission was to establish a model of American English equal, if not superior, to that of British English” (p. 52). Webster’s principal contribution to the history of English lexicography, however, lies in the lexical contributions. “Webster’s *American Dictionary* is thus a dictionary for the new scientific age, incorporating not only the lexical innovations, but also the more enlightened definitions, of the nineteenth century” (p. 53). Beal asserts that there is a clear political agenda in Webster’s philosophy behind his dictionaries, eloquently expressed in the preface to the *American Dictionary*, which Beal quotes, “language is the expression of ideas. ...[The] institutions of this country which are new and peculiar give rise to new terms or to new applications of old terms, unknown to the people of England” (p. 53).

While the exhaustive analysis of the history of the English dictionaries is Chapter 3’s strength, it smacks of tediousness to a certain extent in relation to the driving theme of the volume and the argument that Beal purports in this chapter.

Syntactic structure as a whole in any language naturally witnesses much less change than lexicon does in a given period, as it constitutes a more embedded part of a language. Like new lexical items that enter a language, however, syntactic structures go through similar channels as lexical ones. They invariably enter the spoken language, then informal writings such as letters and journals, and later at the discretion of grammarians, indoctrinated into formal written discourse. Beal lists in Chapter 4 a few syntactic changes in later modern English: second-person pronouns, the use of *do*, relativizers or relative pronouns, the *be + ing* construction, group verbs or verbal phrases, the gradual decline of the subjunctive mood usage and so on.

In the case of the verb *do*, it is interesting to note that it was not accepted as standard until early modern English, when *do* started to be introduced in negative and interrogative sentences. By the late eighteenth century, “the extent of an author’s use of the constructions with or without *do* correlates with their education and with the genre of writing. Use of *do* is associated with more educated authors and with the genre of essays” (p. 74). However, the most spectacular change in English syntax during the later

modern period, according to Beal, is the increase in both the frequency and range of uses of the “progressive” or the *be + ing* form. Early sightings of the *be + ing* form is seen in Jane Austen’s *Emma* (1816) in which “she was falling overboard” suggests Austen’s bold experiment with the form. Indeed, the *be + ing* construction was condemned by American grammarian Richard Grant White, especially when it is used in the passive form, *have + been + -ing*. It is not until the early twentieth century that such constructions were being used by literary authors. Through discussions of syntactic structures in Chapter 4, Beal provides ample evidence that, more than in any other period, changes in morphology and syntax of later modern English are the subject of overt comment. Despite grammarians’ protests to ban new structures or to promote quaint ones, the English language marches on with its own velocity.

The eighteenth century, the age of reason and logic, witnesses similar doctrinal theories about the English language, particularly in the second half of the century. Beal attributes the desire for correctness to what the socio-linguist Labov calls “linguistic insecurity.” The later modern period represented a time of social change and social mobility in Britain. As British society became more meritocratic and plutocratic, people of humble origins moved upward to new positions that placed them in contact with the gentry of birthright. To fit in, the *nouveau riche* strove for hypercorrect forms in speech styles and writing, feeling all the while extremely insecure. This very anxiety propelled a demand for prescriptive guides to correct usage of the English language.

A second point Beal makes in this chapter is that language is closely associated with politics. Stability in language helps retain stability in government and society. The creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain at the beginning of the eighteenth century invoked a need for standard British English to bind together Scots, Irish and English as citizens of the new Union. Grammarians such as William Cobbett and the like assert that no grammar can be politically neutral and they vehemently deny the link between correct grammar and intelligence. However, Cobbett does promote correct usage of the English language by the lower class as he believes that correct grammar leads to the emancipation of the poor. But the belief that incorrect language is a product of an inferior mind still lingers. With the invasion of Americanisms and colonial expressions, grammarians of the British isle worry that their Queen’s English is in danger of corruption; therefore a more vigilant defense of correct grammar is mounted.

