

# Book Reviews

**Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity.** *Joshua A. Fishman*, ed. New York: Oxford University Press. 1999. xii + 468 pp.

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Fishman's *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity* presents an introductory overview of the relationship between ethnicity and language intended for nonspecialist readers. The first section of the book introduces various disciplinary approaches, while the second part (which makes up most of the book) provides background on particular geographic regions or speech communities. These geographic areas are divided into four broad categories (the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific). Each of the subsections also includes a general map of the area(s) covered in the text. The maps have very little detail and are intended as a basic resource for those using the volume as a textbook. In keeping with the textbook format, each chapter contains an overview of a particular topic, a set of discussion questions, and suggestions for further reading.

In the introduction, Fishman admits that any attempt to combine global coverage and interdisciplinary perspectives will not be able to cover every possible area of interest. For example, there is no specific section devoted to linguistic anthropology. Nancy Dorian's "Linguistic and Ethnographic Fieldwork" (chapter 3) does touch on anthropological methodologies (if not theories), although the main focus of the chapter is linguistic fieldwork on endangered languages. Despite such gaps in coverage, Fishman has compiled an interesting and extensive collection of articles, including several topics that do not usually receive much attention in the literature. For instance, François Grin's chapter (2) on economics and Karmela Liegkind's chapter on social psychology provide useful basic introductions to methodologies that rarely receive attention in anthropological research. In chapter 4, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas provides a basic outline of educational models for teaching linguistic minority students, while Bernard Spolsky's chapter (13) on second-language learning discusses ethnic revival movements as they relate to language teaching and bilingual education. Harold Haarmann's chapter (5) on history outlines the role of language in various periods of European history and traces the sources of ethnic revivals in the 1990s. The chapters on nationalism by William Safran (chapter 6) and political science by Robert Phillipson (chapter 7) both deal with the relationship between language and political aspects of ethnicity, comparing European concepts of nationalism and statehood with more recent examples from other parts of the world, particularly Africa. The chapters on psychology by Amado Padilla (chapter 8) and sociology by Glyn Williams (chapter 12) are primarily focused on the assumptions about language in each field, covering basic topics such as the differences between written and spoken language, normativity, and social order. Fishman's own chapter on sociolinguistics focuses on qualitative studies of issues such as language attitudes, language policy, and ingroup/outgroup distinctions. The remaining chapter in the section on disciplinary perspectives is Colin Baker's (chapter 9) on sign languages. Baker examines issues related to American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf culture in the United States, focusing on the development of bilingual and bicultural education. Although a fine introduction for the nonspecialist student, the chapter

does not touch on more controversial issues, such as cochlear implants, which tend to capture the attention of students. The inclusion of ASL in the "Discipline and Topic" section rather than the "Region and Language" section is surprising and undermines the chapter's attempt to promote awareness of Deaf culture. Separating ASL from the other languages in the book reinforces the traditional view of deafness as pathology by failing to treat signed languages in a manner equal to spoken languages.

The coverage of particular regions contains a sampling of areas, rather than attempting to cover every possible community in detail. The resulting collection, however, gives primary focus to European languages (both inside and outside of Europe). And despite the extensive attention given to Europe, there are inconsistencies in the coverage. While there are chapters on Germany by James Dow (chapter 19) and Scandinavia by Leena Huss and Anna-Riitta Lindgren (chapter 20), there is much less coverage of countries such as Italy, Spain, or Portugal. The chapter on Western Europe by Andrée Tabouret-Keller (chapter 22) focuses almost exclusively on Britain, France, and Belgium. The other chapters on Europe—"The Celtic World" by Colin H. Williams (chapter 18) and "The Slavic World" by Miroslav Hroch (chapter 21)—present historical overviews of various languages and language policies. While the Slavic chapter presents very short overviews of the development of various national languages, the Celtic chapter presents a general history of language policy in Ireland and the United Kingdom (with only cursory mention of Breton).

