

BOOK REVIEWS

Jonathon Green. *Green's Dictionary of Slang*. London, Chambers, 2011. Three volumes. \$450.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This is a monumental reference book. Every significant library reference desk must have it. It is a huge contribution to lexicography, and slang is no less important than any other kind of language just because it is usually a child of the non-elite. "Slang," wrote Carl Sandburg, "is a language that rolls up its sleeves, spits on its hands and goes to work". Slang is vivid and vital and a lot more than what some lexicographers define as a substitute for more formal, less vulgar, words. Some slang is included in regular dictionaries but Green's is extraordinarily more complete and covers material which has earlier been found in specialized collections of criminal slang (Green produced one of those), slang of various countries (such as Australia, by Leni Johansen), sexual slang (Alan Richter's *Sexual Slang*, "Bruce Roger"'s *Queen's Vernacular*), and so on. I have a shelf of slang dictionaries in American (Harold Wentworth & Stuart Berg Flexner, Robert L. Chapman, Richard A. Spears, and others), British ("Ducange Anglicus," "Jon Bee" [John Badcock], J. Redding Ware, J. S. Farmer & W. E. Henley, and others), Mexican and Spanish, even *Dictionnaire d'argot fin-de-siècle* (Charles Virmaître, 1894) and more modern French examples, etc. I am one of those nerds who like to read dictionaries of all kinds although when speaking and writing I always try to avoid obscure "dictionary words," the sort of unheard-of vocabulary that crops up too often and unnecessarily annoyingly in some novelists I greatly admire, such as Anthony Burgess. I will sometimes employ slang and wordplay, though of course I have to take care with levels of diction and avoid being as unreadable as *Finnegans Wake*, for when dealing in communication one must strive to communicate, to inform, not merely impress. Slang seeks to enliven, not to obfuscate. Is standard *obfuscate* a bit too much for the average reader of today? Who is your target reader? Slang creates a distinct tone and an impact. Once, I suppose, *impact* as a verb could have been called slangy, not just neologism (new word, as one does not have to explain to readers here). It also touches on the personal.

I corresponded with the late Eric Partridge (author of the classic *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, first published in 1937) and I was of some assistance to Paul Beale, who labored long over the 8th edition of Partridge, published in 1962. Partridge and Beale included in their vast compilations colloquialisms, catch-phrases, solecisms, catachreses, nicknames, and vulgarisms and I provided information for Beale's separate volume on catch-phrases. It was an honor and a privilege to have anything at all to do with the great Eric Partridge's Herculean achievement. Partridge's *door-stopper* was long the standard single volume work. Now Green in three volumes with a total of 6222 double-column pages, plus a select bibliography in three columns totaling just over 150 pages, has given us this stupendous, daring, erudite, sometimes hilarious, sometimes shocking work of serious scholarship. Truly, the commentator on low language who stated that the mud often yields incredible creatures was stating no more than the truth. Here is the wit and wisdom of the common folk in all its randy and rambunctious glory. Here we see that the public is *common* in more than one sense of the word and that their speech is not nearly as pure and precise, and seldom as dull, as what lexicographers used to legislate and today say they report, though they clearly do not report the whole story. Ordinary dictionaries give us a distorted idea of language.

Slang is a language of everyday speech. It can work long in common speech before anyone ever writes it down so that lexicographers can find printed citations, enough so that they are convinced that a find is not a word used only once and so thought not worth bothering with, a rule somewhat like the objection to ending a sentence with a preposition. Sometimes a writer will put a word or phrase into quotation marks and this is meant to indicate that it has not yet really arrived in accepted vocabulary but today the fuzzy minded literary critics, who tend to put "beauty," "message," and other terms into exculpatory quotation marks in order to, like, you know, evade responsibility for word choice, or because they actually do not know what they mean by "mean," also sprinkle quotation marks around. So those marks do not reliably contribute to dating slang—but sometimes they show its tenuous relationship to jargon, also difficult to stick on a pin to display. Nonetheless Green dates the illustrative quotations so

that, like the vast *Oxford English Dictionary*, it is lexicography on historical principles. This is a bit of a contribution to a *terminus ab quo* but not exactly a date of origin. Call it a date of first noting, thus far. Green's dated illustrative examples are much better than most because he seldom or never gives us a sentence that uses the word but not in a way that tells you anything useful about its meaning ("It was a whazziz" is of very little and possibly no use at all) and he does not simply invent illustrative sentences (a serious flaw in the gay *Lavender Lexicon*, for example). Even the *OED* examples are sometimes far from perfect in this regard. Best probably is just to define terms and leave it at that, no date, no etymology, no quotation. That is what was done in Wentworth & Flexner's *Pocket Dictionary of American Slang*, the 1968 abridgment of their big book. The *OED* tries more but does not always succeed, or indeed meet a need.

The *OED* began by a learned linguist recruiting and employing an army mostly of volunteers, retired colonels, little old ladies, superannuated clergymen, people from many leisurely walks of Victorian life who would read and copy out sentences with interesting words, even a logophile who (it was eventually discovered) was writing from an insane asylum. The latest version of the *OED*, which is online and can easily be updated, is a superb product of professionals, among them an American, the English dictionary earlier having been under the direction of a Scotsman and an Australian. This *OED* contains as the *OEDs* have always contained a good deal of slang and even obscenities, but not nearly as much as the industrious Green has assembled, defined, and illustrated with gobbets from literature, Internet postings, news from all over.

Of course no one can search all texts but computers can perform wonders. No computer and no person can be certain of each and every word origin, nor can anyone say definitively when a word or combination of words was first uttered. That may have been long before anyone wrote it down or anyone printed it, one must reiterate. The late Allen Walker Read spent years tracing *OK* nearly two centuries back in written sources but at any moment now someone may find *OK* in print at some earlier, perhaps much earlier, date. The average person may wonder why linguists want to spend so much time trying to determine precisely when this or that word or expression came into general use. Even if you find 10 citations in print you can never prove that a dozen or more persons ever used the word, that it was more or less in general use. With obscene and otherwise taboo material the life of a word or expression is suppressed in general use and it may be some time before it gets into print or even (as with the *f-word*) someone as daring as Kenneth Tynan actually utters it on the BBC. We cannot even date *fug* (which Norman Mailer did not invent for *The Naked and the Dead*) or *friggin'* and so on. Those and offshoots (*n-word* and the rest) were from a class of evasive slang which includes *gee whiz*, *jeepers creepers*, *Jimminy Cricket* and other plays on *Jesus Christ*, as well as *gar*, *gawd*, *gee*, *golly* and the rest. All those words were on thousands of lips long before they appeared on any page. I have never contemplated trying to date sex slang and have not demanded as I pile up my 3x5 slips that a word be found in print, for slang is a spoken language to a very great extent. In fact the more a word or expression is considered dirty the less it is considered fit to print, however much one may hear it in the street or on late-night television or in rap performances or movies, etc. Geolinguists know or should know all about the differences between *parole* and *langue*, or the way language actually is and the way some people think it ought to be. US geolinguists ought to concentrate on the language actually most in use—and one might well say that slanguage is the native language of the American majority.

Green includes odd spellings of familiar words. *Flewsie* I had never seen before, for instance. He does not provide pronunciation guides, a fact that those of us who reside in one of the five boroughs of Noo YAWK (Man'A'an, BRON-ix, BROOK-uh-lin, Qeentz, and STA-din I-lin) can readily appreciate. He recognizes trademarks and copyright material. He seems to have consulted an astounding number of literary sources but I do not think he has read enough about sports or gambling or for example the slang of doctors (*PPP=piss-poor protoplasm* for a *gomer*, Get Out Of My Emergency Room) and other medical personnel, but there are specialized books elsewhere for that stuff. He may not have everything but he has God's plenty.

Of course, to take for example not iatric but more common sex slang (a dictionary of which this reviewer has been working on for decades), one may well not see the gems of purest ray serene in the dark, unfathomed caves of pornographic magazines or the most obscure cheap pulp fiction, let alone hear all the

dirty words in cable entertainments, and so on. I had never seen *maytag* in print to mean a punk in prison who is forced to do the laundry for more macho convicts nor *talking* to describe lesbians conducting an affair in jail, but I encountered them and put them into a novel as well as into a learned journal. In a series of articles on fringe vocabulary, the more or less private language of closed groups of various sorts, published in Reinhold Aman's bold journal *Maledicta* I got some words from perversion (now called *alternate lifestyle*) into print, as far as I know for the first time, but serious lexicographers at the *OED* and so on demand more than a couple of citations before they will even think of including a word in their dictionaries. Two examples of use is not enough, especially if from a single author. All Green's entries are even if supported by only a single quotation presumably well attested.

His dictionary is also precisely, correctly written, a nice surprise in a world in which too few English speakers and writers know where to put that *only*.

One can strive for grammatical correctness, even in the world of *It is me*, but one can never get what scientists call a complete universe of data when it comes to what the French call the equivalent of "green language," or indeed any language. That is because language is like verdure forever dying and coming to be born. *Jailbreak* as a verb and adjective with a new meaning has very recently come into computerspeak, too recently for Green to include it. At the moment you read this sentence some nerd (I consider *nerd* now standard) somewhere is putting a brand new word into a blog. It may or may not get used ever again. There are in a slang dictionary as in any dictionary words that you never have used or ever will use, though not the basically useless Latinate garbage in the *OED*'s medical and other terminology. Who knows or needs *adermatoglyphia*? Moreover there are words to be marked *obs.*, like *potato finger* and *roll in her ivories*. But really no word ever invented can be guaranteed a long run or securely stated to be defunct, for anyone at any time can speak or write it and, refreshed, it rises from the grave like Dracula, to delight or discombobulate. You may be astonished in Green to discover a real oldie in use today and you will be shocked to see sometimes that what you think of as certain modern slang terms are actually to be found in (say) Chaucer or Shakespeare. Greene seems to have missed a couple of Shakespearean slang words for *phallus* (originally a slang word in Latin) that Partridge mentions in *Shakespeare's Bawdy*. I hesitate to nit-pick at omissions, though you see I have fallen prey to temptation. Indeed that is how dictionaries are usually reviewed, most egregiously by the critics who read hundreds of pages, find a typographical or other error, and delighted pounce on that in order to show off. Green's work is so overwhelmingly impressive, so majestic, that no critic, it seems to me, can afford to try to *showboat*. Green's work is, to bring back a phrase long gone, the bee's knees. *Green's Dictionary of Slang* is first-rate, *primo*. It is a doozy (from the elegant car of yore made by Duesenberg). Those are two slang etymologies of which I feel pretty confident.

Paul V. Kroskrity, ed. *Telling Stories in the Face of Danger: Language Renewal in Native American Communities*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012. Pp. xiv, 269 with Index. \$24.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Linguists and anthropologists, ethnics and ethnographers examine storytelling and poetry and oral transmission in general in the threatened languages of the Apache, Kiowa, Maliseet, Navaho, Paiute, and Tewa communities in the American west. This literature has been used to keep the languages alive and to teach Amerindians their heritage, traditional morals and world view, and establish personal and group identity. Efforts to preserve and extend languages are described, languages which otherwise might become as extinct of hundreds of other aboriginal tongues.

Kroskrity teaches American Indian Studies at UCLA and other contributors, some Amerindian and some not, are the late Pamela A. Bunte (California State at Long Beach), Margaret C. Field (San Diego State), Amber A. Neely (graduate student at Oklahoma), M. Eleanor Nevins and Joseph J. Nevins (both of Nevada at Reno), Sean O'Neill and Gus Palmer (both of Oklahoma), Bernard C. Perley (Wisconsin at Milwaukee), and Anthony K. Webster (Southern Illinois at Carbondale). There are some illustrations and some interesting samples of the languages with English translation. Navaho seems to differ most from

European languages. It has, for instance, no verb for “to go” and many nouns are the same in the singular and the plural (compare English *sheep*). Some aboriginal languages have unusual subtlety in terms of indicating size or distance in time, a different way of looking at the world. The list of works cited gives a reader some idea of work in the field of the languages selected for attention to which this paperback is a welcome new addition. This brief review will conclude with a statement of the surprising importance, the truly revolutionary potential, of this field, so stay with me.

You know that the early traders in Indian lands created some pidgins and that early missionaries devised grammars and dictionaries of native languages and provided a writing system for those which had none. You know that most aboriginal languages have disappeared and with them, naturally, the cultures which produced them. Indian schools on reservations, as readers here are well aware, often punished students for speaking their mother tongues. There was an attempt to Americanize the American Indian. Now there are many efforts to revive and retain native languages, some large, as with Lakota, some small.

There is no single aboriginal language origin in the Americas similar to Indo-European with a clear *Stemma* of descendants (as the organized Germans put it) and scholars still debate whether there are three or more unrelated Amerindian families, plus some puzzling isolates. Estimates of the aboriginal population at the time of the first European arrivals here range widely to as high as 50 million but disease and war diminished the tribes and nations considerably and many languages perished in the process. The important Athabaskan, Algonquin, Inuit, and Souian groups were widely if thinly distributed in North America and they still exist. California had almost two dozen distinct language groups and many of the western tribes and nations survived better than those who confronted European settlers on the east coast. The languages of Nadene origin, which are tonal, have had a hard time. Ojibwa did well in Canada and the US and Cherokee both in North Carolina and Oklahoma but bilingualism was followed by a great deal of loss of the majority of Amerindian languages, exacerbated by the fact that often in the first place there was only picture writing or sign language and oral transmission, no permanent written literature, the surest way to some sort of language survival. Amerindian languages have done a bit better in Central and South America, where aboriginal peoples have always been more numerous than in North America.

The languages selected to be featured in this collection of essays under review are roughly in order of the number of speakers today, or actually when Gunnemark reported some 20 years ago, which even then was not entirely reliable in all particulars but is the best estimate I can find, is or was Navaho (150,000), Apache (15,000), Tewa (3000), Piute (2000), Maliseet (Gunnemark says Malecite-Passamaquoddy in Maine and New Brunswick, 1500), and Kiowa (500).

The statement of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* of half a century or more ago that all the aboriginal languages of America are “doomed to extinction” cannot be made with such confidence today because of the heroic and sustained efforts of some people to preserve them. Some will last much longer than was once expected. Indeed some so-called dead languages can be and are to a small extent revived, such as Cornish, whose last native speaker died at the end of the 18th century but which now has been given new life. You can chat in Cornish online today with speakers in Australia. There have even been recently some small discoveries of old Cornish literature, which is very scarce, chiefly a few prayers or religious dramas. In the extremely long run, admittedly, all languages extant today will die, but then, as Lord Keynes remarked when commenting on the long run in the world of economics, “in the long run we are all dead”.

Meanwhile we need for general reference an expert update of Franz Boas’ *Handbook of American Indian Languages* (3 parts) in the bulletin of the US Bureau of American Ethnology about languages still alive. We need to bring the matter up to date since 1938. This will be a huge problem because one expert for all the extant let alone the dead Amerindian languages is not alive. More important is the fact that individual American groups are continuing to teach their old languages to their new members, for it is always the children and not the scholars who hold out the best hope of any language’s survival.

Finally, why take an interest in so-called primitive languages clinging to existence because of the interest of small groups of people? What about the scholars? The answer is that such languages may be nothing less than crucial in our future understanding of the basic nature of all human languages. Really. The publication in 2012 of Dan Everett’s book *Language: The Cultural Tool* may be the first really big

offensive in the sporadic war against Noam Chomsky's description of human language, which previously has seen only skirmishes. Maybe Chomsky has been wrong all along, which many have been a bit suspicious about and some have flatly asserted. Chomsky and colleagues in 2002 pronounced recursion ("Chomsky's friends said that Chomsky was sure that Chomskyism was right") is the very basis of the difference between human speech and the communications of other animals. Everett has been studying the language of the Pranha, usually spelled with a dash over the final *a* we do not have in this font, of Brazil and that jungle people absolutely do not have any recursion, nothing like that sort of embedding of clauses within clauses, at all. In fact. They have no terms for colors and no numbers and yet they get along quite well without such things because their culture does not seem to need them. Now, if the culture creates the language and not the other way around, then Chomsky has always been quite wrong with his deep structure and language ⇔ culture and all that. Chomsky has always been as much a politician as a linguist and linguistics are ready to debate endlessly and viciously the Chomsky theories. So now that something has come up involving the Pirana that cannot be described as irrelevant, the war escalates among the academic partisans. And right at the heart of it are small languages, ancient and isolated, that may tell us how wrong we have all been for so long about the nature of all languages, aboriginal or not.

Scott F. Kiesling. *Linguistic Variation and Change*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2011. Pp. xvi, 200 with Index. \$ 36.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

In the notable Edinburgh series which recently began and proposes to give a comprehensive report on the science of sociolinguistics, this paperback by a professor at the University of Pittsburgh provides a step-by-step introduction to the very heart of geolinguistics, language in action, with full appreciation of the factors that govern language variation (even in individuals' speech) and change over time and place.. Those controls are the nature of language, the nature of the society in which it operates, and the way language is connected to personal, group, and national identity. The author walks carefully through the minefield of terminology, provides a wealth of figures and tables, and directs students and teachers alike to important works for further reading. He deals fully with language collecting, sampling, and statistics, and patterns and theories. He provides a great deal of information on the "life course" of language change and he assesses the "social information" contained in the details of change, transmission, and adoption of new forms, whether involving coining, pronunciation, grammar and syntax, or presence in a community's speech as that affects outsiders who come into contact with the community and adopt its ways. Usually structural change is recommended by some utility perceived by speakers.