Beal strives to do justice to the study of phonology in Chapter 6 by devoting 40 plus pages to its coverage. Yes, phonology has suffered the most from the neglect of scholars during later modern period, but it scarcely warrants such a lengthy discussion to simply prove its worth. Perhaps phonological changes are the most elusive to capture. Its glacial evolution as compared to lexical mutations makes its study especially futile. For this reason alone, Beal deserves credit for her patience in painstakingly listing ten phonal changes before the twentieth century that contributed to the RP constitution. Beal also points out that it is not until the turn of the twentieth century that certain phonal developments have affected present-day RP. Of special interest is that the eighteenth-century marks the beginning of the great divide between British English and American English. As a result, pronouncing dictionaries and guides to correct pronunciation started to flood the market in the eighteenth century to set the norms of RP in Britain, and the market for accent-reduction classes in the US remains strong even to today.

Beal contends in Chapter 7 that “where there is a class of people with social aspirations and a recognized prestige pronunciation, there will be a market for schemes promising to make that pronunciation available” (p. 168). As with the appearance of a socially aspiring middle class that was conscious of good diction and usage, the same class was aware of the value of correct elocution, prompting a market for pronouncing dictionaries and guides whose role is examined in Chapter 7.

To coincide with the progressive thinking of the later modern period, Beal ends this volume with Chapter 8 devoted to discussions of varieties of English beyond simply standard English that spanned the text. Literature during this time reflected non-standard varieties, as exemplified by the works of Emily Brontë and Thomas Hardy, to represent authentically rural voices and lower-class characters. Late nineteenth-century philosophy sparked interest in regional dialects as linguistic systems worthy of study in their own right. Grammar books devoted to dialects started to appear on the market, promoting the new ideology that regional dialects were not ungrammatical, but had their own grammars which were of interest to philologists.

Aside from varieties of English in the British Isles, other varieties arose outside as a result of colonization and settlement by the English, such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The American Revolution marked the great divide between British and American English, and Americanisms were given the stamp of approval with the appearance of Webster's dictionaries. With the rise of comparative philology in Europe, attitudes toward other varieties of English started to change among European scholars who advocated a historical view of language, according to which dialects are viewed as branches of a parent language. American and Australian Englishes thus earned their own rationale for study, which inevitably spawned deprecatory comments from conservative British scholars in spite of attempts to modify their traditional stance on standard and reception.

Beal certainly has done a thorough job on covering the changes of English in modern times. The volume will no doubt serve as a handy reference for scholars in the fields of historical development of the English languages and students whose studies cross topics of historical linguistics and modern English.

Edwin L. Chalcraft. *Assimilation's Agent: My Life as a Superintendent in the Indian Boarding School System*, ed. Cary C. Collins. Lincoln (NE) & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. Pp. lxvi, 360 with Index. \$59.95.

Reviewed by  
Louise Barbara Richardson

This volume is not a book on language, but it is the interesting autobiography of a man whose work was influential in promoting the government assimilationist policy that drastically reshaped the geolinguistic contour of the United States. Of the over 300 Native languages spoken in North America at the time of the Euro-American contact, in 1995 only 46 were still spoken by significant numbers of children, according to the Smithsonian *Handbook of North American Indians* (ed. Ives Goddard, 1996, vol. 17, p. 3). The other extant languages were either used only by adults or by a few of the very oldest people. The remainder, totaling at least 120, is extinct.

Most effective in creating this very distressing situation since the mid-nineteenth century was the government assimilation policy that aspired to teach all young Indians to adjust to living in the new Euro-American society and become oblivious of their ancestral tribal values and ways of life. Forgetting their Native languages was considered essential in the assimilation process. The most efficacious way to achieve this was to require that only English be spoken in school, preferably boarding school, and those children who used their Native tongue were severely punished. Thus within a generation, Native languages began to fall into disuse.

Edwin C. Chalcraft within his 33-year career, from 1883 to 1925, with the Federal Government's Indian Service as superintendent of six individual schools and as one of four national supervisors of Indian schools staunchly supported this policy. The editor Cary C. Collins points out that Chalcraft's memoir, entitled "Memory's Storehouse," is contained in the Chalcraft-Pickering Family Papers, which were purchased and are now held by Washington State University's Library in Pullman. The 277 typed pages of the memoir represent the only known extant copy of the original. Collins says (p. lxv) that he prepared the text with a minimum of editorial emendations.

