

REVIEWS

The Idea of English in Japan: Ideology and the Evolution of a Global Language. Philip Seargeant. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2009, xv + 188 pp.

Reviewed by GREGORY PAUL GLASGOW*

Providing an ontology of the English language and how it is conceptualized in a foreign country is an ambitious undertaking; however Philip Seargeant, with his volume *The Idea of English in Japan: Ideology and the Evolution of a Global Language*, provides a compact, anthropological investigation of this issue through a careful selection of case studies as well as thought-provoking analysis. It is a study particularly refreshing to see, as Japan is still fairly underrepresented in world Englishes literature. For sociolinguists and Japanologists alike, this book is a welcome addition to the current literature on language and society in Japan. It assertively questions how linguistic ideologies are reproduced and the implications these ideologies have on how English is viewed globally.

The book is essentially comprised of several articles that Seargeant had previously written about Japan, globalization and the ideology of English. The theoretical and methodological frameworks in this volume are detailed in the Introduction (pp. 3–5), ch. 2, “The Concept of English as a global language” (pp. 6–21) and ch. 3 “Language ideology and global English” (pp. 22–42). In ch. 2, after he commences his introduction with the proposition that “language exists not only as a medium but also as a *concept*” (p. 1, italics mine), he carefully reviews two prominent schools of thought in world Englishes, which pit Quirk’s monocentrist orientations towards a universal English language against Kachru’s more pluricentric, nuanced outlook that appreciates linguistic variety. Seargeant deftly employs this debate as a springboard for his intentions to determine the ramifications that “context-specific conceptualizations” (p. 20), like Japan has for the development of a theoretical approach. In ch. 3, Seargeant presents his choice of a qualitative, language ideologies framework in order to investigate how English is positioned within Japanese society, and what assumptions about the language can be gleaned from this positioning. He does this through semiosis, by analysing written and visual texts, as well as conducting small-scale interviews, though he concedes in a later chapter that he tends to draw predominantly from written text about English produced in the English language rather than in Japanese.

Chapter 4, “English in Japan: The current shape of the debate” (pp. 43–62) and ch. 5, “Globalization: Enriching Japanese culture through contact with other cultures” (pp. 63–86), begin the conceptual case studies that first delve into the issue of language-in-education policy. In his thoughtful critique of the ‘determinism’ that tends to be a feature of English language teaching and research in Japan, he interrogates the seemingly dubious positions taken by the Japanese ministry of education with respect to the English language as a tool for communication, highlighting that ‘communication’ in Japan and the West may be quite different concepts. The subsequent chapter approaches the issue of how globalization in

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Japan becomes ‘glocalized’ and accepted, but not before “taming it and Japanizing it and rendering it acceptable for Japanese consumption” (Tan and Rubdy 2008: 2). Seargeant demonstrates this globalization (?) through a variety of semiotic practices, from the 2003 governmental directive to estate agents that they fight discrimination against foreigners, to the construction of “foreign country theme parks” (p. 71), to the ‘ornamentalism’ of English in a variety of cultural products such as Internet advertising, as well as the display of English phrases on clothes, adverts and signs. These chapters are successful in advancing Seargeant’s argument and demonstrate vividly how English in Japan, through “managing shifts in semantics and co-opting it for purely ornamental purposes” (p. 85), further divides the country from the rest of the world.

The following chapters provide a continuation of analyses of local examples of the way English is positioned. Chapter 6, “Authenticity: More English than England itself” (pp. 87–105), utilizing as its examples the British Hills Educational and Cultural Resort and the English teaching practices of the now-defunct language school chain Nova Corporation, raises the issue of authenticity; that is, “the contested construction of a concept of authenticity” (p. 89) not only influences how teaching practices are implemented but seems to comply in the semiotic reproduction of the image of a ‘real English’. By enjoying British Hills in the mountains of Fukushima prefecture – where only English is spoken – and taking classes from native-speakers of English at Nova, the Japanese are able to partake in the imaginary of authenticity that is socially reproduced through Japan, and that privileges native-speaking varieties and speakers from the Inner Circle variety, especially the United States and the United Kingdom. Chapter 7, “Aspiration: Enhancing lifestyles and living out dreams” (pp. 106–31), examines the multimodal messages of Japanese travel and employment magazines and presents the results of interview data of mostly female white-collar workers. The magazines present a “discourse of aspiration . . . in the promotion of the English language in marketing strategies for educational institutions” (p. 107), while the narratives of the participants with undergraduate education who shared their attitudes towards English show how their experiences with the language has shaped them. Here, though a bit weakened by the paucity of male responses of various ages which may have reflected contrasting views, the message Seargeant conveys is that “English is positioned as *the* agent of change in people’s lives; as the talisman that can effect their dream fulfillment” (p. 112, italics in original).