Readers may encounter some difficulty with such terms as Trudgill's *salience* or Silverstein's *metapragmatic awareness* but Kiesling is generally very easy to understand and extremely well organized, so that this can be an excellent textbook for undergraduate or graduate students and a refresher for experts.

Yasemin Yildiz. *Beyond the Mother Tongue*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2012. Pp. xii, 292 with Index. \$55.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

For specialists in the areas of German-Turkish and German-Jewish studies, this solid study by a professor from the University of Illinois takes on the belief that a person can be master of only one language, a fairly modern idea but one that is widely held although now globalization challenges the monolingual as well as the national paradigms. Multiculturalism and the spread of international English, for instance, as well as nations, in Africa for example, in which various tribes have to manage more than one language, point to the fact that people are not all monolingual and that even nations with a single official

language have within their diverse populations speakers of minority languages perhaps along with the official language but sometimes even with no use of the official language.

Ms. Yildiz, a professor of German, focuses on modern writers in German who are involved with multilingualism, producing a German affected by other languages or perhaps works in German and another language as well. We learn of borrowings, codes, and different registers in a single text. Monolingualism was a major factor in uniting some of what “Saki” in *The Easter Egg* called the “princedom that make inconspicuous freckles on the map of Central Europe” into a single, powerful German state. That state, when divided by politics, made huge and successful efforts finally to reunite its halves, and German still reigns as a national monolingual ideal even though threatened by speakers of other languages who have arrived as immigrants or who within Germany speak a number of very different dialects, social and regional. There exist national unity and the concept of the *Volk* and what Ruth Mandel in *Cosmopolitan Anxieties* (2008) has termed the “selective cosmopolitanism” of the position of the language of Turkish-speaking *Arbeiten* in Germany. A “de-ethnicized” German or “German beyond the mother tongue” may be on the horizon. Immigration, past and perhaps future if resistance cannot be effective, is going to alter the character and speech of many European nations and of course there is ever-present Americanization, more or less, everywhere.

Sara Pugach. *Africa in Translation: A History of Colonial Linguistics in Germany and Beyond, 1814–1945*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012. Pp, xiv, 303 with Index. \$65.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Afrikanistik, the study of African languages by Germans, started in the early nineteenth century as the missionizing and the commercial exploitation of the so-called Dark Continent drew attention in German lands. The Bible, the translation of which by Luther was the founding of the German language in effect, was translated into various African languages because it was believed that the Word had to be accommodated to the way the natives spoke and thought. Later in the nineteenth century Germany as a nation vigorously entered into the “scramble” for colonial power, natural resources, and markets in Africa. So German language experts, who for a long time have studied philology and *Germanistik*, began to get seriously involved in the astounding number of languages that had grown up as a result of the separation of numerous tribes and nations on the vast African continent. Ms. Pugach connects all this not only to colonization but also to nationalism and racialization. *Afrikanistik* went from a useful occupation of those involved in trade or conversion in Africa to a cosmopolitan and politically and ethnically charged university subject of study in Germany.

Now we are allegedly in postcolonial times—I happen to see a great deal of lively colonialism in US and other politics today, but let that pass—but Africa still certainly bears the marks of colonialism and everywhere language is unarguably a major factor in all relations, commercial and cultural and otherwise, between peoples. What was accomplished by German linguists, often aided and sometimes opposed by the Africans whose languages they were studying, is of great interest and of wider application than even this book hints. Today there are African studies programs of distinction in Bayreuth, Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg, and Leipzig as well as a famous school of African Studies in London and scholars working in other places. They are putting the emphasis on the linguistic rather than the biological in discussing ethnic and racial groups. Still, however, there is a certain Caucasian assumption that people in Africa who cannot (or do not) count above three, like people in South America whose language lets them count only to two, are not ready for the twenty-first century.

Susan Petrilli. *Expression and Interpretation in Language*. New Brunswick (NJ), etc.: Transaction, 2012. Pp. xx, 297 with Index. \$49.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Ms. Petrilli (Bari) is an expert on semiotics, on language's ways of communicating meaning, enabling interpretation, and fostering understanding, and even being capable to transmitting ideas from one language to another. She places a high value on imagination. She is well organized. She puts together and makes sense of a number of different and occasionally contradictory facts and fancies in the study of language and the connected matters of ethical and practical behavior, of humanism and sensible thought and action, of subjectivity and objectivity, of reasonable definitions of identity and personal responsibility. All these have interesting geolinguistic aspects.

In this book there is some hard going and not only with concepts such as "firstness, secondness, and thirdness" and the identification of and speaking of or disguising of truth, the nature of iconicity, and discourse with The Other. There is a little slight of hand intellectually with "life of signs" and "signs of life". There is both the usual vagueness and the occasional verbosity of carpentered terminology, not to mention the unusual objection here to the expression "speech act". We are taken short by words such as *translatants* and asked to see the connection of *signifiant* to *signifié*. We read: "The image is the dynamical object that is not exhausted in the identity of the immediate object." How's that? One regularly encounters a sentence such as this one, chosen at random, which argues that "to be properly understood, human social communicative behavior, communication in culture must be contextualized in the broad sphere of biosemiosis". Translate. It is worth the trouble, but it is troublesome.

I want to take this opportunity still again to encourage making more readings on the subject of linguistics more readable. I should like to see more communication experts who communicate more concretely and concisely. I am not such a WASP that I would object to the invasion, especially in our scientific and pseudoscientific terminology, of good old Anglo-Saxon by Greek and Latin that I would want to replace *impenetrability* by "un-get-throughableness of stuff" but cannot we have language about language in English more simply English? It is all the more to be desired when scholars such as Ms. Petrilli have something to say that amply rewards understanding. I realize that as Einstein said science must be "simple, but not too simple" but indubitably the hard science of linguistics must always try to avoid the fuzzy language of soft sciences such as psychology and sociology and political science and economics where terms appear to be invented to make familiar matters of common sense look unrecognizable as such and little ideas appear to be larger, like objects in the fog.

Victor Ginsburgh & Shlomo Weber. *How Many Languages do We Need?* Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 2011. Pp. xii, 232 with Index. \$35.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

The answer is certainly one to express ourselves to and understand relatives and friends and as many members of our multicultural nation as are essential to us—we can never expect anyone to speak all the languages of a multilingual country—and one or more languages needed to be part of the international community in these days of globalization. Ideally the whole world would have a basic common language (and be able to cope with the inevitable local variants and changes over time) and what we may call cultural dialects which would preserve for everyone the cultural differences that exist (and change) which languages embody. Think of the euro coin, with a common symbol on one side and a national symbol on the other, stressing that individual nations have been joined into a larger unit but retain their national characteristics and pride. Even the European Union, however, does not have a single official language but almost two dozen official languages with a resulting vast amount of time and money is spent translating everything into a number of different languages. Even some individual nations which used to insist on the ability to speak a traditional national language as a requirement for citizenship now accept the fact that

within their borders is a multicultural and multilingual society which honors difference and protects minority rights. Since the Tower of Babel, we may say, the world has had to be multilingual, and linguists will point out that each and every individual has an idiolect, a language which at least in vocabulary is his or her own, though able to cope with other dialects of a shared language.

Economics and politics and sentiment are forces, too. In some cases there may be no pea under and shell. No solution. The useful charts and statistics the authors (from Belgium and Russia) produce and insightfully interpret cannot always measure everything, for which language capabilities best serve commerce and international relations as well as individual lives? How far can standardization be imposed on any individual language, and how well can inescapable change over time be addressed? Is big best or is small beautiful, or both? Languages are born and die, and what can and should be done to make them last as well and as long as possible? How are dialects to be viewed socially? How do demography and migration and education and improvements in trade and communication and other factors affect language policies and practices? What are the impacts of fractionalization and national and international understanding communication power or disenfranchisement? What price unity; what price diversity; what price modern convenience and what price traditional culture? How much diversity threatens chaos and to what extent was Auden right when he wrote: "Civilizations should be measured by the degree of diversification attained and by the degree of unity retained"? Finally, must such languages as English develop at the expense of other languages or can it work beside them?

These are longstanding and challenging questions? First get your facts straight. Example: English is one of the official languages of India and does much to unify the nation and connect it to the rest of the world but the majority of the Top 10 newspapers of India are not in English but in Hindi. Ginsburgh & Weber suggest "the development of optimal and sensible linguistic policies" that "take into account rigorous economic, linguistic, and sociological considerations while recognizing differences and sensitivities of all people, and allow them to hope and achieve together". The authors inevitably argue for the inevitable, which is language diversity. They touch on questions about which languages are best for this or that; even if "all men [and women] are created equal" all languages are not. Ginsburgh & Weber clearly see diverse cultural costs and difficulties, some of which appear to have no solutions, such as the fact that Ghana would prefer one of the native languages as a unifier but there is not one that will serve and so Ghana uses English, with all the colonial fingerprints on it. The authors are aware that language has its politics (tribal, national, international) as do religion and trade with all their competitions, and that these things both unite and divide humanity while providing at least the illusion of stability in a world constantly in flux. They give us the facts about how we are even divided over such things as English as the most useful language nationally and internationally today, whether Yiddish is worth keeping, whether academies can embalm languages, whether the EU if Turkey joins can cope with Turkish as the fourth most important language of Europe, which languages it is most advantageous intellectually and/or career wise to learn, and much more.

This book honestly tackles a number of issues of crucial interest to geolinguists such as language use and language death, personal and national identity, individual rights and hard realities, the nature of communications and their relationship to progress, and much more. This clear-eyed appraisal is pioneering and trenchantly tackles huge issues rationally both historically and in their current manifestations. The book takes a broad view and likewise offers specific attention to the very obvious problems of the European Union "which can hardly cope".

Gale Stam & Mika Ishino, eds. *Integrating Gestures: The Interdisciplinary Nature of Gestures*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2011. Pp. 372 with Index. \$135.00.

Reviewed by
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Gestures, which preceded speech in human primates and now sometimes substitutes for it or emphasizes or elaborates it, were among the Romans taught in connection with rhetoric, later were stylized

for actors, finally have been studied for information about the evolution and effectiveness of language in human interaction and human cognition. Gestures vary over different societies and always convey information about culture, discourse, thought, intentions, emotions, intersubjectivity, brain function, and even illuminate second-language acquisition. Gestures are an important example of how in communication, as with coined words, the spontaneous and individual becomes codified and conventional.

In this collection of essays on gesture research the various approaches address the nature and function of gestures, first-language and second-language acquisition, gesture in the classroom and in problem solving, gesture aspects of discourse and interaction, and gesture in music and dance. Gestures can be conventional in the culture or spontaneous, as has been said, and they add emphasis and a sort of illustration to speech. If you believe that they are all natural you might recall that in some cultures nodding the head up and down means agreement with what is heard or spoken while in other cultures this is conveyed by shaking the head left and right, which to readers here means No.

This reviewer in an ASG publication made brief mention once of the need for geolinguists to take gesture and its variations across cultures into account but apart from American Sign Language, which has been discussed in the American Society of Geolinguistics and lately has been in the news as users of ASL struggle to preserve this language in deaf culture, students of language in action in and across cultures have not paid gesture nearly enough attention. This interdisciplinary study containing more than two dozen expert reports is volume 4 in Benjamins' new Gesture Studies series edited by Adam Kendon (University of Pennsylvania). That is at last establishing this significant gesture aspect as a topic for research and publication.

It is time for gesture, which is so suited to communicating in person, became a matter that is brought up at linguistic conferences and as traveling to conferences because of financial and other restrictions is replaced by teleconferencing gesture may get more attention. It can be well presented in video talks on modern devices, better than in printed books. In our visually oriented society it is a natural.

Victor Golla. *Californian Indian Languages*. Berkeley &c.: University of California Press, 2011. Pp. xiv, 380 with Index. \$90.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

The late William Bright produced the standard reference on Amerindian place names and here from another amazingly erudite scholar is the new standard reference book on all the dozens upon dozens of indigenous languages of what once was the Spanish mission area and then the independent republic and now is the state of California. The history of these languages covers no more than 2000 or 3000 time depth although it must be said that humanity has been on the ground there for some thousands of years before Christ and those whom we call Native Americans may have partly or completely replaced even earlier settlers who arrived in the Americas across a land bridge from Asia in the north or came across the Pacific to land on the continent's western shores. What has been recorded about these people is full of fact and guesswork. We do know for certain that what was once thought to be an island and we now call by the old name from a Spanish romance California there developed in non-communicating little villages what linguists recognize as 28 basic classifications of mutually unintelligible languages with many sub-classifications and such isolates as Karuk and Takelma. Takelma's presence in California in fact extends only a few miles south of one border and very little is established about the languages at the very southern tip of Baja California where are found Waikuri (sometimes called Guatakura), spoken around the mission of San Luis Gonzaga and Pericü (with, William C. Massey suggested, a language called Uchití falling somewhere between those two) and Monqui (which has left us nothing more than 14 place names but is supposed to be related to Waikuri somehow). Golla has delved deeply into ancient reports by Spanish missionaries and later Europeans in what is a large area and presents many problems of linguistic fact and opportunities for scholarly speculation and debate. Occasionally there is confusion because some languages have alternate native names and some (such as Gabrielino) have names the Spanish gave. To sort all this

out and to trace the pre-history as well as the known typological and areal history was a terrific task. Golla has triumphed.

Many readers here will know of the basic language families that are pretty certainly established; indeed some assert that all pre-Columbian languages of the Americas derive from just three, Algic, Na-Dene or Athabaskan, and Uto-Aztecian, but very few indeed will know of the complex situation about which Golla, an anthropologist of Humboldt State University, is the unquestioned expert. His large-format book in three parts with maps and charts and illustrations—the photographs of investigators and last speakers of languages add an attractively human touch—will hereafter be the go-to site for all scholars. There already is an electronic version of the text available.

Golla first defines the area of the Californian indigenous language mosaic and then he presents a narrative history of the study of them since the first European contact (1542), featuring the famous Alfred L. Kroeber and Edward Sapir (whose letters Golla edited elsewhere) and their students. Then come the more challenging parts. “Languages and Language Families” (Algic/Ritwan, Athabaskan/Na-Dene, Hokan, Penutian, Uto-Aztecian, and those which are of “uncertain affiliation” such as the very ancient Chumash, Yukian, and tiny languages of Baja California), “Typological and Areal Features” of Californian linguistics (phonology, grammar, numerals, names, Diminutive and other expressive symbolisms, social and situational varieties, and pre-Conquest and post-Conquest borrowing). We have a very detailed survey of the diversity and geolinguistic life and death of the languages and account of field work in complex and unfamiliar societies. Golla examines all the various phonological and grammatical structures and dialectology and dispersion of the native languages of California and in fact all the contiguous states where the same families exist. He meticulously documents every scrap of scholarship. He records whatever has been speculated about the pre-history in connection with the relevant languages, whether they are still active or have disappeared from use, how they operated or operate in contact and conflict, and he fully assesses the documentary history of how the languages have been collected and studied. He produces a reliable if daunting guidebook to the indigenous languages of the Golden State. This study took many years of scholarship and, I repeat with confidence, for many years will be the standard reference book.

It is a wonderful source for experts in linguistics, especially geolinguistics, anthropology, archeology, ethnology, history and pre-history. In a world in which scholars are encouraged to publish or perish and turn out fairly unreadable and small, narrowly focused studies such work as Golla’s, which springs from extremely extensive competence and synthesizes so very much documentation and points the way to major ideas about language in action and interaction, is rare indeed. It is a cause for awe.

Lisa Lim & Nikolas Gisborne, eds. *The Typology of Asian Englishes*. Philadelphia &c.: John Benjamins, 2011. Pp. vi, 120 with Index. \$120.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

With the notorious inability or unwillingness of English speakers to learn and use Asian languages it is a good thing for international commercial and cultural exchange that Asians learn a number of local varieties of English and even some favored western Englishes. In postcolonial Asia the footprint—to employ a word heard perhaps too often lately—of colonial English remains but just as in politics things have changed inventively and interestingly so the Englishes of the East are well worth examining for their similarities and differences, their structures and uses.

Why and how are new Englishness invented? How are they transmitted to the local populations? How do they affect the native languages and how are they received in the wider global context? Does it matter that, for instance 96 percent of the inhabitants of Hong Kong are Chinese or that a more mixed demography exists in this or that other place? To what extent does it matter that the new English of Hong Kong, for instance, bears all the marks of the colonial oppression? What is special about Singlish? Why do these English seem to western speakers of English to be sung to a different tune, and how puzzled might foreigners be about some of the lexical items that creep into Asian Englishes from native Asian languages?