Collins in his edition, on the other hand, has offered extensive historical background material, introductory paragraphs to each of the book's eleven chapters, and explanatory notes followed by a detailed index. This material is most helpful in clarifying complicated situations and also in furnishing an alternative interpretation to some issues that might be viewed in another light from the limited one presented by Chalcraft in his memoirs. For example, Collins offers another point of view on some issues on which Chalcraft was at variance with certain of his superiors in the Indian Office whose adverse criticism he regarded as politically motivated.

Chalcraft wrote in very positive terms about his work and what was being accomplished at the six different reservation schools where he was at one time or another superintendent. He was pleased by the schools' work-study curriculum and the extracurricular activities such as sports, band, literary societies, and entertainment programs in which the students took part. He spoke with great satisfaction about his schools' achievement with students who were adjusting very well to the new life. He also wrote of the affection he and his wife had for the students. He described many success stories of young Indians who, having done well in school, went on to good jobs, fully assimilated in the life of the new society.

Chalcraft retired in 1925. This was three years before the scathing attack on the United States government's administration of Indian education known as the Meriam Report. It also preceded by just a few more years the beginning, already precluded for some time by enlightened thinkers, of the great change in government Indian policy under John Collier, the new Commissioner of Indian Affairs during the Roosevelt administration.

Chalcraft mentions in passing a number of languages native to the students in his schools or those he visited. These languages include many in the state of Washington: Quileute, a Chimakuan language, various Salishan languages, for example, Puyallup, Nisqually, Squaxon, Chehalis, Colville, and Silitz, a dialect of Tillamook, the latter in Oregon. He mentions three of the Plateau Penutian family, Klamath in Oregon, and the Sahaptian branches Yakima in Washington and Nez Perce in Idaho; and in Oklahoma the Muskogean language Choctaw and the Algonquian languages Cheyenne and Arapaho. Choctaw is still spoken by some young people, but Tillamook is considered extinct, and all the others mentioned above are threatened, that is, spoken just by adults, a few by only the very oldest adult (Smithsonian *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. Ives Goddard, 1996, vol. 17, pp. 3-8).

The thoughtful reader will surely reflect that if a good additive bilingual program had been introduced in the Indian schools instead of the "English only" assimilationist approach, Native Americans today would have retained their tribal languages, the most profound aspect of their cultural identity. Such programs, however, have only begun to be introduced during the latter part of the twentieth century. If they become more general, it is to be hoped that these initiatives will be effective in reviving those languages for which they have been instated. The adoption of these courses is now encouraged by the complete reversal of the former governmental Indian policy. This reversal is clearly expressed in the Native American Language Act of 1990 where the United States government recognizes the responsibility of helping and urging Native Americans to use and preserve their ancestral languages. Chalcraft, on the other hand, belonged to another era characterized by very different government thinking, defended with firm conviction in his memoir, which Collins has presented so effectively in this carefully explained and extensively documented edition.

Jon Reyhner & Jeanne Eder. *American Indian Education: A History*. Norman (OK): University of Oklahoma Press, 2004. Pp. x, 370 with Index and Photographs. \$29.95.

Reviewed by  
Louise Barbara Richardson

Reyhner and Eder's book furnishes a most informative and clearly written reference work about the schooling of American Indians from colonial times to the present day. The determined effort of the United States government to assimilate Indian youth into the Euro-American culture and later its efforts to repair the negative results of this attempted assimilation are thoughtfully presented in this well documented book, which furnishes extensive references and quotations from many primary sources. These sources include numerous government reports, records of schools and statements of educators, as well as comments of American Indians drawn from various documents, which provide varying points of view on some of the complex issues involved in the development of Indian education.