The remainder of the book contains thoughtful analyses of how language perceptions are rationalized through the studies in ch. 8, “The unknown language,” (pp. 132–53), and returns to the broader theoretical issues addressed at the beginning in ch. 9, “Rival ideologies in applied linguistics” (pp. 154–68). In ch. 8, Seargeant shares results from interviews with participants who had to note down as many encounters they had recently had with the English language. Seargeant found that while English lessons, or encounters with native-speaking English people may have seemed to count as ‘examples’, English loanwords that may be displayed through public spaces or English in media advertisements seemed not to. Seargeant identifies this process as one of “erasure” (p. 141) that takes place based on presuppositions. Following this is his revisiting of the phenomenon of English ornamentalism on clothing and its peculiar and often incorrect use of English, as well the example of a Japanese TV program lampooning the types of English mistakes Japanese people make as further instances of the multiplicities found in how English is perceived. The topic that began the book is then broached again, in search of an answer to the question of what teaching model would be best around the world, which “foregrounds the

key mechanisms by which the concept and the shape of the language is regulated” (p. 155). Although some may feel as if Seargeant prevaricates with the answer “this depends” (p. 165) he offers a reasoned discussion of rationales for orientations toward a standard more in line with a monocentric view, and reasons why a lingua franca approach may have its limits.

In conclusion, I would like to return to my concern about the book being an ambitious undertaking. This may be a point of consideration due to the book’s primary emphasis on visual and written texts, and less of an emphasis on a wider variety of human participants, which may have given a broader perspective of how the language not only is conceptualized, but how it is *performed* through a variety of linguistic repertoires by individual people. For instance, documenting Japanese teaching practices in terms of English varieties, language use in more of a variety of institutional settings as well as in popular music are a few possibilities that may have added more breadth to the study and an interesting dimension to the discussion. However, Seargeant does succeed in his exploration of the question of how English should be regulated globally with Japan as a starting point. Even if he has not been able to provide an answer that privileges one approach of regulation of a global language over the other, the topic of this book is severely overdue, and I hope that it serves as a stimulus for more of a variety of sociolinguistic approaches that attempt to achieve similar aims, whether in Japan or in other parts of the world.

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Beyond Yellow English: Toward a Linguistic Anthropology of Asian Pacific America. Angela Reyes and Adrienne Lo (eds.) New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, xvii + 401 pp.

Reviewed by JAMIE SHINHEE LEE*

I was instantly intrigued by the title of this book. It would be dishonest of me if I said it had nothing to do with my own ethnic identity and social positioning in the United States. *Beyond Yellow English* is a sizable linguistic anthropology volume (23 chapters, 11 of which are either revised or reprinted versions of earlier studies) divided into five parts: interactional positionings of selves and identities, discursive constructions of groups and communities, languages in contact, linguistic practices in media contexts, and educational institutions and language acquisition. In their introduction, Adrienne Lo and Angela Reyes note the ‘lacuna’ in research on Asian Pacific Americans (APAs), problematize the terms such as ‘Asian American’ and ‘yellow,’ and explain how these terms “point to a racializing discourse that has a profound impact on the ways that APAs are situated on a racial and ethnolinguistic landscape” (p. 4). They identify their goal as moving “‘beyond Yellow English’ to consider the complex ways that Mock Asian as well as other styles of speech are utilized by APA speakers in the performance of an ethnic identity” (p. 6). The labels such

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as 'forever foreigner' and 'honorary White' (Tuan 1998), epitomize racializing discourse about APAs in the United States. Lo and Reyes observe "three simultaneous trends" in racial positions of APAs: "non-English-speaking foreigners," speakers "linguistically and culturally assimilated to middle-class white norms," and "'inauthentic' JSL speakers of heritage languages" (p. 7).