Edited by Lim (Hong Kong) & Gisborne (Edinburgh) this book presents papers presented at the first International Conference for the Linguistics of English (Freiburg, 2008) in the workshop on the typology of Asian Englishes. The papers were then printed in a special issue (30: 2, 2009) of the journal *English World-Wide*. US \$120.00 is quite a price for this slim hardcover book. In it the editors “set the agenda” *re* Asian Englishes, the subject already of journal articles and books on the Englishes of Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, and Sri Lanka, and then we have essays by Lim (“Revisiting English Prosody: (Some) New Englishes as Tone Languages”), Gisborne (“Aspects of the Morphosyntactic Typology of Hong Kong English”), and Umberto Ansaldo’s “The Asian Typology of English: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations,” Devyani Sharma’s “Typological Diversity in New Englishes,” and a group of scholars (Priyankoo Sarmah, Divya Verma Gogoi & Caroline Wilshire) on “Thai English Rhythm and Vowels”.

Not addressed in this book, of course, are the ranking (say) of social dialects or the uses of Asian English in formal and informal communication, in conversation and in journalism, literature, the cinema, and so on. That was not the remit for this conference group any more than they wanted to take up the question of the impact of globalization on native languages or the impact of New Englishes of Asia on commerce, educational and other institutions, and so on.

Stephen J. Cowley, ed. *Distributed Language*. Philadelphia &c.: John Benjamins, 2011. Pp. x, 220 with Index. \$128.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

The small collection of papers on the typology of Asian English was #33 in Benjamins Current Topics series and this book as #34 in the series ties in with one of our world’s new religions, Ecology. Language is seen as connected to all our thoughts and expression in daily life and as common to us and as essential to us as the air we breathe. With that feel-good basis established the papers collected and edited and briefly introduced by Cowley (University of Hertfordshire) can range over speech and reading, even Shakespeare’s “linguaging”. There your reviewer is on his most familiar scholarly ground and can assure you that the article by Ellen Tribble is trivial regarding expectable changes in the text during presentation of a play. Indeed Sir Tom Stoppard once said he doubted that his *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* has ever been presented in exactly the same way more than once in any given place. Still Ms. Tribble (University of Otago) bats above average for this league. As for whether written language has a bias for language as code, suit yourself, as you will also in reacting to the fact that staging plays is a team sport and the “bending author” at his desk dashing off dialogue and maybe stage directions now and then is only the first link in the chain that connects the work to the individual audience members.

As for the cognitive dynamics and social sense-making and experiential speech and actualizing semiotic affordances (yes, the profs here really do write like that) there is less here than fills the page. As for the emphasis on Ecology, well, I contend that hobbyhorse is here ridden a bit too hard. The basic concept, stripped of the pomposity and persiflage is quite sound but once all the jargonistic trappings are loaded on it just don’t *rock*, if you catch what I mean. We need someone to say *whoa!* to these people and repeat what his brother William James said to Henry James: “Spit it out”. If you have a sound idea, a clever insight, a useful conclusion, state it clearly and concretely. Keep it simple. If you are not Shakespeare and you are not writing in an age when the English language is in need of a much larger vocabulary and reaches out eagerly to embrace the 3000 or so words Shakespeare invented as he went along—my favorites are all the *un*-somethings that prove so useful—then it is probably best to stop trying to impress your coterie of colleagues and say what you have to say in what the frank and fearless poet Marianne Moore used to call plain American “which cats and dogs can read”.

If an academic these days is writing articles to gain promotion, (s)he need not write to try to baffle the reader with fancy footwork. (S)he should try for a clean knockout punch. Indeed if you cannot tell me in a single sentence what your new big book does that is (a) new and (b) significant, forget it! There is no need to fuzz up writing so that it looks impressive to the reader. The promotions committee and the dean

are not readers; they simply try to discover the distinction of an academic journal and count the number of pages with your name on them. They *literally* weigh your publications. (Maybe that is what makes scholars prolix.) Publish or perish! From personal experience this reviewer can tell you that going from instructor to full professor in a decade (making 46 enemies of those I passed over, but they had to be nice to me because then I got to vote on their promotions and might be on their dread committee) was only a matter of publishing more than any committee could find the time or inclination to read. I published poetry, literary history and biography and criticism and translation, military history, folklore studies, popular culture studies, a wide variety of articles here and abroad, numerous reference book entries, textbooks, and etc., etc. etc. as well as reading more papers at conferences each year than all the rest of my huge English department combined. Of course none of this had the slightest connection, except perhaps the textbooks, to my teaching, and teaching which was after all what I was actually paid to do, not research, or serving as an officer of national organizations, or being collegial on campus and good PR for the college off campus.

Naturally, if you are going to be crystal clear in your prose you will soon be found out if you have nothing to say. Maybe the soft sciences like psychology and sociology and urban studies and the like actually need to hide their intellectual nakedness with what in clothes today is called “layering” but at least in a science like linguistics one must be precise and in English literature one should strive to write fine or at least comprehensible and entertaining prose. Poetry today, admittedly, does not have to be either comprehensible or entertaining. Here seems to be a rule that it must “rich” (puzzling) and then read aloud intoned or fiercely rapped.

I have rabbitied on (as the Brits say) here so you will be, let us say, more informed about something than the writers criticized seem to aim at in their prose. It is not that they do not have a good subject but that they express themselves badly. Their few readers will likely be only the worst of literary critics, the sort of people that I think it was Heine describes as wandering through the graveyard of dead ideas looking on the tombstones for opinions that they feel comfortable holding already.

MORAL: Clarity covers a multitude of sins. COROLLARY: If writing does not hold you by the brilliant or at least the amusing, in most communications you fail.

GEOLINGUISTS: You are involved in macrosociolinguistics so write so that the whole society can grasp at once, or cheerfully stay with you as you have explained clearly, what you want to communicate about how language works in the modern world.

Cathy N. Davidson. *Now You See It*. New York: Viking, 2011. Pp. viii, 342 with Index. \$27.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Anyone interested in communication must take notice of advances in advances in cognition and neuroscience and this book on the science of attention argues that changes are rapidly occurring in the ways we live, work, and learn as science and digital technology bring regular miracles far greater than, for example, the revolution in language teaching that came with recordings and computers.

The author here is a former vice-provost of Duke University, a leader in information science and her work is easily accessible to the non-scientist, which is more than can be said for the writings of most linguistics these days. Handheld communication devices are even having a major impact on politics in the street, computers offer rough translations from more than 70 languages into English, and there are many more wonders. In addition there is distraction and disruption in everyday lives, new ways of thinking created by electronic games, and many exchanges in 140 characters as well $\frac{1}{2}$ 2 tel U a new language.

Mark Bauerlein, ed. *The Digital Divide*. New York: Penguin, 2011. Pp. xvi, 354. \$17.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

The arguments both for and against Google, Facebook, and other huge companies in the age of texting, blogging, posting, tweeting, twittering, and the whole new and enslaving world of social networking, with some attention to the impact on language and language education as well as the wide social implications as they affect both the “digital natives and digital immigrants” and the new ways that they all are starting to think and communicate are the subject of the essays collected in this paperback. We are told that our brains evolving, that perhaps the cyberworld is making us stupid or isolated (or more closely connected), that our identities and personalities are changing and our privacy invaded, that we sextext and find love online, that there are new concepts of friendship and political activism, new sources of information (Wikipedia, for instance) and new threats to peace and prosperity, even “nomadicy”.

The editor, a professor at Emory University, tends to stress the dangers. He is the author of *The Dumbest Generation* (same publisher, \$ 15.95—“don’t trust anyone under 30”) and rather pessimistic about the future of culture. Bauerlein is afraid that public stupidity will reach dangerous levels. This reviewer disagrees, thinking that if you are going to venture to have democracy you are going to have to welcome the voters being able to communicate, even to air grievances, and to vote what they consider to be their own best interests, whatever those are thought to be. This reviewer further thinks that the younger generation is not ignorant, only informed on different matters and in different ways than the older generation.

Finally, this reviewer argues that all the time wasted in innumerable, brief, trivial daily communications may be more than made up for by the way that electronic games are—in his opinion—making young folks smarter than their elders although not traditionally educated. It is not that they know nothing; it is that they know things different from what older people know.

Moreover, the new technology may replace the expensive and inefficient basic teaching of foreign languages and permit the small percentage of foreign language teachers that is capable of doing so to teach not vocabulary and grammar but foreign literature, history, and culture, and in college courses conducted entirely in foreign languages, while in these days even Comparative Literature courses deal entirely with texts. Lectures, and class discussions in English. We may even be able to eliminate Freshman English as a simple remedial course in grammar school reading and writing and return to what the first year college course in English was when this reviewer, a very long time ago was a freshman. There should be no place for Basic Skills in the curricula of Higher Education. It is too expensive and perhaps even too late to teach at college level what should have been learned well before college entrance. The textbook was a hefty collection of *Century Readings in English Literature* and the papers written about the reading were graded on the basis of intellectual content and did not have to be corrected for grammar and spelling and punctuation because all students already had a high-school education, which now very few of US college entrants actually have.

Andrew Arno. *Alarming Reports*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. Pp. vi, 208 with Index. \$25.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

In a new series called Anthropology of Media the first book is by a professor from the University of Hawaii. In this paperback edition he theorizes the Internet and its effects worldwide on thought and communication and changing concepts of reality and interrelation. Social identities as well as methods and the nature of communications change and the science of anthropology has to change to describe what is happening. Fortunately he does not disapprove of the use of what he calls “vernacular terms” in recording and analyzing who speaks what, where, how, and to whom.

Geolinguists need to grasp ethnography and anthropology as well as linguistics. This book helps to avoid what one NYU professor challenged in the journal *Social Text* as what Arno calls “the arrogant, pretentious nonsense of postmodern social analysis”.

John Postill. *Localizing the Internet*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. Pp. xxvi, 150. \$40.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Number 5 in that Anthropology of Media series is this brief book (with a rather unnecessary “photo essay” stuck on at the start) by a member of the Anthropology program of University College, London. He has published earlier on the Internet and its effect upon the media and on ethnographic praxis, and here he makes some shrewd observations and opens new avenues of research into how the Internet affects our lives and, to a certain extent, our language, connecting online with what we may call offline (the rest of daily life). Who will control the domain of the Internet and with what results in the forthcoming information era? The answers are not yet fully available but the questions are important and the result will affect language teaching and language use.

Bas Aarts. *Oxford Modern English Grammar*. New York &c.: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xx, 410 with Indexes. \$29.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Aarts, professor of English linguistics and director of the Survey of English Usage at University College, London, provides a complete survey of the history and current state of English language use eminently suitable as a textbook for undergraduate courses and a reference book for everybody. It is nice, not NICE (Negation, Inversion, Code, Emphasis). We learn that “previously frowned upon usage can become normal”. Over time, we are told that sub-standard *innit* (“isn’t it so”) may over time become acceptable as a generalized tag, like French *n’est-ce pas?* We are told about declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamative, the indicative, subjective, and imperative, nominative, accusative, genitive, and a great deal more, even the oddly-named footballer’s present perfect (“The linesman’s given the decision, but what astounds me is that he has sent Tarrico off before he spoke to the lineman”).

English has many oddities like that, including the telling of stories of the past entirely in the present tense. Damon Runyon’s guys and dolls speak like that. There are rules that purists try to cling to but ordinary people very often break (such split infinitives), and in fact there is a general feeling among ordinary native speakers that they are the ones who make the rules as they please, whatever grammarians say. There is the famous case of the Englishwoman who when “corrected” said she was a native speaker and the way she expressed herself was obviously the right way. If people want to avoid or misuse the subjunctive, or use words such as *irregardless*, or come up with ugly new words such as *discensus* (the opposite of *consensus*), or say *go* instead of *say* or even *send a signal* instead of *say*, or “It’s me” instead of “It’s I” or “If that’s the case” instead of “If that be the case,” they will. If they want to confuse *will* and *shall* OK. Or A-OK.

Just yesterday, as I write, I happened across an old book on language correctness. It is Jim Quinn’s *American Tongue and Cheek: A Populist Guide to Our Language* (1980) and I remarked that while professors of linguistics and amateurs such as Edwin Newman and William Safire try to dictate what is right and what is wrong, in grammar as in vocabulary it is the popular *parole*, English as she is spoke (as an incompetent guidebook once put it), and not the *langue* that counts. Really counts as we say in the US, counts, actually, as they say in the UK. Sentence fragment, comma splice.

Geolinguists, of course, want to know as much as possible about the differences between various versions of English such as British and American. To what extent and why do they differ in grammar, a

topic far less addressed than the way they differ in lexicon? We want to know all about regional and social dialects and their effects on people. Geolinguists are well aware that communication requires following rules but also that the rules are changing all the time, hopefully/one hopes not so quickly that confusion arises.

Daniel Chandler & Rod Munday. *Dictionary of Media and Communication*. New York &c.: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. viii, 472 with biographical notes and suggestions for further reading. \$18.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

That *discensus* in the previous review appears in this extensive, up-to-date collection of words concerned with “interpersonal communication” as if there was importantly any other kind in the spoken and digital and broadcast and printed and visual culture, from aberrant decoding (a hand gesture may be misunderstood by someone from another culture) to zapping, zipping (fast-forwarding as with skipping commercials), zoning (tailoring a message to a niche group). The book ends with zoosemiotics because other animals deal in “interpersonal communications” too.

We encounter brain biology (hemispheric lateralization), society and its discourse communities and publics, the Kulishov effect and Hawkins’ magic window and Goffman’s facework, folk psychology and advertising jargon, MUD (Multi-User Domain, or dungeon), the netiquette of the chatroom, infomercials, reader response theory, and a lot more. There are over 2200 cross-referenced entries dealing with psychology and philosophy, theories of art and literature, cultural studies, telecommunications, new media, etc. The whole thing documents novelty in technology, social movements such as feminism and postcolonialism, etc. New facts and situations call for new coinage. The extent and pace of modern communication has been astounding. It has immensely affected the way we think and speak and live today.

Fredric Field. *Bilingualism in the USA: The Case of the Chicano-Latino Community*. Philadelphia &c.: John Benjamins, 2011. Pp. xviii, 320 with Index. \$49.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This expensive paperback appears in a reliable series on bilingualism from a leading publisher of scholarly books on linguistics. The author (California State at Northridge) addresses global bilingual and multilingual practices and problems but focuses on that American minority which is slowest to adopt English, Spanish, and notes that Spanish is the second most popular language in the country and the most popular “foreign” language in US education’s curricula. In connection with Spanish speakers Field covers 150 years of US cultural history. The influx of Puerto Ricans in the New York, Cubans in Florida and so on has greatly altered the east and so has the immense increase of Mexicans changed the southwest and west, but Spanish has been spoken in these areas since long before the US became a nation. The main thrust in this detailed study involves the bilingual Spanish-English of Los Angeles, where Hispanics are the majority. Their numbers are growing in far more places across the country.

Spanish-English bilinguals share the basic disadvantages and advantages of all bilinguals in our multiethnic society and around the globe but there are special facts of the Spanish-English combination in the US, which is often said to be cursed or blessed with monolingualism although that is absolutely not the case, and these Field explores thoroughly. He produces a study that can be used as a textbook in courses on bilingualism. His is a study in cultural pluralism and its educational, social and economic and political implications as well as in matters of language acquisition and use, with southern California serving as a place to see in operation a number of language and culture factors which in fact obtain all over this country to one extent or another and have to be taken into account in other countries and all international connections, cultural, commercial, etc. How bilingual people create what we may call variations on the

supposedly standard languages which they use is extremely interesting because Puerto Ricans or Tex-Mexicans or Chicanos and so on have each their own versions of both Spanish and English and these vitally influence monolingual speakers of both Spanish and English in daily communication and in writing. They shape what the author calls a tug of war in education. They set up perceptions and even prejudices among both monolingual Spanish and monolingual English speakers. Which language(s) you speak and how you speak them have serious social results. This is geolinguistics, whether it brings up, for example, why some speakers are privileged or not privileged or some are more connected to the literate tradition than others, some educational systems may be dysfunctional and need to be reformed, some social attitudes have been altered or need to be altered for the better, or simply how language(s) spoken relate to personal identity, social acceptance and opportunity, political outlook, and all the rest in which scholars of language in action are deeply interested and indeed everyone ought to be concerned.

Robert McCrum. *Globish: How the English Language Became the World's Language*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2011. Pp. 331 with Index. \$16.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

McCrum, co-author with William Cram & Robert McNeill of *The Story of English*, which you may have seen as a television series, has written a fascinating and very well researched survey of the growth and spread of English, which half the population of the world now speaks in some form or other. It is the closest thing we have to the imagined pre-Babel world when, The Bible asserts, all mankind spoke the same tongue. This paperback edition of the 2010 hardcover really is about two things: *globish* (a 1500-word, forget grammar, sort of basic English) and English as a world language.