The authors have wide experience in the field. Their present book is an expanded revision of their *A History of Indian Education* published in 1989 by Eastern Montana College (now Montana State University), where they both were formerly faculty members. Jon Reyhner is now Professor of Education

at Northern Arizona University. He had previously taught and served as school administrator on a number of reservations. He has given many workshops on Indian education and has written extensively on the subject. He has also edited several works, among them the excellent *Teaching American Indian Students* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1992). Jeanne Eder, a Dakota Sioux, is Director of the Alaska Native Studies Program and Associate Professor of History at the University of Alaska, Anchorage. She is the author of the *Dakota Sioux* and *The Makah*.

The authors organize their *History* largely in chronological order from the beginning of the European contact to the present day. Although the book's subject is Indian education in the United States, Chapter I, "Colonial Missionaries," briefly covers mission schools in Mexico and in Spanish colonies that later became part of the United States. French Jesuit missionaries working in Canada and in a region that subsequently became the North East of the United States are also discussed. The authors think that although they made many very positive contributions to the study of Native languages and believed that American Indian young people should learn to read first in their Native language, then gradually become literate in English, both Catholic and Protestant missionaries for the most part did not have any real interest in Indian culture but sought to assimilate Indians into the European culture.

Chapter II through IV, "Treaties and Western Removal," "Reservations," "Allotment and Dependency," chapters providing much detail in an overview of the complicated history, discuss the government's increasing involvement with Indian education while taking control of the Native population in the entire United States. Convinced that the way to "civilize" Native American young people was to remove them from their families and place them in boarding schools, the government considered mastering the English language a prime factor in this civilizing process, and, therefore, in 1880 the Indian bureau issued regulations that in government and also in mission schools "all instruction must be in English" under threat of governmental funding being withheld (p. 76). If children spoke their home language at all in school, even to each other, they were severely punished.

The authors quote many comments of Indians reflecting mixed sentiments about their schooling, which in 1891 Congress authorized as compulsory. Many comments were negative, recalling repressive measures and feelings of isolation, especially among new students who knew no English but were forbidden to communicate with others in their native language. Some students, however, liked school, appreciated their teachers, were interested in what they were studying, and wanted to learn English.

Teaching Indian youth to speak and read English without first teaching them to read in their native language presented very serious problems. The authors speak of the great numbers of teachers who were not adequately trained to instruct Indian students. However, there were some exceptions, teachers who were prepared and interested in their work. The authors provide particularly interesting discussion about the pedagogical methods used by these teachers and various theories of the period on how to teach English as a second language.

After World War I the government of the United States began rethinking its Indian policy, prodded by mounting criticism within the country. An example of this was the Brookings Institute investigation, known as the Meriam report, in 1928, which called attention to shocking conditions in Indian schools. Particularly influential in this period was the new Commissioner of Indian Affairs under Roosevelt, John Collier, whose work the authors discuss at some length in chapter VIII, "A New Deal, 1924-1944." Collier's efforts resulted in the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which provided for a measure of tribal self-government, Indian preference in the hiring of Indian-Service employees, and Indian religious freedom. Collier was totally opposed to the former government assimilation policy. His admiration for Native American values and ways of life is reflected in his memorable words, quoted by the authors (p. 206), that modern society had "...lost that passion and reverence for human personality and for the web of life and the earth which the American Indians have tended as a central sacred fire."

The period following World War II heard a renewed call to "...set the American Indian free" (p. 232). This resulted in more Indians entering public schools. During the 1960's two more studies on Indian education were conducted. One in 1968, known as the Kennedy Report, was entitled *A National Tragedy, A National Challenge*. The authors comment (p. 252) laconically that "The title of this report says it all."

On the other hand, by the latter decades of the twentieth century educated Indians had developed a core of leadership that was capable of defining its wishes to the federal government. The year 1975 saw the passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, which required the Bureau of Indian Affairs to contract as many services to the tribes as the latter wished. This paved the way for Indian controlled schools that would allow Indian parents to establish a balanced curriculum teaching children both to adjust to the modern white man's world and also to appreciate their tribal values and ways of living. There were by the late 1980's over 60 of these contract schools. The first two were on the Navajo Reservation. The authors discuss them at some length in chapter X, "Self-Determination, 1969-1989," especially Rock Point School, which, it may be observed, is quite often cited in educational circles as a model of additive bilingual education.