Part I has 4 chapters, Lo and Reyes' introduction (ch. 1) discusses earlier research on APAs' linguistic practices and briefly surveys the organization of the volume. Chapter 2 (Styles and Stereotypes: Laotian American Girls' Linguistic Negotiation of Identity by Mary Bucholtz) focuses on two Laotian American girls' contrastive identity construction: a model-minority nerd and a gangster. Chapter 3 (Asian American Stereotypes as Circulating Resource by Angela Reyes) deals with metapragmatic stereotypes about Asian Americans in a teen video-making project near Philadelphia's Chinatown. By focusing on Korean evidential marking, Adrienne Lo in ch. 4 (Evidentiality and Morality in a Korean Heritage Language School) challenges the earlier view that Korean interaction draws upon discursive resources rigidly fixed on relationship factors, such as social roles, age, and generation, and argues that speakers dynamically and flexibly assess and place one another in discourse. Jane Hill (ch. 5, On Using Semiotic Resources in a Racist World) offers a critical commentary on the chapters in Part I and notes that Asian Americans are not exempt from institutional and pedestrian racism, contrary to what deceptively positive labels such as 'model minority' (Lee 1996) seem to suggest.

Part II has five chapters; Bonnie McElhinny et al. in ch. 6 ("Talk about Luck": Coherence, Contingency, Character, and Class in the Life Stories of Filipino Canadians in Toronto) analyse narratives of Filipino immigrants in Canada and show that transnational migration often places them in socially complex situations that require self renegotiation. It turns out that career choices of these immigrants are often influenced by their familial needs and religious beliefs, indicating a rather deterministic view of life. Chapter 7 (Turban Narratives by Wendy L. Klein) is based on narrative data collected from Punjabi Sikh families in Los Angeles. Klein observes that wearing a turban, as situated practice, marks the visibility of Sikhs to non-Sikhs and serves as a transformative force for second generation young Sikhs who often have to navigate through conflicting religious and socio-cultural expectations on their journey of reconciling self-identities in the US. Chapter 8 (Constructing Ethnic Identity through Discourse: Self-Categorization among Korean American Camp Counselors by M. Agnes Kang) shows diverse and complex uses of the word 'Korean' by Korean cultural camp counselors in the Bay Area of Northern California. Chapter 9 (Who is "Japanese" in Hawai'i?: The Discursive Construction of Ethnic Identity by Asuka Suzuki) deals with *Yonsei's* (fourth generation Japanese) perspectives on what it means to be Japanese based on a panel discussion on "Japanese American Contemporary Experiences in Hawai'i." Suzuki concludes that categories such as *Japanese* and *Japanese-American* are not always as fixed as one would assume. The participants in Suzuki's study employed various categories of generation, age, and language to project their negotiated identity. In ch. 10, a commentary on chapters 6–10, Niko Besnier foregrounds a complex, ambivalent, and contingent nature of identity categories and ethnic labels.

Five chapters in Part III focus on geographically transposed bilingual populations, such as immigrants and foreign students and their borrowing, code-mixing, and code-switching. Drawing upon Silverstein's *indexical order*, Emi Morita in ch. 11 (Arbitrating Community Norms: The Use of English *Me* in Japanese Discourse) sociopragmatically accounts for the use of the English first person reference term, *me*, in Japanese sentences

by two adult Japanese immigrants and an American-born English-Japanese bilingual child. Joseph Sung-Yul Park's discussion in ch. 12 (*Illegitimate Speakers of English: Negotiation of Linguistic Identity among Korean International Students*) is concerned with international students, arguably the least discussed subpopulation in Asian American studies. By analysing interaction among Korean graduate students studying in the US, Park argues that what he calls 'disclaiming English' and 'the ideology of self-deprecation' are used to negotiate opposing positions transnational populations often find themselves in. Chapter 13 (*Bilingual Creativity and Self-Negotiation: Korean American Children's Language Socialization into Korean Address Terms* by Juyoung Song) also deals with ethnic Koreans, but its analysis centers on 5–6 year old Korean-English bilingual children and their use of address terms in socialization and self-negotiation. Alessandro Duranti and Jennifer F. Reynolds in ch. 14 (*Phonological and Cultural Innovations in the Speech of Samoans in Southern California*) show that Samoans in Southern California employ a variety of speech styles including Standard English, Samoan English, non-Standard English with African American English features, and two varieties of Samoan 'good speech' and 'bad speech.' They assert that maintaining phonological features of Samoan kinship terms and English proper nouns invariant across contexts is culturally significant. Chapter 15 (*What Do Bilinguals Do?*) is a critical commentary by Asif Agha examining bilingual discursive practices in immigrant communities and highlighting significant arguments in the chapters in Part III.