English is “crazy,” ever changing, uncontrolled and uncontrollable, a “thoroughfare” for “all kinds of expression”. It is the language not only of the former British Empire but of the current American imperium, backed by economic and cultural forces of great if recently rather diminished strength. If British “word-coining power has lapsed” American inventiveness and influence has not. The Japanese cannot pronounce *milk* but instead of their *gyuunyuu* (“liquid from udder”) have adopted *miruku*. They also have some words nearly like *knife* and *fork*. China has Chinglish and wants to “Conquer English to Make China Strong”. There are more people who speak English in China than there are in the US. South Korea has Konglish. Singapore has Singlish. Most of all, what you may wish to call “real” English is being increasingly studied and used by Asians while the British and Americans are not learning Asian languages to any widely useful extent. English is one of the official languages of India, which with US outsourcing is said virtually to “run America,” and not Babu, Cheechee, or Hobson-Jobson Indian English approximations but more recognizable English (and American) computer language, etc. English is now global. It has some 4 billion speakers. It is even spoken in Australia, where it is called Strine. There are more people in Africa who speak English well than do African-Americans in the US who have not always received the education they deserve and need.

The narrative, to use a word becoming increasingly common, will certainly change. The East will rise as the West declines; populations speaking something other than English will grow while those that speak English will decline. The position of English will definitely be different by the end of this century but for now English dominance is clear if not safe. It will evolve as ever. Unlike Latin which is dead but raided for scientific terminology and so on English is very much alive. You could call it the Neo-Latin because it is a Spanglish for modern business. You can break up English into mutually more or less unintelligible languages while alliances and oppositions and trade and commerce favor some areas and not others, some languages and not others. Already Shakespeare is moving toward the less comprehensible tongue of Chaucer. Someday his language will be as obscure as Anglo-Saxon is today. At the same time we are progressing toward small devices that will be able to translate anything into anything and will undermine the teaching of foreign languages for practical daily use. Technology and the twists and turns of history have even more tricks up the sleeve for Englishes and all other extant languages and naturally they have a host of languages for computing.

This charming and erudite book tells the whole rather incredible story of English starting with where English started. That was among one of the barbarous Teutonic tribes that Tacitus happened to mention in the 750 lines of his terse little booklet *Germania*. We also see in some riveting detail how English happened to get to be where it is today. That is accompanied by information on the spread of cricket and technology and American teenage music. Much more is to be found here, not just etymology and dialectology and lexicography and other aspects of linguistics but the political and other ramifications of language as well, for language shapes society and society shapes language, in strange and wonderful ways.

Magnus Ljung. *Swearing: A Cross-Cultural Linguistic Study*. New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2011. Pp. xii, 190. \$50.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This book, originally *Svordomsboken* (Book of Swearing, Swedish), by a professor at Stockholm, is “a study of swearing, its shape, use and manifestations in English and a number of other languages” includes the “four-letter words” (many with more than four letters, of course) in Arabic, Cantonese and Mandarin, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Kirundi, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Yurok, in all some 25 languages. In all languages it is difficult to distinguish between the vulgar and the obscene, the blasphemous and curses, etc. Dr. Reinold Aman, editor of *Maledicta*, the journal devoted to these matters, really ought to be reviewing this book from his multilingual perspective but *Maledicta* appears to have died after a dozen annual issues. *Damn!* Still Aman is the expert on the interjections (*Shit!* US and *Bloody* [by your Lady] *Hell!* UK), unfriendly suggestions (*Go to Hell!* and *F**k You!*), curses, the use of profanities as intensifiers, etc.

There is more than Ljung says to remark in the use of the likes of *gee whiz*, *Jeepers Creepers*, *Jimminy Cricket* and *gosh*, *goldarn*, *heck*, *sheeit*, *friggin'*, *mofò*, *yo' mama*, and other ways of evading the use of taboo words (*golly*, *cripes*, *fug*, *foul up*, *SOB*, etc.). It is also interesting that *bastard* need not refer to illegitimacy or *bugger* to a sodomist, *bitch* or *c*nt* (you notice the use of an asterisk is subjective) only to a female, *jerk* or *tosser* to a male masturbator (my computer's spell check does not have this word). This scholar defines swearing, describes its topology and the distribution of various kinds of naughty/dirty words that involve insults to parents or birth from a dog/camel/etc., *jerking off* and fellatio, scatology, boosters such as *for crissake*, etc. The British say *effing*, Americans the *f-word*. The British say *bleeding*, *blinking*, *blooming*, *ruddy* in lieu of *bloody* (originally “by your lady”). When a woman remarked on the title of the Gilbert & Sullivan operetta *Ruddygore*, Gilbert pointed up the problem by responding that he might say he liked her ruddy complexion but did not like her bloody cheek. [*Cheek* is UK for “insolence”.]

Norman Mailer filled his first novel with the all-purpose *fug*. Now you hear the “real word” more than 400 times in the movie *Casino* and a cardinal says *screw up* from the pulpit. There was a rock group called *The Fugs* but when another group called *The Mothers* wanted to record the company insisted they change their name to *The Mothers of Invention*. Now in NYC you can see t-shirts with (let me “clean it up”) “F you you F-ing F”. I object to no comma there. I likewise object to the Britishisms in some of Ljung's translations: Hindi and Urdu *chodu* is not “bloody fool” but (shall we say) “fuggin' idjit”.

Styles of swearing vary from one language and one time to another. In English *zounds* (God's wounds) is obsolete. In *québécois* the *sacre* which in France seems to have more or less disappeared (except in the odd equivalent of “holy blue!”) has taken on new force and new meanings and in Montreal in my youth I heard *tabernacle* and *sacrament* as swear words. In English some French-Canadians said *By Gar!* Now young French-Canadians may use English swear words picked up from the international youth culture. Religion and other aspects of culture as well as the structures of different languages create different effects. It is all geof**kinglinguistic, filthy goddam language in confounded emotive use!

Kathryn Schulz, who wrote *Being Wrong*, by her very name reminds us that some people who use dirty words just want to get noticed like people who stick with misspelled monikers, but Ms. Schulz is basically on to something more important:

Like sex, alcohol, nudity and drugs, swearing sets off the great
American seesaw of schoolmarmish horror and schoolyardish glee,
and it can be hard to predict whether a writer who curses will wind
up exalted or excoriated.

What is easy to predict is that such a writer, or anyone who peppers her/his ordinary conversation with curses, vulgarities, or obscenities will get noticed. Perhaps that will be as extra macho in certain low circles. Perhaps that will seem fashionably iconoclastic in more articulate groups. It goes beyond freedom of speech and rejection of societal controls; it is part of the desperate American desire to stand out from the herd. That once was achieved by an unusually large vocabulary and now when that is widely considered unmanly and snotty a very limited number of dirty words are called into play.

There are, let us say in Bronx (formerly The Bronx) where almost two-thirds of high-school students drop out, plenty of people whose only intensifier is a version of the *f*-word, and they are naturally angry enough to use it very frequently. Odd that people who are determined that no one use the *n*-word are so free with the *f*-word.

Peter Miller. *The Smart Swarm*. New York: Avery [Penguin Group], 2011. Pp. xx, 283 with Index. \$16.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This smart paperback by a senior editor at *National Geographic* argues that swarms of insects and flocks of sheep and schools of fish and colonies of ants, indeed all nature can teach us how to think right, work efficiently, make better decisions and—here is the geolinguistic thrust--communicate better. The natural world has lessons for us all about innate and acquired knowledge, organization of self and society, adaptive mimicry and collaboration and communication.

Groups in nature have evolved over millennia to cope with the challenges of circumstances and change. Adaptive principles can be found that improve effectiveness in all aspects of our lives, including the complex business of communication in culture and commerce and in every department of daily life, the family, the world of finance, everything.

The word *language* does not appear in the index but the book, with all its references to the hard and soft sciences (though not linguistics), is unfailingly engaging and will give geolinguists something to think about that goes far beyond the necessity for groups to agree on the meanings in codes and the animal interest in nearest-neighbor tracking, co-operating to get things done on the personal and the political levels, and more.

Philip N. Howard. *Castells and the Media*. Cambridge (UK): Polity Press, 2011. Pp. xii, 139 with Index. \$19.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

The lectures given by Manuel Castells, a leading sociologist and author of the several volumes of *The Information Age*, etc., visiting the University of Washington in 2010, have led to this explanatory paperback from a professor there. It appears in the Polity series which earlier offered *Zizek and the Media* and *Kittler and the Media*. These experts on communication all benefit notably from simple expositions by others.

The fixed-line telephone has been largely replaced by mobile communication devices. Turkey leads the world in the mobile communication population, an astounding 99.7 percent. This has revolutionized social media and all culture and its industries. We are all networking in new ways and to new degrees. We live a lot of our lives online, blogging, searching, playing games (even at work). There are networks of people, power, and politics. Some people bliss out online and others suffer from a kind of trance in which they experience what I call waking apnea: they forget to breathe they are so entranced. We are addicted. We are becoming the slaves of the machines and communicating more and more even as we stay more and more out of real life and have less real experience to talk about. Networks are changing our ideas of time and space, of friends and associates, of many aspects of our psychology and identity and privacy and our social connections.

Networking devices are shaping our science and technology, our economics and politics, and our personal lives. Castells sees the complex and “messy” technologies and Howard explains what Castells has understood.

John P. Leavey, ed. *Jacques Derrida Parages*. Translated by Leavy & Tom Conley & Avital Ronell. Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press, 2011. Pp. x, 282. \$24.95 in paperback.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

“Dissimilar and discontinuous” and, to be frank, damned demanding decoding rather than simple translation, here are four essays, one of them a rather fuzzy effort on Derrida’s part to make sense of Marcel Blanchot, an even more difficult French writer on—of all things—lucid communication. Forget the old saying that if it is not clear it is not French. In this paperback the new translators touch up old English translations as texts have had to be revised, trying to copy with “semantic play” and “slippage of meaning” (as with *pas*, which usually means negation). Once in a while translators leave a word like *récit* in French. I cannot put up with this folderol. I shall continue to suspect that this emperor has no clothes unless and until someone presents the thinking (preferably not any version of the prose) of Derrida in concise and concrete language.

Meanwhile in some linguistic and philosophical circles the French disease rages and one of the symptoms is the use of exculpatory quotation marks when nothing is being quoted, just failure to attain precise terminology.

Everyone can speak some language or other and some languages can get very precise and powerful. English and French are among these. Why cannot French linguistics be more lucid and why do English translations have to sound so *translated*?

Who can tolerate the likes of this paragraph chosen more or less at random?

To approach in his/its approach [*aborder en son abord*] this terrifyingly ancient, more ancient than time, in which the presence of the present paralyzes itself, the gait [*allure*] of what is going—in which it was always going—to come about (you see that these words are no longer allowed to be subjected to the tenses/times of our grammar and that “terrifying” comes to the position not of the accessory adverb but of the very “subject” of the experience in which nothing presents itself, save for the obscene [*fors l’obscène*], say, a certain augularity)—that is what awaits us still, very far in front of us, before us [*devant nous, avant nous*]. But as forgetting.

Thanks for the actual French, but why in a translation which is accurate? And does it make sense in any language? I'd listen to Alfred Jarry's *Ubu*, who makes clever sense of a sort. *Et vous?* True, some language has to be read carefully and even more than once to be comprehended (imagine! Derrida lectured!) But is this not no matter how often we struggle with it, shall we say?, garbage—and should we not the way gays joke about *J. P. Penny* as J.-C. Penné pronounce that garBAGE?

John McWhorter. *What Language Is (And What It Isn't and What It Could Be)*. New York: Gotham Books (Penguin), 2011. Pp. x, 228. \$26.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

The author of more than a dozen charming and learned books on language, McWhorter here offers a romp through quite a number of languages, one with more consonants than you could possibly believe and others with peculiar features in both the spoken and written forms. (Two hundred out of the world's current 6000 or so living languages have written form.) A major point he makes is that by no means is the written language superior to the spoken language. With him as a guide any reader can start to disabuse himself of prejudices (for example as against the Internet for ruining English) and start thinking like a professional linguist. Not really, about why there is a language in which *he, she, it, and they* are covered by a single word (*je*, which also just happens to be *I* in French) or why *hello* in Chinese is the equivalent of our "have you eaten?" and why in a tongue called Berik "nice to meet you" is "my gall bladder is really warm today". No, really more about the difference between the spoken and written languages, the French *parole* and *langue* ("word" and "tongue"), and the difference between languages usually learned at mother's knee and what happens when languages are learned by non-native speakers, or when speakers are cut off from foreigners. He explains why the misconception that learning a language is simply collecting a vocabulary does not apply to Indonesian, where you can get by with words and no grammar. He explains why if you get wrong in Surinam the tones inherited from some African languages you just sound like a foreigner but do not get all the words wrong, as you would if you could not use the correct tones in Chinese (where *ma* is both "mother" and "horse," and more, depending on the tone). He explains how clicks work in some languages and how English is odd because *you* is now both singular and plural and "I pushed the dog in the water" is ambiguous because it does not specify, as some other language might, whether you were in the water with the dog or out of the water and pushed the dog into it. You think that "I could care less" and "I could not care less" meaning the same thing is remarkable? That is only "the tip of the iceberg," and in fact (what the British like to call *actual fact*) the part of icebergs that shows above the water is far more than the tip.

Linguists understand why primitive and isolated languages are so complex and why languages that are more in contact with the rest of the world tend to be simplified as foreigners learn them as adults. They understand dominant and lesser languages and how geography and trade and numbers of speakers affect languages. They plumb the mysteries of such things as classifiers with the numbers in Mandarin, how Haitian differs radically from French, why Navajo is so complicated and baffled enemies when it was used as a code in World War II, how concepts and words for *here* and *there* differ in various languages, how vocabularies are small or large and grow, how nearly impossible it is for an adult to begin on a foreign language and learn to speak it just like a native, even how *an apkin* and *an otch* and *an ekename* gave way to modern words.

The book is especially important in what it judiciously says about Ebonics and indeed other varieties of English. It also goes fascinatingly into rather obscure little languages such as the creole (formerly a pidgin) called Saramaccan, which this reviewer addressed in his *Language in Action* but came nowhere near as close as McWhorter does to answering the question he poses with "What do you get...when you throw together words from five languages and grammar from two?" He makes that language in a former Dutch colony on the coast of South America, Surinam, almost as riveting as what he once called in a book our world English, *Our Magnificent Bastard Tongue*. He gives you bits of information about (for example) Esperanto, explaining why it has two kinds of questions and why it has no

hope of being an important international language when it is so very difficult for Chinese speakers to learn, and also logical and lucidly stated generalizations of great value, expressed far more clearly than most linguists write.

This entertaining and informative read if you can afford to spread it around will make a wondrous stocking stuffer next Christmas for friends who have any interest in language. And of course you will want a copy for yourself, to read and re-read.

Rich Ling & Scott W. Campbell, eds. *Mobile Communication: Bringing Us Together and Tearing Us Apart*. New Brunswick (NJ): Transaction, 2011. Pp. x, 348 with Index. \$49.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

These experts (Ling at Telenor, Campbell at Michigan) in 2008 edited a collection of articles on how mobile communications have influenced our ways of looking at time and space, and in this collection they address how modern devices allow us quickly to contact others wherever they may be and while that in one way widens our world in another often reduces us to slaves at the machine quite as much as galley slaves were chained to their oars. We speak out more but often go out less. Social media in some ways have made us less social in the old ways.

The essays here relate to modern privacy issues and risk taking, (im)mobile mobility, alterations in our ideas of responsibility and sociability and community and personal connections, blogging and networking, connection and disconnection, personal expression and impersonal action, even drunk dialing. We are increasingly connected to everyone else and also disconnected from older social units and social ways. We spend a great deal of time conversing (without the enhancement to communication that being face to face offers, with friends, friendsters, frenemies, and total strangers.

Campbell (with T. C. Russo) in "The Social Construction of Mobile Telephony" (*Communication Monographs* 70:3, 2003, 317–2004) wrote of how we are all being drawn together in the modern world but now he joins with Ling (interested in "private talk, public performance") in exploring with a team of very interesting researchers how we are also being isolated and how society is being torn apart. So are, for instance, governments struck with flash mobs, diplomats outed by WikiLeaks, and private individuals hacked and harried. In style (type and SEND) and in remarks careless of other people's feelings, rights, and best interests, the younger generation is becoming more and more irresponsible. They don't watch what they say. They were brought up told they were very special and hugely entitled and now they discover that things are going to be worse for them than it was for their parents, that they, often badly educated and less devoted to the work (or any other) ethic are not only unemployed but unemployable. The few jobs that are available they cannot fill. So they have plenty of time to grouse and bloviate, tweet and twitter and rage. In the course of doing that they often reveal things about themselves that even more undercuts their possibilities of employment.

An American literary critic invented the term "culture of complaint". There is certainly a lot more to complain about now than there was in his day, decades back, but whether this will lead to more reform than regret, more despair or more democracy, is uncertain indeed. To recall the only American character who occurs in the works of Shakespeare, are we all to become Calibans, angry that language gives us no more power than the ability to curse?

David M. Mark, Andrew G. Turk, Niclas Burenhult & David Stea, eds. *Landscape in Language*. Philadelphia &c.: John Benjamins, 2011. Pp. xiv, 449 with Index. \$149.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

All these editors (respectively from the US, Western Australia, Sweden, and Mexico) and contributors from Alaska, Australia, California, Canada, Florida, Germany, Hawaii, the Netherlands, New Mexico, New York, New Zealand, Texas, United Kingdom, and Wyoming. They are retired professors and youngish students. They all are engaged in the fairly new field of language in relation to the natural world, here called landscape (a word English has borrowed from Dutch). They are interested in how the natural world is represented in the vocabulary and the thinking of speakers of a wide variety of languages and what this can tell us of different cultural ways of looking at the world, toponymy and geographical language systems, religious attitudes toward natural phenomena, ethical aspects of our relationship to the natural world, and more. Their material has been collected from literary, folkloric, scientific and other published sources and online by what is now called folksonomy, which means collecting “from the bottom up” from a contributing public.