The book provides an interesting discussion of higher education for Indian students (Chapter XI), especially the tribally controlled colleges, which have been established on many reservations since 1968. These institutions strive to prepare students for future jobs and adjustment to modern technological western society as well as to teach and preserve ancestral tribal languages and culture. Their number is constantly increasing. In the spring of 2006 there were 37, three of them universities, registered in the American Indian Higher Education Consortium.

In the final chapters the authors emphasize that the tribes have "...persisted in the uphill struggle to take control of their education" (p. 308). There have been in the last two decades three educational events that point to self-determination moving forward. One is the Native American Language Act of 1990, which maintains that the United States is responsible for working with Native Americans to ensure the survival of the cultures and languages of the Indian tribes, which have the right to use Native American languages as a medium of instruction in all schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior. This act, of course, represents the complete reversal of the government's former assimilation policy (p. 309).

The Indian Nations at Risk Task Force recommended in 1991 that schools were responsible for promoting students' tribal language and culture, for the Task Force saw a correlation between students' understanding of their culture and their achievement in school. Reyhner and Eder, however, observe that the introduction of courses in Native American culture and languages like those at the Navajo Rock Point school have not yet become very general. Native communities still need to be more directly involved in their children's education and insist that schools prepare young Indians both to live productively in the modern technological world and to appreciate their traditional heritage. The time has come, the authors conclude at the close of their excellent book, for the "...recognition of the basic human right of America's Native peoples to control the education of their children" (p. 330).

Heather K. Hardy and Janine Scancarelli, eds. *Native Languages of the Southeastern United States*. Studies in the Anthropology of North American Indians. Lincoln and London: The University of Nebraska Press, 2005. (In cooperation with the American Indian Studies Research Institute, Indiana University, Bloomington). Pp. xiii, 558 with 3 figures, 78 tables, index. \$70.00; UK: £54.00.

Reviewed by  
Louis Barbara Richardson

This most informative and interesting work treats a subject that has been considerably studied, according to the editors (p. 3) over the past 25 years, but the languages in question, with one exception, may not be familiar to the general reader. The exception is Cherokee, one of the eight languages analyzed in this book on the basis of field work carried out by eminent scholars in the field.

The work is precluded by a clearly written, succinct, yet detailed history of research done on Southeastern Native languages from the arrival of the Europeans to the 1990's. This history, by William C. Sturtevant, offers much bibliographical data on the subject.

The bulk of the volume consists of the analyses of eight languages found in the Southeastern United States. Four of these belong to the Muskogean family, a language family located entirely within the boundaries of the Southeast. The four include Alabama (analyzed by Heather K. Hardy), Chicktasaw (Pamela Munro), Choctaw (George A. Broadwell) and Creek (Donald E. Hardy). These analyses are accompanied by studies of Karen M. Booker, Jack B. Martin, Pamela Munro and Heather K. Hardy on "Muskogean Historical Phonology," "Proto-Muskogean Morphology," and suggested classifications of Muskogean languages within the family.

The four other languages analyzed are Caddo (Wallace Chafe), Cherokee (Janine Scancarelli), Natchez (Geoffrey Kimball) and Quapaw (Robert L. Rankin). Caddo is now spoken by only a few elderly people, and Natchez and Quapaw are no longer spoken. The editors remark (p. 6) that Kimball did not base his analysis of Natchez on his own fieldwork but rather interpreted the notes of the prominent earlier scholar Mary R. Haas.

Each of the languages analyzed begins with a brief discussion of such questions as dialect variation, areas where the language is spoken, approximate number of speakers today and attempts being made to revive its use, the establishment of an orthography and the availability of written texts. The major part of each analysis consists of a Native text to be used as a source of material illustrative of the language's grammatical structure. The text is followed by a discussion of the phonemic structure of the language, then a more lengthy consideration of the important features of its morphology-syntax. Both sections cite lines from the text by way of illustration of observations being made.