In the section on the Americas, there are chapters on African American Vernacular English by Sonia Lanehart (chapter 15) and on "Amerindians" by Teresa McCarty and Ofelia Zepeda (chapter 14) that use narratives to introduce issues related to ethnicity and language. The language of Latinos in the United States is mentioned only briefly in a discussion of the English-Only movement in the chapter on the United States and Canada by Richard Bourhis and David Marshall (chapter 17), while issues related to Asian Americans and Arab Americans are not examined at all. The chapter on Latin America by Ofelia García (16) focuses on Spanish and makes comparisons with Spain and the United States. The languages and cultural politics of indigenous peoples of Latin America, though mentioned, receive little attention apart from their role in defining Latin America as a region that is linguistically distinct from Spain.

The chapters on Sub-Saharan Africa by Samuel Gyasi Obeng and Efurosibina Adegibija (chapter 23) and the Arab World by Moha Ennaji (chapter 25) present historical overviews of language policy in these regions; the latter examines the history of Arabization and language issues in the Maghreb. An additional chapter, "Border Areas in Africa and Asia" by Tope Omoniyi (chapter 24), focuses on the Nigeria/Benin and Singapore/Malaysia borderlands and is the only chapter that does not present a broad overview of a single region or language.

In the section on Asia and the Pacific, there are chapters on "The Far East" by Florian Coulmas (chapter 26), the Pacific by Heather Lotherington (chapter 27), and South and Southeast Asia by Harold Schiffman (chapter 28). All three present brief historical overviews of languages and language policies in particular countries. Coulmas's chapter considers China, Japan, and Korea but gives little attention to minority-language issues in either China or Japan. Lotherington's chapter considers the effects of colonialism in Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia; other areas, such as Australia, receive almost no attention at all. Schiffman's chapter is almost entirely about India, with an occasional nod to the existence of ethnic issues in Southeast Asia.

Although all of the chapters are intended as general introductions for nonspecialists, they differ a great deal in terms of scope and style. For example, Lanehart provides a personal life history to introduce the attitudes and experiences of speakers of African American English, with very little technical or grammatical information. Grin, on the other hand, gives a fairly technical discussion of how particular methodologies in economics can be applied to the study of language and ethnicity. And while chapters such as Coulmas's and Garcia's provide

broad overviews of a particular region, other chapters focus on a single issue within a given area. Bourhis and Marshall, for example, focus primarily on Canadian French, with a brief history of language policy in the United States, and Dow treats the history of attitudes about the German language, with little mention of other languages in Germany, such as Turkish or Sorbian.

Most of the chapters in the second part of the book present basic historical introductions to colonialism in various regions, an emphasis that bolsters the book's Eurocentric feel. As such, the volume is more a historical survey of language policies in various regions than a full examination of the whole range of issues related to the intersection of language and ethnicity. Furthermore, the chapters tend to have a very traditional approach in which ethnicity is viewed as static and monolithic. There is virtually no discussion of more recent postmodern approaches to questions of identity. Thus, there is neither a discussion of research on ethnic identity issues in Critical Discourse Analysis such as that found in the work of Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak (*Discourse and Discrimination: Rhetorics of Racism and Anti-Semitism*, Routledge, 2001) or of Jan Blommaert and Jef Verschuere (*Debating Diversity: Analysing the Discourse of Tolerance*, Routledge, 1998), nor any detailed consideration of the ways in which ethnic categories are socially constructed, how they change, or how they interact with other aspects of social difference. Instead, the chapters focus entirely on macrosocial and political issues related to multilingualism to the exclusion of issues related to the role of language in the construction of racism, the negotiation of ethnic identity, and debates about naming ethnic groups. Though intended more as a textbook than an actual handbook, it is unlikely that the volume could serve as the sole text for a class, given the inconsistency in coverage and in the quality of the chapters. Despite these problems, the *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity* does present a fairly broad introduction to the historical development and contemporary study of language policy in various parts of the world. The wide geographic and disciplinary coverage of the work makes it a valuable resource for students and others seeking basic information on issues of linguistic and ethnic diversity in specific regions.

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*An expanded version of this review is available at the JLA website:  
<http://www.aanet.org/sla/jla/jlamain.html>, under volume 13, number 2.*

Inspired by the scholarly work of one of the most productive (anthropological) linguists of the second half of the 20th century, the late Joseph H. Greenberg, over the past decades language typologists have come up with important cross-linguistic generalizations concerning grammatical categories and syntactic constructions. As a descriptivist with a strong belief in the heuristic value of language typology and universals, I feel that for several of these grammatical