As always, “speak that I may know you”: language reveals what people think about themselves, other people, and the whole natural environment. We look at words but “words don’t mean, people do”. As geolinguists we see language in action as key to understanding anthropology, ethnology, history, literature, psychology, and much more.

Mary Bucholtz. *White Kids: Language, Race, and Styles of Identity*. New York &c.: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xvi, 277 with Index. \$33.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This overpriced paperback makes the basic point that young people were born into a different world than their parents. But you knew that high (often high on drugs) schoolers were desperately seeking individual identity as well as coolness, that they form cliques and create language to distinguish in-groups adults, live in a different world and were born into the world at a different time than their parents. Naturally they see the world through their own eyes and their own experiences and their own electronic devices and music, and so on. Seeing it differently from adults they express the difference in a deliberately different language, in both the different languages of young males and young females. As for the latter, we miss (say) Valley Girl in the index to this book, Southern belle, girrrl, and more.

A professor of linguistics from the University of California at Santa Barbara chooses Caucasian children to study the way that the young seek to design and describe and differentiate themselves in their slang as well as their clothes and daily pursuits. This approach ignores the fact that California is multicultural and that in the southern part of California the Caucasians are the minority. There the most colorful if not the most influential language is Spanish and Spain, being historically of mixed European and Moorish blood, makes *white* a bit too debatable as a social label. Also a fuzzy label is *Hispanic*, which covers people of various colors and usually means not “speaking Spanish” or “of Spain” but of Mexico. Mexico is *mestizo* and does not speak Spanish but the Mexican language. Californians may speak Chicano English, or no English at all. Californians may speak Chinese, Hmong, Japanese, or some other language with or without some English, or should I say American? To cover the languages of California, even limiting oneself to the languages of the young, as another woman has for years limited herself to the college slang of the state of Georgia, is a daunting task. Ms. Bucholtz sticks to whites.

This book further narrows its examination to only three subgroups: preppies, hip hop fans, and nerds. *Preppie* somehow sounds less Left Coast to most Americans than East Coast. *Preppie* used to suggest Groton and St. Paul’s and Lawrenceville and such, boys’ equivalents of the finishing schools for girls, actual preparatory schools for Ivy League colleges. Now anyone can dress and act preppie. *Preppie*

is often used for a style of dress uncommon in California. *Preppie* is too vague a term. It is not restricted in the East to actual prep school kids, any more than the clothing styles of the Jewish designer from Bronx (formerly The Bronx), if indeed Ralph Lauren can be granted the *the*, are accurate imitations of old money outfits. Those so-called preppie clothes are only for the *nouveau riche* and/or less wealthy imitators of that class. They are supposed to enable one to spot social and economic class at sight and/or exclude those who ought not to be included. But we have no sumptuary laws, so anyone can wear any clothes they can buy, even rip-offs of elite labels, just as they can pick up cheap fake Rolex watches or the latest outrageously priced handbags, real or fake. There is American sociodynamics here and one may ask whether sociodynamics and the American tradition of trying to move up in status, despite rather scary economic inequality, can or will over time homogenize or improve the American language. Of course the failure of US education, so deplored and so devoid of general improvement lately, accounts for the substandard. The young are innovators and challenge standards. Some move toward standards is nonetheless to be seen, for instance, in the case in multicultural high schools. One such high school in Connecticut, where the webpage is in 52 different languages, astounding for a small town, has in 2011 actually adopted a policy of allowing no student to graduate who cannot read and write English adequately. There has been the expected strong resistance to this as discriminatory, a bad word in American, just as there has been widespread resistance to English Only for the whole US.

Next, race rears its ugly head. I am sorry to have to go anyway near this third rail. Note first that not just anyone may be able to pass as a preppie but anyone can be a hip hop fan or a rap fan, a def poetry fan, a heavy metal or punk fan, etc. Moreover, some real preppie white folks even have an ironic touch, a slumming attitude, as wealthier white folks used to go to Harlem “in ermines and pearls” as the song goes for the music or the difference. One can be hip hop influenced at any age and of any color, though there is always a strong suggestion of black underclass. That force also has had an obvious effect on clothing styles which like speech involves the presentation of self. Dress is a major way that Americans express at least the class, or even the age, with which they would like to be identified rather than face the facts. Many whites likewise may use black vocabulary if not black speaking styles to seem hip, and that means cool, not hip hop.

Now brace race yourself for possible outrage because any mention of race in the US definitely risks not only questions but hackles. I dare to say that African-American Vernacular English is shaped by almost unmentionable factors such as the lazy speech of both blacks and whites in the Deep South (many of whom have moved North and West), the colorful slang picked up like the colorful outfits of the ghetto (US for “slum”) and the jail (no shoe laces and trousers worn low enough to show the elastic bands, preferably with fashionable designer names, explained by jailers depriving prisoners of laces and belts with which they might hang themselves or strangler others). Funk and ghetto styles have been adopted by people who are not condemned to live there. Finally on this point, and here comes something almost always sidestepped, politically incorrect, there are obvious in hip hop speech evidences of both the ignorance of the underclass (due to poor education offered them by the upper classes) and in the case of African-Americans, and other people of mixed blood, perhaps the thicker lips that affect the pronunciation of English and maybe the flatter noses that do not enable the multicultural to honk like honkies. The effect of anatomy on speech cannot be ignored, but it usually is too touchy to state. Admittedly some African Americans are just as educated as some whites and speak accordingly. Some even overcorrect to an amusing extent, as most Caucasians do not feel the need to do. The (over)privileged in these hard times are less given to blatant display; they do not embrace bling, usually. They fear to flaunt wealth and they often like to sound less educated than they really are. They may boast regional accents, even lower class accents, to show how far they have come. Where is the so-called Harvard accent these days?

Lastly, there are the nerds, who come in all colors and all economic classes, importantly, by the way, Asians. The market and the movies have seen an astounding advance of nerds up the social ladder. They have contributed immensely to the triumph of technology and also to the general lexicon. Computers, for instance, have trashed what I call the typically nineteenth-century boiler-room outlook of psychology (depression, expression, impression, repression, letting off steam) with the modern mindset and vocabulary of the mind as a computer (input, output, overload, etc.), if without the precision of machines (like, sort of, y’know, y’unnertan wha ahm sayin, right?).

There is even more to be said about the speech of the young than is said in this comment on *White Kids*, and white kids are rarer than ever in the US today than ever before, so this book, however well researched and worth reading carefully, is far from the whole story. Ethnics are of great interest to all Americans, though somehow *white* is not *ethnic* here. This close ethnographic study does look interestingly at one multiethnic Californian high school and naturally geolinguists will welcome any information on modern language and personal identity? I break the rule and put a question mark at the end of that declarative sentence, a Californian habit that is spreading nationwide. It may well have its origin in the tentative searches for identity among the young of all colors, not just white kids.

“X, Professor.” *In the Basement of the Ivory Tower*. New York: Viking Press, 2011. Pp. xxiv, 238 with Notes, no Index. \$24.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Driven by mortgage problems of the housing collapse, this government employee has for a decade had to take on two extra jobs as an adjunct teacher of beginning college courses in composition and literature, one at a private college and one at a community college. He offers now this report from the trenches in the war against illiteracy, another war America is losing.

There are more than 18 million students in US colleges. Most of them are not qualified to be there, cannot afford it, and half will drop out. Those who graduate (after an average of 6 years for the 4-year course and two-thirds of them with tens of thousands of dollars of debt) are ill prepared for most modern jobs. The US problem is not the large percentage of Americans who are unemployed but the staggering number who are unemployable in the information age. Business cannot really use them or will not hire them. It outsources.

US higher education, run as a business, is largely an expensive disaster. Such a waste of money would probably not be tolerated in any other industry. The failed system operates with two-thirds of courses taught by part-time peons given no benefits and almost never a chance of gaining tenure, tenure itself now being under threat. The country pays more per pupil in the public schools than any other nation on earth and the results place Americans way down the list of competence of elementary and secondary pupils. The nation has most of the Top 20 research universities of the world and bright people from all over the globe come here to attend these prestigious temples of learning, though now they are increasingly not staying here after graduation. At present most of American colleges and universities are charging ever more for education that is ever more inadequate. Education, I wrote years ago, and it is truer today than ever, is the one thing that Americans are willing to pay for and not get. Now they can hardly afford it.

The adjuncts do their best with “non-traditional” (older and/or totally unprepared) students at the freshman level. Perhaps we now have to say *freshperson* level because most US college students today are female. Their dejected teachers’ conscientious and most often inadequate struggle belatedly to teach basic reading and writing and a smattering of literary appreciation is vividly presented in this witty and depressing book. Prof. X is Chaplinesque; he has virtuoso moves that impress but you don’t know whether to laugh or cry. You probably should do both.

Well-meaning but deluded policies of the so-called American Dream undertook to grant every American the right to own a home and get a college degree, whether they could afford or could earn one or not. Some people still believe that every American is entitled to be successfully instructed to the point where they can read and write well enough for the jobs that the government thinks it ought to create and so far has failed miserably to create, if only because the American economy and the national defense demand that. That is not happening. The government has recognized in official reports that the educational system is a “disaster” but no large and effective measures have been taken to reform the system from kindergarten and high school through college.

The task of calling the losers to account once they reach the college level, having been passed along without learning at earlier levels, has been dumped in the laps of poorly paid adjuncts, some with few credentials for the job and some with doctorates who cannot get a better position on any faculty because of budget concerns which dominate even when a number of colleges charge \$50,000 a year in tuition costs and public institutions in nearly-bankrupt states are having to raise costs higher for both state residents and those from out of state. When inevitably taxes in the largest debtor nation on earth go up and deductions for charity are limited or ended, endowments of private colleges will suffer. If and when state governments lose the bitter battles with the teachers' unions then public institutions will suffer. Worse financial problems seem to lie ahead for education in the country. Already Pell grants to help the poor go to college look likely to disappear. Higher education, which might prepare Americans for life as well as secondary education long ago used to do, threatens to get beyond the reach of the average American.

With all our American conviction that we are exceptional and richly entitled, do we not have an idea that citizens of a democracy must be educated before they can vote responsibly and have some right to be prepared to earn a respectable living? Is not literacy some kind of basic human right these days? How can hard pressed adjunct instructors in a single semester take a class of 25 students all the way to 13th-grade English, presumably college-grade English? Also, what are students doing passing other courses in which that level of competence in reading and writing is supposedly required when most of them fail Freshman English on the first try? The students arrive in New York City from the "best" high schools with an average 8th-grade competence. That is what they ought to have had beginning secondary education, not graduating from it. In community colleges the students may be adults long out of high school desperate to receive credits enough to get a job that pays a living wage. They attend at night, tired after a hard day's work if they have a day job. They mostly get taught by part-timers. In the City University of New York as full professors we all had to teach at least one remedial course and that was paying high salaries for the teaching of non-college material. Naturally we thought this was not only a waste of money but a waste of our time and many of us taught with less enthusiasm and less success than the adjuncts brought to the task. Also, many tenured faculty cheated, because if your students reported they did not like the course and the teacher or the failing grades they received your promotion was at risk. If adjuncts fail to make silk purses out of sows' ears they may well be fired for incompetence.

The task is important. Americans even if they can get by with a thin degree of culture or really no appreciation of the humanities at all definitely need to be able to think logically and express themselves correctly. Our schools are failing at teaching correct thinking and correct expression and of course numeracy is even more dismal here. "X" marks the spot in this wry and alarming indictment by an "accidental academic" who, sad to say, is far more intelligent and articulate than almost all graduates of our often laughable schools of education and far more dedicated than most of his beleaguered and belittled colleagues.

Peter Lunenfeld. *The Secret War between Downloading and Uploading: Tales of the Computer as Culture Machine*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 2011. Pp. xviii, 219 with Index. \$21.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

A professor of Design Media Arts at UCLA tells us how there is a shift in communication in the cyberworld, now more than half a century old, from consumption to product, how downloading and uploading create culture and with all sorts of ever more convenient devices. We seem to care more for convenience than for quality; this can be seen in the production of music and pictures on hand-held devices where the quality is lesser but more convenient than on the larger and more accurate music-players and cameras. "You are the lucky inheritor of a dream come true." He begins by defining terms:

Downloading means pulling data into a system, and connotes moving information from a main or central source to a peripheral device. Uploading, by contrast, carries associations of moving data not only from a periphery to a core but also from

one device to man, flattening out the hierarchy of production, distribution, and reception.

Television is downloading. Lunenfeld calls it “contemporary junk culture” for the most part, dealing what Philip K. Dick presciently called a “bombardment of pseudo-realities”. Computers download faster than television and can upload and can connect to networks at any time for “wants rather than needs” and involving “info-triage” and even more than wanted in freedom and access of information from the “culture machine”.

He speaks entertainingly and informatively about the nature of technology, popular culture, communications, and the big names of the cyberworld in invention and merchandizing, the relationship between artist and audiences (Steve Jobs says that artists ship), and the future of communication. He is well read and very readable. You will enjoy this book.

Cyrus Farivar. *The Internet of Elsewhere: The Emergent Effects of a Wired World*. New Brunswick (NJ): Rutgers University Press, 2011. Pp. xiv, 239 with Index. \$25.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

The host of *Spectrum* (a program on science and technology) and a free-lance journalist, Farivar in his first book of communication history and analysis is right on the geolinguistic track as he explains how the Internet has impacted culture, commerce, and politics not only in the US, where Silicon Valley is so important, but also in foreign countries, some of which have taken things in directions the US so far has not tried. France with Minitel (1982) created a predecessor to the Internet and now owns the largest share of Sonatel. Estonia created Skype and online voting and now houses NATO’s cyber-defense headquarters. Brazil was the first nation to use Internet voting. Iran was the first country to arrest a blogger (2003). China has contributed a great deal to the Internet, both through Chinese in the US and at home, for China has leapt into cyberspace with both feet, the Chinese being, as a character says in Eric Ambler’s novel *A Cause for Alarm*, “a very difficult race to astonish,” and so China already has more Internet users, and also more widely censored, the Internet, than any other country. In case you did not know, English is no longer the commonest language on the Internet. Switzerland hosted the first World Summit on the Internet Society. South Korea is the most wired country in the world and one of the most censoring of information. Senegal has a low literacy rate and less money per person to buy the new technology than all or most countries but has used mobile phone to put citizens on the Internet to a degree not found elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Well researched, although *Britain* and *United Kingdom* are both absent from the index, this book warns US geolinguists and indeed everyone concerned with technology’s impact on communication that there is a great deal of great importance going on *elsewhere*. The significance of that cannot be exaggerated.

Claudia Claridge. *Hyperbole in English: A Corpus-based Study of Exaggeration*. New York &c.: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xiv, 301 with Index. \$99.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Irony and figures of speech and some other non-literal language have been much more studied than hyperbole. This book by a professor at Duisburg-Essen fills the gap with quantitative and qualitative examination of spoken and printed texts from Chaucer to Monty Python, connecting also to reception theory, interpretation, speaker-centered and emotive matters, discourse and interactional uptake, and more. It is a key to greater comprehension of literature and propaganda, coinage and language fashions, humor and political agendas. Hyperbole is demonstrated as contributing to language richness and to language

change. Here we have discourse analysis based on a variety of approaches including semantics and pragmatics, syntax and rhetoric, historical and current and embracing broadcast, printed, and spoken communication.

Neal R. Norrick in “Hyperbole, Extreme Case Formulation” pp. 1727–1739 in the *Journal of Pragmatics* 36 (2004) said the subject offered “endless avenues for future research” and Ms. Claridge has ventured down some of them quite a distance. The newspapers she consulted for part of the *corpora* are British (and one German newspaper) but the findings surely will hold true for the US use of hyperbole, extreme case formulation, and overstatement, all of them quite common here, indeed average in our conversation in a culture where bigger is better and *great* is attached to so many things and conditions and ideas. A comparison of American with British sources would probably produce very similar results although litotes (understatement) is said to be a British rather than an American habit. “Happen to notice the bombing last night?” “Rather. Bit of a bother. Killed mother.”

For further research also of interest to geolinguists, always aware of language’s construction of identity, the use of hyperbole in the presentation of self would be of absolutely mind-blowing interest, if not the greatest thing since sliced bread. This would be of greater interest perhaps than more investigation of the use of hyperbole in literature for comic or serious uses or in (say) political argument and sports reporting. Then there is the language of youth, *totally* enamored of hyperbole with “I coulda *died!*”) and such all over blogs, tweets, twitters, and—*OMG!*—everything.