Part IV takes a different approach from the previous sections by reviewing non-naturally occurring data, that is, media texts. Elaine Chun in ch. 16 (*Ideologies of Legitimate Mockery: Margaret Cho's Revoicings of Mock Asian*) views comedy performances as a legitimate site for sociolinguistic analysis. She foregrounds 'Mock Asian' features in Margaret Cho's comic routines featuring Asian-accented English, including that of her own Korean mother. Similar to Chun, Roderick N. Labrador in ch. 17 (*"We Can Laugh at Ourselves": Hawai'i Ethnic Humor, Local Identity, and the Myth of Multiculturalism*) shows that ethnic and linguistic stereotypes can be expressed through humor. Labrador focuses on Hawai'i, dubbed 'the chop suey nation,' and articulates how powerful humor can be as a tool to determine who has valid in-group membership in Hawai'i and can therefore legitimately perpetuate or problematize the notion of 'a racial paradise.' Chapter 18 (*Reel to Real: Desi Teen's Linguistic Engagements with Bollywood* by Shalini Shankar) discusses Bollywood film viewings of Desi teenagers in Queens, New York and Silicon Valley, California. Susan Gal (ch. 19, *Perspective and the Politics of Representation*) urges researchers to critically evaluate "the very notion and nature of linguistic stereotyping itself" (p. 326) and stresses the importance of probing the circulation process of mass media texts.

Four chapters in Part V feature language acquisition and pedagogy issues regarding Asian Americans. Leanne Hinton in ch. 20 (*Trading Tongues: Loss of Heritage Languages in the United States*) analyses 250 linguistic autobiographies she collected over seven years in a class offered at the University of California at Berkeley. Hinton suggests that successful linguistic assimilation is often accompanied by personal sacrifices, which she calls 'the human cost' of the first language loss. This includes "a loss of family intimacy and communication, a sense of bitterness toward a system and people that the students have come to see as racist, and a sense of personal inadequacy" (p. 345). Chapter 21 (*Forever FOB? Resisting and Reproducing the Other in High School ESL*) presents Steven Talmy's observation that 'linguicism' or 'language bigotry' (Valdés 1999) is readily made

available by language policies, school curricula, and teaching practices. He notes that ESL students are viewed as “exoticized Newcomers, cultural and linguistic Others” (p. 362). Using conversation analysis, Agnes Weiyun He in ch. 22 (Sequences, Scripts, and Subject Pronouns in the Construction of Chinese Heritage Identity) demonstrates how identity construction is carried out through script choices between *fantizi* (the traditional Chinese script) and *jiantizi* (the simplified Chinese script) and pronoun uses in Chinese heritage language classes. In her commentary on Part V (ch. 23: The Emergence of Language Identity in Cultural Action), Bonnie Urciuoli’s conclusion sums up nicely what I think is the mantra of the volume, that is, “the association of language categories with literacy and correctness can overshadow and undervalue the experiential complexities through which linguistic experience becomes part of cultural experience” (p. 389).

As the editors point out, “the chapters are quite diverse in several regards” (p. 9), but the common theme is that identity is not as fixed as some of the labels seem to suggest, but is actively negotiated and reclaimed all the time by members of diverse Asian American communities. Asian American identity, stereotypically imagined or complicatedly heterogeneous, is a common theme emerging from the volume. Gal notes that compiling a collection of articles on Asian Americans is a “political act aimed at encouraging research about social groups apparently neglected” (p. 326). I feel that Reyes and Lo have achieved this goal by including chapters highlighting varied linguistic and cultural practices of Asian Americans.

I find a commentary at the end of each part insightful and useful. Doing a close reading of 23 chapters was not a simple task; giving critical comments on this many chapters was difficult. Paying equal attention to each chapter was not always possible, partly due to my own research interest, varying degrees of engaging writing styles, and novelty in analysis and topic choice. Heterogeneity among authors in terms of caliber, topic, analysis, and writing makes this volume interesting and yet a bit imbalanced. Maintaining the same level of academic rigor, interesting research findings, and high quality writing across all chapters in an edited volume is extremely hard, if not impossible. There are some indications that Reyes and Lo struggle with this very issue, but I would say that they did a better job than most editors. In addition, I appreciate their decision of taking a linguistic anthropology approach to Asian Pacific America, which has been underrepresented in research.

To do each chapter justice, my review needs to be significantly longer than it is now. Given the space constraint, I have chosen to provide a broad survey of each chapter, rather than a full-blown critical review, which I hope will help readers to appreciate a wide range of topics covered in the book and motivate them to read it to determine the usefulness of the book themselves. Even if you are not actively doing research on Asian Americans or are not ethnically affiliated, I think there is something for everyone in the volume. This book certainly enhanced my own understanding of the community that I have become part of and, in a sense, of myself too. That alone was worth my time.