The abundant information offered in these analyses and the copious bibliographical material provided at the end of each chapter and at the end of the book make this a valuable work for the study of Native languages of the Southeastern United States.

Jean-Claude Bouvier. *Espaces du langage: géolinguistique, toponymie, cultures de l'oral et de l'écrit*. Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2003. pp. 412. €33.

Reviewed by  
Kenneth H. Rogers  
University of Rhode Island

Jean-Claude Bouvier has had a long and distinguished career as a professor, center director, and president, at the Université de Provence. The volume under review is a collection of 31 articles written by Bouvier in the course of his career, articles which the editors Claude Mauron and Jean-Noël Pelen have divided into five topics: (1) *Dialectologie occitane et gallo-romane* (eleven studies), (2) *Onomastique* (three studies), (3) *Oralité, identité, mémoire* (seven studies), (4) *Linguistique romane et linguistique générale* (four studies) and (5) *Littératures occitane et française* (six studies).

While all the papers in this collection are of great interest, this review will focus on several which seem to be more pertinent than others to the field of geolinguistics. The first of these is, not surprisingly, the first article in the collection: *L'occitan en Provence: le dialecte provençal, ses limites et ses variétés* (pp. 11-25), reprinted from the 1971 volume of the *Revue de linguistique romane* (Volume 43, pp.46-62). Basing his classification on specific phonological features, such as the maintenance or diphthongization of stressed vowels and the maintenance or loss of the final [r] of infinitives, Bouvier divides Provençal into four sub-dialects: *provençal alpin*, *provençal vivaro-dauphinois*, *provençal rhodano-méditerranéen*, and *nissart*. The author takes care to show the affinities which serve to unite all Occitan varieties, from Gascony to Nice, and further points out that all Occitan can be divided into North and South varieties on the basis of other features. Nevertheless, he sees overall cultural and linguistic unity in Occitan in general, and in Provençal in particular.

A second study by Bouvier of interest to geolinguists is "*Auguste Brun et Walther von Wartburg: essai de mise au point sur une polémique*" (pp. 309-322), reprinted from the 1997 issue of *Lengas*. Von Wartburg had stressed the influence of the Frankish superstratum in the formation of Northern Gallo-

Romance (French) and Southern Gallo-Romance (Occitan); Brun disputed this emphasis, asserting instead that the pre-Roman substrata (Ligurian and Gaulish) were responsible for the bifurcation. Bouvier gives a sympathetic ear to both, but asserts that neither paid sufficient attention to the Romanization process itself in Gaul. Two features of Bouvier's study are worth noting: (1) he asserts the need, also evident in Brun's study, of incorporating into linguistic studies other fields of research, fields such as geography, local history, and ethnography; and (2) Bouvier never closes the door on the need for further research, affirming, as he does in all of his articles, that continued study can only enlighten us further.

A third study in this collection is worth noting; it is Bouvier's 1973 study "*Les paysans drômois devant les parlers locaux*" (pp. 79-86), reprinted from *Ethnologie française* (Volume 3, pp. 229-235). This paper is a valuable precursor of the geolinguistic and sociolinguistic research of the 1980's and 1990's. The author adopts the concepts earlier elaborated by Robert Lafont, of *full-time users* of Occitan, versus *part-time, post-, non-users*, and *potential users* (pp. 79-80), and in remarks which seem to foreshadow Nancy Dorian's remarkable study of Scots Gaelic, Bouvier points out that there are, in addition to the other users of Drômois Occitan, *returning users*, former speakers who have lived elsewhere but are returning to the Drôme and once again using their mother-tongue.

Even the articles on literature will interest many geolinguists, dealing as they do with language questions (for example, "*Stéréotypes de l'étranger méditerranéen dans la littérature provençale du XIXe siècle: l'exemple de Frédéric Mistral*" pp. 339-353). In short, this is an exceptionally useful and interesting collection of papers by a scholar who is too little known among American linguists.

#### **Works Cited**

Nancy C. Dorian. *Language Death: The Life Cycle of a Scottish Gaelic Dialect*. Philadelphia (PA): University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981.