Jean Burgess & Joshua Green. *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*. Malden (MA): Polity, 2011. Pp. xii, 172 with Index. \$19.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Participatory media, in which YouTube has quickly become a major force, needs to be understood by anyone interested in media’s shaping of the culture. Jean Burgess (Queensland University of Technology) & Joshua Green (MIT) in this paperback reprint of the original 2009 publication carefully examine all aspects of YouTube’s operation and the debate that has accompanied it with an eye to cultural production, media influence, digital literacy, the growth of knowledge and its spread, and language in action. Youth Tube might be a more accurate name for this new giant in the world of tweeting, Facebook, and the rest. It connects “marginal, isolated, or just shy ‘nodes’” and can do everything from consoling the lonely to creating flash mobs. It can connect the young especially, jumping over all or almost all geographical boundaries with its “open complex system” in which everyone can exercise a “bardic function” even if YouTube is not a harp but an air guitar.

YouTube represents just another stage in the politics of participation and global communication. Great things are happening in this latest addition to minority, alternate, and activist communities. Can individual “self-mediated” blogging and such be scaled up to create a truly inclusive cultural sphere and contribute reliably to the growth of knowledge? The book appears in a series which has offered sensible books on digital media ethics, blogging, what has happened to the music industry because of recent technological advances and devices, war reporting, and politics of all sorts in the digital age.

There is a lot more happening online than cute kittens (LOL) and home movies and amateur clips of events both significant and trivial. *OMG*.

Paulk Watzlawick, Janet Beavin Bavekas & Don D. Jackson. *Pragmatics of Human Communication*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2011. Pp.xviii, 284 with Index, \$21.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This is the first paperback edition of a classic book by three leaders in the field of psychology who here examine patterns of interaction in human communication with all their pathologies and paradoxes. The original, dating from the late 'sixties, appears now with an informative forward by Bill O'Hanlon who places it in the tradition of Gregory Bateson and refers to the rules that people learn with the acquisition of natural language. O'Hanlon admits that "[t]he pragmatics of human communication is a science in its infancy" still and there is "increasing skepticism about the possibility of casting the semantics of human communication into a comprehensive framework".

Nonetheless this book was widely read and respected and formed a good deal of the foundation for the present state of "a calculus" of human communication whose rules benefit communication and the breaking of whose rules militates against communication. The axioms of this "calculus" are given in the second chapter, the pathologies in chapter three. Then we move to human relationship systems (chapters four and five) and with chapter six reach the behavioral effects of paradox, especially the Russellian paradox. (If you do not know what the Russellian paradox is, it is clearly outlined for you.) Paradox has in fact a therapeutic effect and this is discussed in chapter seven and paradox is expected by these therapists to be incorporated into their clinical work. The final chapter takes a shot at outlining human beings' communication with reality. The book ends with a glossary of special terms used in the book but not defined in dictionaries, terms now in common use in psychotherapy.

Communication can be divided into syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics. Psychotherapists realize that the grammatic and syntactic codes of verbal communication are still undergoing attempts at formalization but that the clinician has to cope in the here and now with the pragmatics of human communication.

Geolinguists are pretty pragmatic and they generally are involved in discussing what languages are in use and what effects they have on culture and commerce and politics and such, but geolinguists also need to take an interest in the nuts and bolts of human communication in whatever first (or second, or other) language is spoken or written however much it differs or resembles other languages large or small observable in action in the modern world. They also have to keep up with advances in cognitive science and all aspects of communication technology. Technology continually changes our world these days with astounding speed whereas in non-communication fields it can and has moved very slowly. For years after the invention of the automobile there were still buggy whip holders on the dashboards of "horseless carriages". The one antique feature in communication still around from typewriter days is the keyboard arrangement: the qwerty thing came from deliberately putting the letters of *typewriter* on the top line (with the commonest letter in English, *e*, on the left hand in a mostly right-hand world!) and arranging the other letters so that you could not type too fast and jam the keys. Those still have the same arrangement on the computer keyboard which, though you may never have thought about, cannot jam. Anyway, what in technology has moved more significantly than in communications in the present? Today the young get their information and converse with their peers in ways noticeably different from the way their elders operate. Do you blog or twitter or make telephone calls or write letters? Do you read newspapers or get your news from TV or the Internet? Have you not noticed that new handheld communication devices can put revolutionary crowds into the streets?

Ferdinand de Saussure. *Course in General Linguistics*. Translated by Wade Baskin, edited by Perry Meisel & Haun Saussy. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. Pp. xiv, 260 with Index. \$82.50 in hardcover, \$27.50 in paperback.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

With new material the standard translation (1959) by Baskin of Southern Oklahoma State (1974) of the lectures of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) has been reissued. Given near the end of his life at the University of Geneva, the lectures were constructed from student class notes and posthumously published in 1916. Not a builder of systems, Saussure is not easy to apply to science and he has never been fully accepted by linguists because he specialized in what he called the signifiers of “internal linguistics” as opposed to “external linguistics” which deals in language active in the world of culture and politics and geography, which is the main interest of modern linguists. He is off on quite another track than that followed by geolinguists but he has been a major influence on Foucault, Derrida, and other French writers on language and literature, gender studies and feminism, the so-called New Historicism and postcolonial thought. Still his carefully considered and sometimes poetically expressed comments on synchronic linguistics (the principal part of these lectures) and on diachronic and dialectology as well as phonology and writing are of interest to all serious students of language. What he has to say about the economy of the sign and the system of signification, about the “internal organism of linguistics,” remains important.

“The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name but a concept and a sound-image.” Saussure prompted the study of semiotics, structuralism, and deconstruction. He upset historical linguistics and old-fashioned philology. He attached linguistics firmly to psychology and philosophy, to literary criticism and cultural studies. Early in his life he looked to mimesis as the basis of reference but then he moved, as modern linguistics has moved, to language as performance, signs rather than similarities.

The editors argue with as well as supplement and update this classic text. Meisel (New York University) & Saussy (University of Chicago) have clarified a number of matters and made Saussure’s work better understood and more useful to scholars now. They have even corrected typographical and a few errors of translation in Baskin.

Karl Bühler. *Theory of Language*. Philadelphia &c.: John Benjamins, 2011. Pp.xlviii, 518 with Index. \$68.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Karl Bühler (1879–1963) was one of the leading theoreticians of linguistics (the editor here contributes a biography of the author, primarily a developmental psychologist, as sematologist who set up the fundamentals) and his *Sprachtheorie* (first published in 1934) is here translated by Donald Frazer Goodwin in collaboration with Achim Eschbach for a large paperback edition. This deals with “the representational function of language in an extremely precise and detailed way.” The table of contents runs to 8 pages from the introductory summary of theories of language and the basic principles of language research, its significative nature, speech action, words and sentences, through sections on the deictic field in origins and operation in various languages, the symbolic field and the naming of words, and syntactic schemata, the makeup of human speech with phonetics and the nature of the article and the conjunction *and*, compounds, metaphors, sentences, anaphora, compound sentences, and more. To this are added 11 dense pages of bibliography, the glossary, and an index. Translations have earlier appeared in Spanish (1967), Italian (1983), Japanese (1983, 1985), Russian (1993), Polish (2004), Chinese (2006), and French (2009). This translation into English will make the scholarship available worldwide and can serve as both a textbook for advanced courses in linguistics and a challenging survey for professional linguists because it is standard.

The work is in four parts. First comes the idea of organon model for the instrumental view of language, followed by other axioms of linguistic science. Part II treats of indexicality in language and dexisis (pointing words). Part III deals with the symbolic field and context, onomatopoeia (suiting the sound to the sense), and the way case functions. Part IV addresses the elements of language such as syllabification, definition of the words, metaphor, anaphora (this is one of the technical words used in the book that the glossary omits), etc. There are prefaces by editor and translator.

One of a number of geolinguistic points that Bühler brings up is his emphasis in connection with language not on the individual speaker but on the community. Another is the developmental outlook, language in action evolving as, in the scholar’s work on child psychology, over time and as a result of both the innate and the circumstantial, the individual and society.

Gerda Hassler, ed. *History of Linguistics 2008*. Philadelphia &c.: John Benjamins, 2011. Pp. xii, 468. \$180.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This expensive hardcover book exhibits a “wide diversity of research topics, research approaches and methods” contained under these rubrics: Methodological Considerations, Linguistics and Philology; Antiquity; Renaissance Linguistics; Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century; and Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. This last section will be what attracts the geolinguist. The papers are from the XI International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences, Potsdam 28 August – 2 September 2008. Nearly 300 linguists attended but the geolinguistic approach was minimal. Geolinguists might read the paper by Camiel Hamans (European Parliament) which calls for revision of Kloek’s theory of Hollandish expansion and the four main areas of Dutch dialects called “An Early Sociolinguistic Approach towards Standardization and Dialect Variation” pp. 369–387. Here you see the up to date idea of the theory put forth by Kloek in 1927 and get an idea of how linguists have been viewing ever since then the connection in The Netherlands between geography and dialect. That dialect develops because people are separated from each other is no news.

Annick De Houwer & Antje Wilton, eds. *English in Europe Today*. Philadelphia &c.: John Benjamins, 2011. Pp. xii, 170 with Index. \$128.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Annick De Houwer (Erfurt) and Antje Wilton (Siegen) edit this small, expensive hardcover book on the sociocultural and educational aspects of the teaching and use of English in the UK and the rest of Europe, if the British will permit me to call them Europeans), what one of the editors calls “the dynamics” of English “at home” and on The Continent (as the British say, as if there were only one). This is sort of a *Festschrift* for Karlfried Knapp, founder of the European regional network of the International Association of Applied Linguistics, in an IAAL series from John Benjamins.

Areas in which English is taught and used that are noted here include the Basque region, Britain, Germany, Greece, The Netherlands, and so on, as well as general surveys of the teaching of English as a foreign language and its employment as a *lingua franca* and importance for a multilingual Europe though “Multilingual Europe” does by no means mean that “its citizens are themselves individually multilingual”. Barbara Seidhofer adds: “Far from it”. English does flourish on The Continent in “the media, the internet, advertising, popular youth culture and entertainment”. There seems to be no hope that English, or any other European language, could ever be the sole official language of the European Union although “the predominance of English ...as a language for learning has come to be acknowledged by European institution...”. In the vast majority of European states over 90 percent of pupils in secondary schools are taught English as either an compulsory subject or an elective, and English is used in some universities, but any native English speaker who has spoken with Europeans will have noticed that just because a second language is taught there is no guarantee that students can and will speak it frequently or easily. There are identity and convenience issues and psychology and politics to be considered. There are some unusual situations as well, such as when, for instance, a German from Bavaria may speak with a German from Berlin in English so as to avoid comprehension or status difficulties of dialects. The Continentals are sometimes more likely to attempt so-called Standard English than the minorities do in the British Isles, which themselves are increasingly multiethnic and multicultural. The so-called Received standard is in Britain less “received” than most people imagine.

Many people complain that English is not only tainted with imperialism and colonization but damn hard to learn, but oddly Basic English, which is easy to learn, has never caught on, in Britain or anywhere else. There is some interest in Business English. That is what the British Council has taught far afield. Not, of course, on The Continent, though. There a more ambitious British English has most often been attempted,

British English use may be impacted not only by Britain’s growing minorities but also by the nation’s declining financial status. The latter has forced the BBC to cut out the World Service broadcasts in English along with some other savings. Europeans may be learning more American than British English these days and anti-Americanization may come seriously into play. As often said by me in these pages, the French do not want English (American) in the councils of Europe because with the language comes the mindset. It’s politics, not language purity that is the issue. Language use is affected everywhere by politics and politics is *au fond* all about economics. Indeed in the US we are in great confusion because economic problems are addressed in terms of politics, by politicians, not in terms of sound fiscal policy as outlined by economists. We have Nobel Prize winners but they are not heeded. The economists say that they know what to do but the politicians are fearful of being voted out of office if they suggest unpleasant, if necessary, financial fixes. Higher taxes and reduced entitlements (read my lips) are Not Vote Getters. When things get bad enough, however, even self-serving and pusillanimous politicians will usually act, even if their actions produce riots in the streets. In democracies, always leading from behind, tacking according to the way the wind blows as the polls indicate, politicians have finally to do what those who happen to vote really want. If they cannot deal with those people they are out of office anyway.

In a democracy, indeed in any government, as in any language in use, the power to change lies always with the people. They can tolerate or overthrow any tyranny if they are willing to pay the cost. The

people in the long run get what they deserve. I have quoted elsewhere H. L. Mencken's remark that they deserve to get it "hard and good". The majority does not always choose the best solution. Democracy is not perfect. It is as Churchill observed simply the best of a lot of dangerous choices. In fact in democracies the majority seldom decides; it is the minority composed of those who are willing to put themselves on the line that writes history for everybody.

Adopting or rejecting English in Europe is the activists' decision to make, in the light of what others may offer in protest, and they will have to live with the consequences. Meanwhile, English may be good for business and for avoiding having to translate (say) Maltese into Italian before it is translated into (say) French and for graduate teaching in a country where two languages exist with such hostility that neither can get away with being the sole language of higher education. English as you well know is already the language, for example, of European aviation and the Europeans have accepted that the same way that they have accepted the language of mathematics.

Victor Ginsburgh & Shlomo Weber. *How Many Languages do We Need?* Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 2011. Pp. xii, 232 with Index. \$35.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

The answer is certainly one to express ourselves to and understand relatives and friends and as many members of our multicultural nation as are essential to us—we can never expect anyone to speak all the languages of a multilingual country—and one or more languages needed to be part of the international community in these days of globalization. Ideally the whole world would have a basic common language (and be able to cope with the inevitable local variants and changes over time) and what we may call cultural idiolects which would preserve for everyone the cultural differences that exist (and change) which languages embody. Think of the euro coin, with a common symbol on one side and a national symbol on the other, stressing that individual nations have been joined into a larger unit but retain their national characteristics and pride. Even the European Union, however, does not have a single official language but almost two dozen official languages and so a vast amount of time and money is spent translating everything into a number of different languages. Even some individual nations which used to insist on the ability to speak a traditional national language as a requirement for citizenship now accept the fact that within their borders is a multicultural and multilingual society which honors difference and protects minority rights. Since the Tower of Babel, we may say, the world has had to be multilingual, and linguists will point out that each and every individual has an idiolect, a language which at least in vocabulary is his or her own, though able to cope with other dialects of a shared language.

Economics and politics and sentiment are forces, too. In some cases there may be no pea under and shell. No solution. The useful charts and statistics the authors (from Belgium and Russia) produce and insightfully interpret cannot always measure everything, for which language capabilities best serve commerce and international relations as well as individual lives? How far can standardization be imposed on any individual language, and how well can inescapable change over time be addressed? Is big best or is small beautiful, or both? Languages are born and die, and what can and should be done to make them last as well and as long as possible? How are dialects to be viewed socially? How do demography and migration and education and improvements in trade and communication and other factors affect language policies and practices? What are the impacts of fractionalization and national and international understanding communication power or disenfranchisement? What price unity; what price diversity; what price modern convenience and what price traditional culture? How much diversity threatens chaos and to what extent was Auden right when he wrote: “Civilizations should be measured by the degree of diversification attained and by the degree of unity retained”? Finally, must such languages as English develop at the expense of other languages or can it work beside them?

These are longstanding and challenging questions? First get your facts straight. Example: English is one of the official languages of India and does much to unify the nation and connect it to the rest of the world but the majority of the Top 10 newspapers of India are not in English but in Hindi. Ginsburgh & Weber suggest “the development of optimal and sensible linguistic policies” that “take into account rigorous economic, linguistic, and sociological considerations while recognizing differences and sensitivities of all people, and allow them to hope and achieve together”. The authors inevitably argue for the inevitable, which is language diversity. They touch on questions about which languages are best for this or that; even if “all men [and women] are created equal” all languages are not. Ginsburgh & Weber clearly see diverse cultural costs and difficulties, some of which appear to have no solutions, such as the fact that Ghana would prefer one of the native languages as a unifier but there is not one that will serve and so Ghana uses English, with all the colonial fingerprints on it. The authors are aware that language has its politics (tribal, national, international) as do religion and trade with all their competitions, and that these things both unite and divide humanity while providing at least the illusion of stability in a world constantly in flux. They give us the facts about how we are even divided over such things as English as the most useful language nationally and internationally today, whether Yiddish is worth keeping, whether academies can embalm languages, whether the EU if Turkey joins can cope with Turkish as the fourth most important language of Europe, which languages it is most advantageous intellectually and/or career wise to learn, and much more.

This book honestly tackles a number of issues of crucial interest to geolinguists such as language use and language death, personal and national identity, individual rights and hard realities, the nature of communications and their relationship to progress, and much more. This clear-eyed appraisal is pioneering and trenchantly tackles huge issues rationally both historically and in their current manifestations. The book takes a broad view and likewise offers specific attention to the very obvious problems of the European Union “which can hardly cope”.

Victor Golla. *Californian Indian Languages*. Berkeley &c.: University of California Press, 2011. Pp. xiv, 380 with Index. \$90.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

The late William Bright produced the standard reference on Amerindian place names and here from another amazingly erudite scholar is the new standard reference book on all the dozens upon dozens of indigenous languages of what once was the Spanish mission area and then the independent republic and now is the state of California. The history of these languages covers no more than 2000 or 3000 years although it must be said that humanity has been on the ground there for some thousands of years before Christ and those whom we call Native Americans may have partly or completely replaced even earlier settlers who arrived in the Americas across a land bridge from Asia in the north or came across the Pacific to land on the continent's western shores. What has been recorded about these people is full of fact and guesswork. We do know for certain that what was once thought to be an island and we now call by the old name from a Spanish romance California there developed in non-communicating little villages what linguists recognize as 28 basic classifications of mutually unintelligible languages with many sub-classifications and such isolates as Karuk and Takelma. Takelma's presence in California in fact extends only a few miles south of one border and very little is established about the languages at the very southern tip of Baja California where are found Waikuri (sometimes called Guatakura), spoken around the mission of San Luis Gonzaga and Pericü (with, William C. Massey suggested, a language called Uchiti falling somewhere between those two) and Monqui (which has left us nothing more than 14 place names but is supposed to be related to Waikuri somehow). Golla has delved deeply into ancient reports by Spanish missionaries and later Europeans in what is a large area and presents many problems of linguistic fact and opportunities for scholarly speculation and debate. Occasionally there is confusion because some languages have alternate native names and some (such as Gabrielino) have names the Spanish gave. To sort all this out and to trace the pre-history as well as the known typological and areal history was a terrific task. Golla has triumphed.

Many readers here will know of the basic language families that are pretty certainly established; indeed some assert that all pre-Columbian languages of the Americas derive from just three, Algic, Na-Dene or Athabaskan, and Uto-Aztecian, but very few indeed will know of the complex situation about which Golla, an anthropologist of Humboldt State University, is the unquestioned expert. His large-format book in three parts with maps and charts and illustrations—the photographs of investigators and last speakers of languages add an attractively human touch—will hereafter be the go-to site for all scholars. There already is an electronic version of the text available.

Golla first defines the area of the Californian indigenous language mosaic and then he presents a narrative history of the study of them since the first European contact (1542), featuring the famous Alfred L. Kroeber and Edward Sapir (whose letters Golla edited elsewhere) and their students. Then come the more challenging parts. “Languages and Language Families” (Algic/Ritwan, Athabaskan/Na-Dene, Hokan, Penutian, Uto-Aztecian, and those which are of “uncertain affiliation” such as the very ancient Chumash, Yukian, and tiny languages of Baja California), “Typological and Areal Features” of Californian linguistics (phonology, grammar, numerals, names, diminutive and other expressive symbolisms, social and situational varieties, and pre-Conquest and post-Conquest borrowing). We have a very detailed survey of the diversity and geolinguistic life and death of the languages and account of field work in complex and unfamiliar societies. Golla examines all the various phonological and grammatical structures and dialectology and dispersion of the native languages of California and in fact all the contiguous states where

the same families exist. He meticulously documents every scrap of scholarship. He records whatever has been speculated about the pre-history in connection with the relevant languages, whether they are still active or have disappeared from use, how they operated or operate in contact and conflict, and he fully assesses the documentary history of how the languages have been collected and studied. He produces a reliable if daunting guidebook to the indigenous languages of the Golden State. This study took many years of scholarship and, I repeat with confidence, for many years will be the standard reference book.

It is a wonderful source for experts in linguistics, especially geolinguistics, anthropology, archeology, ethnology, history and pre-history. In a world in which scholars are encouraged to publish or perish and turn out fairly unreadable and small, narrowly focused studies such work as Golla's, which springs from extremely extensive competence and synthesizes so very much documentation and points the way to major ideas about language in action and interaction, is rare indeed. It is a cause for awe.

Lisa Lim & Nikolas Gisborne, eds. *The Typology of Asian Englishes*. Philadelphia &c.: John Benjamins, 2011. Pp. vi, 120 with Index. \$120.00.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

With the notorious inability or unwillingness of English speakers to learn and use Asian languages it is a good thing for international commercial and cultural exchange that Asians learn a number of local varieties of English and even some favored western Englishes. In postcolonial Asia the footprint—to employ a word heard perhaps too often lately—of colonial English remains but just as in politics things have changed inventively and interestingly so the Englishes of the East are well worth examining for their similarities and differences, their structures and uses.

Why and how are new Englishes invented? How are they transmitted to the local populations? How do they affect the native languages and how are they received in the wider global context? Does it matter that, for instance 96 percent of the inhabitants of Hong Kong are Chinese or that a more mixed demography exists in this or that other place? To what extent does it matter that the new English of Hong Kong, for instance, bears all the marks of the colonial oppression? What is special about Singlish? Why do these English seem to western speakers of English to be sung to a different tune, and how puzzled might foreigners be about some of the lexical items that creep into Asian Englishes from native Asian languages?

Edited by Lim (Hong Kong) & Gisborne (Edinburgh) this book presents papers presented at the first International Conference for the Linguistics of English (Freiburg, 2008) in the workshop on the typology of Asian Englishes. The papers were then printed in a special issue (30: 2, 2009) of the journal *English World-Wide*. US \$120.00 is quite a price for this slim hardcover book. In it the editors “set the agenda” *re* Asian Englishes, the subject already of journal articles and books on the Englishes of Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, and Sri Lanka, and then we have essays by Lim (“Revisiting English Prosody: (Some) New Englishes as Tone Languages”), Gisborne (“Aspects of the Morphosyntactic Typology of Hong Kong English”), and Umberto Ansaldo’s “The Asian Typology of English: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations,” Devyani Sharma’s “Typological Diversity in New Englishes,” and a group of scholars (Priyankoo Sarmah, Divya Verma Gogoi & Caroline Wilshire) on “Thai English Rhythm and Vowels”.

Not addressed in this book, of course, are the ranking (say) of social dialects or the uses of Asian English in formal and informal communication, in conversation and in journalism, literature, the cinema, and so on. That was not the remit for this conference group any more than they wanted to take up the question of the impact of globalization on native languages or the impact of New Englishes of Asia on commerce, educational and other institutions, and so on.

Mark Balnaves & Michele Willson. *A New Theory of Information & the Internet*. New York &c.: Peter Lang, 2011. Pp. viii, 200 with Index. \$34.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Balnaves & Willson, both of Curtin University, are two of the scholars who try to make sense of the Big Picture of today. This paperback is about how the protocol and the public sphere interact. It tries to tackle what information really is, an ordering, a reduction of uncertainty, a commodity, a resource, a code, a disclosure, cognitions and intentions, or adequate indication. It tries to relate the information society to society and the creation and distribution of information. It is less expensive and of more general interest than the book just mentioned because here the speech community is the popular Internet with all the freedoms and restraints—A. R. Galloway has noticed that the Internet is the most controlled medium every known—that are so much discussed daily that the medium involves. Moreover the story is the familiar one of a giant leap forward in information gathering, processing, and delivery. This book is all about this wondrous new medium and network sociality. All that is discussed by two experts who insist that (italics theirs) “*information does not exist, only informed people exist* “. They note all the democratic forums and personal networks and all the rest of the new cyberworld and its marvelous new servants—and masters—operating in the public sphere and changing the way most people live and indeed the way most people think. Whether what Habermas sees as a “unilineal development from a politically active public to one withdrawn into a bad privacy,” and whatever the new dispensation is doing to established ideas of personal privacy themselves overthrown, millions upon millions hunched over their delightful and possibly dangerous devices, are going to make the world more peaceful and prosperous and person friendly, or maybe not. Certainly a new era of haves and have nots is being created in terms of access to information. Certainly new ways of communicating are reshaping language *SU en C*. Certainly the machines are changing some part of what it traditionally has been the way of humans in contact and competition. Certainly more people are reaching out more, blogging. Tweeting, texting, and so on, chattering more to others Out There and at the same time spending more time than ever before tied to machines. They are communicating more and more at a distance and therefore with only emoticons rather than tones of voice and facial expressions and gestures and so they are beginning to get closer and closer to being indistinguishable from robots just as science has reached the point where it is difficult and sometimes impossible to determine if a robot is “talking” to us onscreen or a human being is at the other end of the line of communication.

These and other modern situations demand a serious attempt at a whole new theory of communication. This book makes a move in that direction but by no means is The Answer. It raises as many questions as it settles, probably more. The speed with which technology is moving, in fact, blurs everything. Future things seem harder than ever to predict, in a phrase one hears all too often these days, “down the road”. Another all too common phrase is the “you know” that occurs in every other sentence we hear these days in the US, or so it seems, as annoying as all the *and ahs* and *but ahs* and initial *wells* we hear when people increasingly unaccustomed to speaking face to face are called upon to be articulate. But we do not know, not as much as we used to think we did know, about communication. And we do not know what vast changes in language the new means of communicating are going to make in time to come. It’s like, y’know, sort of one of those known unknowns, y’know what I’m sayin’?

Tatjana Soldat-Jaffe. *Twenty-First Century Yiddishism*. Washington (DC) &c.: Sussex Academic, 2012. Pp. x, 178 with Index. \$59.50.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This is a fairly brief and rather expensive academic book distributed by International Specialized Book Services, 929 NE 58th Street, Portland OR 07213 offering a post-Holocaust history of Yiddish in Israel, Europe (especially Germany) and the US. In America Yiddish has declined. Partly because of the opposition of German Jews to Yiddish as the language of less educated Jews of Europe and partly because

of assimilation of Jews in this country. A collector of books in Yiddish in recent years discovered that many Jews were willing to give him their books written in Yiddish because no one in the family could now read the language. Debates over whether to abandon Yiddish have raged among Jews for at least a century.

Nevertheless Yiddish was part of the identity of European Jews for a long time and with Ladino was a language, not merely an inferior version of German or Spanish. Both Yiddish and Ladino retained many particularly Hebrew aspects, most importantly in relation to religion. In 1908 an international conference was held in the then Austro-Hungarian empire in defense of Yiddish and over time it was part of Jewish home schooling and other educational programs. Of course it is still taught and spoken although not in the old sense a folk language and a modern Hebrew was adopted as the national language of Israel. For one thing, Yiddish was one might say too German for the new Jewish homeland after the Holocaust and naturally, open to all Jews the world over, Israel was not going to attract only Jews who spoke Yiddish.

Ms. Soldat-Jaffe (University of Louisville) has searched many archives and she has conducted several critical case studies to report in terms of personal identity, cultural history, and the politics of language and pedagogy, transnationalism and diaspora, and the significance of heritage language in connection with Yiddish, which has its own history and literature. The results are of interest to students of Judaic Studies, cultural interaction and bilingualism, language change and many aspects of geolinguistics. She speaks of language purity and language social status, hybridism and nationalism, cultural pride and autonomy, cultural traits and sociodynamics, education, and especially language as an ethnic marker. She asks whether Yiddish can be revived in Germany where most people regard Yiddish not as some sort of dialect of German but as a quite separate language. Our readers of *Geolinguistics* will be well aware how Yiddish has contributed to American life, especially in terms of the sense of humor, the writings of Leon Rosten, and much more. In various countries Jews and others have made heroic efforts to keep Yiddish alive and to increase its prestige. She recommends “new pathways, away from elegy and anthropomorphizing toward a more capacious, less authenticity-focused view”.

Anne McCabe. *An Introduction to Linguistics and Language Studies*. Oakville (CT): David Brown, 2011. Distributor for Equinox Books (UK). Pp. xii, 405 with Index. \$24.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

This paperback, with amusing cartoons and other informative illustrations, benefits immensely from the fact that the author is an experienced classroom teacher (St. Louis University in Madrid) who not only teaches linguistics but the pedagogy of linguistics, to both beginners and graduate students. It is a textbook for beginners that will win some devotees for language study and it can serve as a good review for graduate students and even their teachers in linguistics. Neither *geolinguistics* nor *sociolinguistics*, however, appear in the index but then neither does (say) *hyphenation* although there is some mention of terms that are one word made of two, two words, or two words joined by a hyphen. It leaves some questions unanswered: in *receive* neither *re* nor *ceive* can stand alone so where is the bound root? I suppose geolinguists will be far more interested in larger questions and may be entertained when languages other than English are turned to for examples and for the exercises that occur throughout this text. There are for younger readers than some linguists sentences diagrammed. Older readers learned to parse and not to diagram.

Dip in for the chapters on language change and language variation and you as a geolinguist will be tempted to start at the beginning and read through the entire book. It p[resents with admirable clarity functional linguistics, discourse and text analysis, and traditional formal approaches to the subject. It is right up to date on cognitive linguistics, computational linguistics, first- and second-language acquisition, and so on and it has a useful description of various schools of linguistics (here is where Jeffrey Reaser of North Carolina State is given a couple of pages to introduce sociolinguistics), a glossary, etc.

This text is a good one for adoption in undergraduate courses in linguistics and communication and even education and students will appreciate its concise and precise presentations and avoidance of the messy, fuzzy jargon in which, unfortunately, even experts on language far too often write.

What still needs to be done is more research on how language actually operates in our conscious and unconscious minds and how to deal with the problems of both sending and receiving communications, including the problems of transferring exact information, because as a character says in Michael Leitch's novel *The Liberty Lad* (first published by MacGibbon & Kee in the UK in 1965 and reprinted by Panther in the UK in 1968):

But words were no good. They were treacherous things. They
Could be read a hundred different ways. (P. 136).

Alwin Frank Fill. *The Language Impact: Evolution—System—Discourse*. Oakville (CT): David Brown, 2011. Distributor for Equinox Books (UK). Pp, x, 263 with Index. \$27.95.

Reviewed by
Leonard R. N. Ashley

Also for both beginning and advanced students is this paperback by Fill (Graz, *emeritus*) which is right down the geolinguist's alley in that it describes the history and the current operation of the power of language in society. Does how we think shape how we frame and use words? Does thinking have to involve words at all? What happens to what we utter in the minds and lives of those with whom we communicate? To what extent are we all playing Wittgenstein's "language games" and to what extent do those operations impact (a fairly new verb derived from a noun) community, culture, economics, politics, and all human activities? In what ways and to what extent does language enable and continually alter society? What does the close examination of language tell us about mind and about preconceptions, prejudices, power plays, etc.? What have thinkers thought over time about the power of language and its bad (sophistry, propaganda, divisiveness, and all the rest) as well as good features? This is a book on the philosophers of language and of language in everyday use. It is a clear statement of what is called impact linguistics. As Wittgenstein said more simply than he usually wrote (for he often lapsed into a style lot less immediately accessible than the one Fill adopts here): "There are countless different ways of using what we call signs, words, sentences"—and there are crucially important results, profound, inescapable, in all sorts of human interactions, of the ways we do that.

Fill starts with the fact that speech "did not really hit our planet like a meteorite" but evolved. It is mankind's greatest invention and the greatest influence on mankind's progress. It was systemized. It changed. It continues to change everything, at different rates and in different ways in different parts of the world. "Words, so innocent and powerless as they are, as standing in a dictionary," wrote Nathaniel Hawthorne, "how potent for good and evil they become in the hands of one who knows how to combine them". They are a construing force. They shape the way we see reality, anthropocentrically and differently in each and every language and dialect. We use language to deal with all real or imagined realities in the bidirectional interaction of individuals and society. Fill as an expert on ecolinguistics makes that approach significant among all the others, historical and current, scientific and philosophical, he notices. He likewise often very usefully quotes or summarizes views of workers in the field of linguistics and ties in their contributions with his interests in the development of language and the nature and effects of discourse.

As the author of a number of books on onomastics myself I was particularly interested in how giving a name confers reality and how names manipulate reception. As a geolinguist I found one of the most admirable aspects of Fill's approach lies in his caution in avoiding blaming language for everything that is wrong with the way we think and act. He knows well the real power of language but is quite aware that that power has real limits.

Vincenzo Lo Cascio, Editor. *Dizionario combinatorio compatto italiano*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2012. Pp. iv, 642 with an Introduction. \$59.00.

Reviewed by
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This is not your quintessential dictionary. Vincenzo Lo Cascio's *Dizionario combinatorio compatto italiano* is a verbal treasure trove of over 3000 words along with a vast array of possible word combinations. He aptly names it "*combinatorio*" because he understands that words do not only exist in a vacuum but are related to each other as if belonging to a "family." Each word is a puzzle piece which can fit a multiple array of words to create different meanings and nuances. The combinations are impressive. They allow for a deeper understanding and a greater ability of a non-native speaker, searching for the best way to express a thought, to find the expression that best fits the situation and that approximates native usage. A foreign language is often a mine field wherein a non-native speaker runs the risk of being misunderstood, making a cultural gaffe or worse. There are so many different combinations that even a native speaker would have an "*aha*" moment.

Lo Cascio makes the case for the importance of the syntagmatic nature of words. Meaning, the word combinations are culturally specific and not arbitrary. He provides a guide for exploring proper usage in order to communicate more precisely and comprehensibly. For example, in English we would say, "I'm taking shower," literally translated "*prendere una doccia*." However, the correct Italian idiomatic phrase is "*fare una doccia*." This simple verb substitution distinguishes the native from the novice speaker. Also, many texts do not note the difference between many verbs like "*affittare*" and "*noleggare*," but Lo Cascio explains that the former would only be used to rent a room, apartment or house, whereas the latter is more apropos for renting a bike, car, boat.

Lo Cascio differentiates the change in meaning when an adjective is placed before or after the noun. Consider, "*un vecchio amico*" which means an old friend versus "*un amico vecchio*" a friend who is old in years. Also included are the multiple uses for a simple word like "*bicicletta*" which takes up three quarters of a page and ranges from the description of a vehicle with two wheels that is pedaled, to the idiomatic expression "*L'hai voluta la bicicletta? Ora pedala!*" (You've made your bed, now lie in it!), and similar exhaustive entries for the word "*film*." Also invaluable are the entries that display cultural nuances of phrases like "*donna di vita*" (streetwalker), "*morto di fame*" (used as a disparaging remark not easily translatable).

Another interesting feature of Vincenzo Lo Cascio's *Dizionario combinatorio compatto italiano* is the extensive array of expressions and idiomatic phrases featuring food terms such as "*fare una frittata*" (which not only refers to making an Italian omelette, but can also mean to cause trouble or make a mess of things), "*impastare la bocca*" (to leave a bad taste in one's mouth, both literally and figuratively), "*sputare nel piatto in cui si mangia*" (or, to speak badly of someone who is good to you), "*pizza a metro*" (pizza sold by the meter). The old standard "*in vino veritas*" stands along with the less commonly known "*vino paglierino*" describing a brilliant, golden wine resembling the color of hay, and "*finire a tarallucci e vino*" (to end a discussion on a friendly, courteous tone).

Lo Cascio has provided an intuitively structured, easy to use dictionary that would be an indispensable tool for student or translator alike. *Dizionario combinatorio compatto italiano* is also the most well put together compendium of idiomatic phrases collected in a single volume.

Heike Wiese. *Kiezdeutsch. Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht* ['Kiez German: A new dialect arises']. Munich: Beck, 2012. 243 pp. + Bibliography, appendices; no index. €12.95.

Reviewed by
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Kiezdeutsch, German linguist Heike Wiese's book on the German language variety of that name, seeks to take seriously a spoken register (or 'dialect,' as the author argues) that has been mocked on German TV and the popular press as 'broken German' and criticized as a potential destroyer of standard German. Spoken largely by young people in urban immigrant neighborhoods, *Kiezdeutsch* may be translated as 'German of the 'hood'. Its image among speakers of Standard German is largely negative, and it is widely perceived as youth slang, gang-identified jargon or 'bad' German mixed with Turkish and Arabic, the languages of Germany's two largest minorities.

Heike Wiese will have none of it. For her, *Kiezdeutsch* is neither teen language, thieves' argot nor immigrant pidgin, but rather a fully functional and legitimate dialect of German used by all ages, its major linguistic features well within the variety shown by Germany's traditional regional dialects and current slang, and worth a linguistic study. Her book represents an opening volley in such study, formulated for the lay reader. Not unexpectedly considering that the author is Professor of German Language at the University of Potsdam, she prefaced this book with several academic articles (some of them in English) on topics related to *Kiezdeutsch* (for example, Wiese 2006, 2011; Wiese, Freywald & Mayr 2009).

Given the heavy cultural value placed on language tradition and language correctness by the German non-specialist reading public, her argument will be a difficult sell to that audience—and, indeed, much of her book is not just scholarly fact-gathering and hypothesis-making, but is a polemic against what she sees as small-minded rejection of *Kiezdeutsch* by the uninformed.

One by one she lays out her arguments:

- *Kiezdeutsch* is not a 'mixed language.' Its foreign elements, borrowed from Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish, and English, are 'Germanicized' in the same way as foreign lexical items are integrated into Standard German. For example, the American slang form 'to diss' [disrespect] is borrowed into *Kiezdeutsch* as 'dissen'—a regular verb form;
- *Kiezdeutsch* is above all, German (in spite of its differences from Standard German and its borrowed lexical items). For example, *Kiezdeutsch*, like standard spoken German, regularly omits the traditionally required preposition in phrases using names of mass-transit stops, such as *Wir sind gleich Alexanderplatz* (written Standard German: *Wir sind am Alexanderplatz* 'We are nearly at the Alexanderplatz'). Wiese points out that the spoken register's omission of a preposition only with mass-transit stops is an almost comically limited rule, and calls it an 'improvement' that *Kiezdeutsch* expands this rule so that prepositions are omitted with general place names and even times: *Gehst du auch Viktoriapark?* 'Are you going [to] Victoria Park too?'; *ich werde zweiter Mai fünfzehn* 'I'll be fifteen [on the] second of May' (Standard German *Gehst du auch zu Viktoriapark?*, "*Ich werde am zweiten Mai fünfzehn*);
- *Kiezdeutsch* is not alone: it is only one of several European urban dialects originated by immigrant youths, for example in Stockholm (*Rinkeby-svenska*), Copenhagen (*københavnsk multietnolekt*) and Amsterdam (*Straattaal*). This implies that a universal linguistic principle is at work in *Kiezdeutsch*, rather than simply immigrants' efforts to simplify German. The American reader will see many similarities with public attitudes toward, and linguistic defenses of, Black English, though not much is made of this by the author;
- *Kiezdeutsch* is a genuine dialect, not 'broken German' or an unsuccessful imitation of Standard German by unsuccessfully integrated immigrants. Here the author points out commonalities between this new dialect and the traditional regional dialects of German, such as Swabian or Bavarian. She defines 'dialect' as "a linguistic variety that characterizes a certain speech

community within a greater language community” and that has “particularities that define it against the standard and against other dialects, in phonology, vocabulary and grammar; and these must form a language system peculiar to the dialect itself”;

- Kiezdeutsch does not threaten Standard German; rather, it is spoken in the immigrant communities of its origin, but not only by immigrants or their offspring; rather, it is heard among native German speakers and even sometimes among older speakers. It is, in short, exercising some influence on the spoken register of Standard German speakers, but without diminishing the standard language. Again, similarities to the case of Black English will occur to American readers: for example, the spread of lexical items such as ‘girlfriend’ and ‘dude’ as direct personal address; and ‘homies’ (=‘homeboys’, e.g. ‘friends’). The author maintains that most speakers of Kiezdeutsch also are capable in correct Standard German and use Kiezdeutsch as an in-group marker with their friends only;
- Kiezdeutsch is unjustly stigmatized, and the stigma attaches also to its speakers. The author argues here that since Kiezdeutsch is a legitimate dialect and that it is not harming Standard German, this stigma is unjustified.

The author certainly lays out her case effectively, and there seems to be no question that Kiezdeutsch deserves further professional study. Since it is being created now, in real time, it can provide clues to linguistic processes that create new languages out of old ones. However, in a few cases Wiese’s study might have gone just a bit further to draw satisfying conclusions from the evidence cited here.

Not explored is a similarity between Kiezdeutsch and the long-standing American example of Black English, which began during slave times and has continued developing into the present day. Currently this previously in-group and stigmatized variety has emerged into trending influence on the majority language, due apparently to African-American artists’ influence on pop culture. Black English, unlike Kiezdeutsch, did not originate with youth culture, but with the unwilling relocation under slavery of a large group of people who had in most cases no language in common. It might have died out with emancipation and increasing integration of its speakers into the majority culture. Instead it has been reclaimed by African-Americans and is being broadcast into the majority linguistic marketplace, where it is beginning to contribute loan phrases to the majority language. Comparisons with Kiezdeutsch would have been welcome—not only to this reader, but very likely to the German reader as well, who is certainly aware of Black English in outline if not in detail.

Also unexplored is the author’s assertion that Kiezdeutsch is not just a youth language, but rather is used by speakers of all ages. However, although it is obvious that some items of Kiezdeutsch have received limited acceptance among older speakers of Standard German, it is not clear from Wiese’s examples that Kiezdeutsch has escaped its origins as a youth language. Studies would be useful of whether the immigrant youth who speak Kiezdeutsch essentially give it up once they mature and enter the wider society and the labor market, where Kiezdeutsch is strongly stigmatized. It may be argued that any language variety used primarily by teen-agers will never achieve the same general acceptance as a traditional regional dialect of German.

The author strongly objects to previous characterizations of Kiezdeutsch as being the speech of ‘Deuschtürken’—German Turks—on two grounds. First, not only Turkish speakers but also Kurdish- and Arabic-speaking young people are the creators of Kiezdeutsch. Second, she objects to the word ‘Deuschtürken’ because the speakers in question are in many cases German-born or have spent their childhood in Germany and plan to stay for the rest of their lives. Thus, reasons Wiese, they are not German Turks, a kind of Turk, but Turkish Germans, a kind of German. However, given the citizenship requirements of the Federal Republic of Germany, it may be wishful thinking to assert that immigrants in Germany will be thought of as Germans, no matter how they are named.

Until a reform of immigration law in 2000, neither German birth nor generations of ancestors living legally in Germany were relevant in citizenship considerations; citizenship could be granted to children of non-German parents only under limited circumstances. Currently, persons born in Germany to

at least one parent with legal residence are granted provisional citizenship; permanent citizenship requires application before age 23, and successful applicants may not retain citizenship of their or their parents' home country unless it is in the EU. Therefore, it is probably safe to assume the German public does not consider the children of immigrants to be Germans. As Americans we may view such conditions for citizenship as burdensome or unfair; however, German public attitudes reflect unwillingness to accept immigrants very quickly, and the citizenship policy supports this unwillingness. A discussion of stigmatization of Kiezdeutsch and its speakers needs to include consideration of the German immigration/citizenship question. Further, the German public's underlying suspicion of 'foreign'-tinged German language is not questioned or analyzed, but is taken for granted here, with a counter-argument that Kiezdeutsch is not in fact foreign. Linguistics scholarship in this case needs to move beyond purely disciplinary issues into political or social ones in order to account for sociolinguistic phenomena.

A popular conception of Kiezdeutsch includes a supposition that its speakers are using it as a substitute for the standard language, and that Kiezdeutsch is therefore a hindrance to appropriate social integration. The author argues against this popular conception, and writes that Kiezdeutsch speakers also master Standard German. On the face of it, this feels mostly true—schooling is obligatory in Germany, and immigrant children, surely, cannot get through school using non-standard German. Or can they? It would have been good to include some studies on this point—it is widely supposed, and not just in Germany, that linguistic and cultural enclaves can isolate their inhabitants and slow down their proficiency in the majority language and culture.

Finally, an index to the text would have been very helpful.

All in all, this is a valuable contribution to the sociolinguistics of dialect formation. It is to be hoped that the author and her graduate students (who are mentioned as having helped carry out studies among speakers of Kiezdeutsch) continue this work, and that the results will in future be available in English for the benefit of non-German-reading linguists.

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Pre-Islamic tribal Arab customs still prevail in the Moslem world despite progressive Islamic law. In the "modern" world, a stultifying disconnect still exists between customary and Islamic law related to the treatment of women. Although positive examples exist of women's success in living more modern lives in the Arab world, the vast majority of women in Arab countries is still bound by traditions rooted in tribal custom extending as far back as the Pre-Islamic period.

Citing evidence from an extensive review of media briefs collected and translated into English by a secondary Lebanese source, the authors of *Arab Women in Arab News* provide enlightening insight into the achievements of those brave women in the Arab world who speak in a more independent voice.

At issue, however, is the extent to which the cited Arabic media portrayal of these women represents a significant movement forward for Arab women as a whole. The ascent of those coming into power who call themselves Islamists in most previously progressive and emancipated Arab countries suggests instead that Arab women face a new uphill struggle that continues to pit customary law derived from tribal culture against the basic tenets of Islam.

Therefore, in order to appreciate more the full detailed briefs cited in the book, a quick reference to the historic origin of the dominating pre-Islamic customs begs for attention.

In his book entitled "*Al-Hayah al-Jinsiyyah 'ind al-'Arab, min al-Jahiliyyah ila Awakhir al-Qarn al-Rabi' al-Hijri*" (The Sexual Life of the Arabs: Since Jahiliyyah until the End of the Fourth Century A.H. (1958; Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid, 1975), the great Arab Syrian scholar, Salah al-Din al-Munajjid (1920-2010), wrote about how the Arabs living in the Arabian Peninsula during the pre-Islamic era changed their attitudes toward women dramatically after a severe drought that had swept the entire region.

Previously, women were revered as a source of tribal wealth, and because women produced and cared for children, they increased tribal manpower. For that reason, they were not allowed to leave the tribe. In addition, women were allowed to have relationships with more than one man. If a woman became pregnant, she would summon all involved men to her tent and designate the father she deemed most fit. Children carried the maternal, not the paternal tribal last name.

When climatic change led to severe drought and consequent dearth of food, women became a tribal burden instead of an asset. To preserve the existing but diminished food supply for others in the tribe, men from other tribes were called upon to take their native tribe's women and children away, thereby assuming responsibility for their food and shelter.

With an increased number of women and children on their hands, tribes also practiced female infanticide, often burying new female babies alive. According to Salah al-Din al-Munajjid, the custom became the accepted and acceptable norm. To indicate their diminished status in the social order and reduce their attraction to other men, tribes also began the complete covering of adult women. "Covering", either through female infanticide or through female clothing signaled the woman's diminished status, literally reducing her physical and social presence through burial alive or figuratively through burial under garments such as the veil.

We can evaluate the advent of Islam as a reaction against and corrective to such tribal practices. In Islam, women were given equal status with men. They were given full independent possession of their property. They stipulated conditions in their marriage contracts through pre-nuptial formal agreements. Men were no longer allowed to acquire hundreds of "wives," limited now to only four. As a result, women became judges, orators, and even leaders of men into battle. And Islam forbade female infanticide, including burial alive as well as covering of women's faces.

Yet the pre-Islamic ugly tradition of reducing women to walking shadows and segregating them from men survives until now! In *Arab Women in Arab News*, the authors report specific moments in the media that indicate the Arab women's struggle for equality. However, they cite only one media event about a woman fighting for equal physical existence. Today, even in Egypt, Tunisia, Syria and Morocco, the trend of re-covering/veiling the previously emancipated woman is moving forward in an alarming speed. The authors found that "80 percent of Egyptian women made the veil (*i.e. hijab*) their uniform" (p.143).

The authors of *Arab Women in Arab News* stated that their intent is to find whether the portrayal of Arab women in Arab media counteracts the stereotypical depictions of Arab women in Western media. However, by equating traditional practices in the treatment of women, whether through their commentary

or that of their cited Arab female voices, they perpetuate a stereotype that conflates tradition with the teachings of Islam.

The equation of traditions deriving from tribal custom with Islamic teachings remains central to the issue of the treatment of women in the Arab world. It is perpetuated in Western stereotypes and in the minds of illiterate, quasi- educated, and even some educated Arabs. They cite Muhammad al-Habash, a lawyer and a Muslim cleric stating that: “before the rise of Islamist movements in Syria in the 1980s, we were all told we needed’ to leave Islam behind to find our futures’. But now... the future... has become the glorious past” (p.203). Is it enough to say at this point, as the authors do, that “the voices of ‘globalization’ and Islam” have yet to be “reconciled” when presenting evidence of renewed advocacy in formerly progressive Arab countries for female re-covering/veiling (p.245)?

For example, the authors gave a revealing extensive expose of the sophisticated women group “The Qubaisiate” in Syria. The Qubaisiate controls half the Islamic schools in Syria with an enrollment of 75,000 girls. “The Qubaisiate employs elaborate recruiting rituals to attract new recruits... Leaders of the Qubaisiate selectively target girls from the ages of five up and from well-to-do and well-connected families....” And, “A girl thought to be interested (in becoming a member) is taken to a meeting where she is addressed by the Sheikha on religious subjects.... She will see girls surrounding her who have tied their veils by instructions....the signature of the Qubaisiate woman” (pp. 201-204).

The preaching that female veiling and segregation are an integral part of Islam still remains the mantra perpetuated by some domineering Arab men. Such preaching becomes most alarming when we read in some of the briefs how some women are brainwashed to the extent that they became the ones opposing change: For example, “the majority of women in Saudi Arabia are devout conservatives, do not seek increased liberties, and believe that the ban on their driving is justified on religious grounds. When he first assumed the throne, the brief notes, King Abdullah was visited by 500 conservative women who requested that he insulate the Kingdom from Western influences and uphold the ban on female driving” (p. 171).

It is commendable how the authors have very meticulously analyzed the briefs they had selected. The reader will be enlightened about the achievements accomplished by brave Arab women and the obstacles they face in war zones and under occupation. They conclude that: “On balance, they (Western readers) will learn that the Arab woman has come a long way from age-old Western bites, when her voice was silenced in favor of captions and voices speaking for her. They will learn that Arab women have independent and impatient voices with which they can chart their own lives.... The UN estimates that, even without special mandates to do so, females will reach political parity with males worldwide by the end of the twenty-first century. Given the glimpse of Arab women afforded by our corpus, Arab women will not sit still waiting for that deadline” (p. 390).

On such an optimistic note, one hates to shed doubt! But, to remind the reader that with the strong wave of those who call themselves Islamists now coming into power in most previously progressive and emancipated Arab countries, Arab women face a new uphill struggle. They will still have to learn more about Islam. That includes rising to the challenge of separating tribal myth and custom from the true teachings of Islam. Only then, can they shed their cover, claim their full existence face to face and side by side with men under the bright glaring sun of the East and proclaim: “Never Buried Alive Again!”