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International English in Its Sociolinguistic Contexts: Towards a Socially Sensitive EIL Pedagogy. Sandra L. McKay and Wendy D. Bokhorst-Heng. New York: Routledge, 2008, xviii + 209 pp.

Reviewed by MARTHA MICHIEKA*

The widespread use of English across the globe has led to English learning and teaching taking place in diverse social contexts. *International English in Its Sociolinguistic Contexts: Towards a Socially Sensitive EIL Pedagogy* focuses on these diverse situations to show the connection between social contexts and language pedagogy.

The book is comprised of seven chapters in addition to a preface (pp. xi–xvii). As stated in the preface, the aim of this volume is to examine the relationship between social contexts and language teaching by combining three significant strands: globalization, sociolinguistics and English as an international language. In the preface too, the authors offer clarification of the key terms used in the book: world Englishes (WE), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and English as an International Language (EIL).

Chapter 1, “English in an era of globalization”, explores the development of English as a global language by giving historical and present day reasons for its spread and maintenance. While colonialism seems to be the main historical cause, the contemporary reasons include many incentives, both real and imagined, ranging from educational to economic and entertainment. The authors argue that globalization calls for a common language, which in this era happens to be English. The global spread of English is, however, not problem free. The last part of this chapter discusses the negative impact English has on other world languages, such as increased monolingualism in both Inner and Outer Circle countries and a growing economic gap determined by access or lack of access to English.

Chapter 2, “Social contexts for EIL learning”, examines the diverse contexts for EIL learning using Kachru’s concentric circles model. The three circles each pose various concerns and issues related to language teaching. Using USA and Britain as case studies, the authors show that in the Inner Circle the most serious concerns in EIL teaching are issues of ‘cultural isolation, segregation, and racism’ (pp. 33). Pedagogical challenges, such as the role of the first language in second language acquisition and the relationship between language and culture, continue to challenge English language teaching in the Inner Circle. Problems in the Outer Circle contexts include educational inequality due to unequal access to the English language and the antiquated, yet ever-nagging issue of language imperialism, while the Expanding Circle contexts pose concerns of learner motivation, teacher proficiency and teaching methodology.

Chapter 3, “Multilingual societies”, continues the discussion started in ch. 2 with a specific emphasis on multilingual contexts. The authors discuss diglossic and non-diglossic contexts of EIL learning. They compare four key areas: the incentives and support for learning English, the type of English input, status of mother tongue and support for mother tongue maintenance. Using South Africa and India as case studies, the authors show that in diglossic contexts English is the high language, while the indigenous languages are low languages relegated to less prestigious domains. While English learning is supported by language policies, there is little support given for the maintenance of local languages. In non-diglossic multilingual societies such as the USA and UK, the dominance of English

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is assumed, and monolingualism is viewed as the ultimate goal. Little support is given for mother tongue instruction, and whenever bilingualism is considered, it is only as a transitional process while learners gain proficiency in English. The authors call for 'a socially sensitive pedagogy that would recognize the other languages used by EIL learners' (pp. 181).

In ch. 4, "Language planning and policy", the authors show how social factors such as national policies that designate languages as official influence EIL teaching. The authors discuss the various ways the designation of an official language influences language teaching and learning. The official recognition of English in both the Outer and Inner Circle countries and the rising status of English in Expanding Circles ultimately promote the learning of English. Along with this comes the setting of linguistic standards and a resulting marginalization of those who speak linguistic forms other than the standard.

Chapter 5, "Linguistic variation and standards", explores the notion of standards and the plurality of norms. The first part of the chapter is devoted to the discussion of the development and description of new Englishes. The authors discuss the variations within the new Englishes and issues of intelligibility. The second part deals with the "Standard English ideology". What should be the status of new Englishes? Using Kachru's (1992) distinction of mistake from deviation, the authors argue that the new Englishes should be viewed as acceptable innovations and not errors. In conclusion, the authors stress that acknowledgment of the place of the new Englishes will promote effective EIL pedagogy.

Chapter 6, "Interactional sociolinguistics", explores the contributions of interactional sociolinguistics (IS) research in understanding ELF interactions. The key question in this chapter is how IS can inform EIL pedagogy. The authors show that IS, by shedding light on the code-switching behaviors of bilingual users of English and their attitudes to code-switching, has expanded knowledge of the characteristic features of ELF interactions. The authors then discuss the implication of IS for EIL pedagogy and emphasize the need for language pedagogy that takes into consideration the interaction of English and the other world languages. They propose the possibility of exploring the place of code switching in the language classrooms.

Chapter 7, "Towards a socially sensitive pedagogy", summarizes the principles the authors consider significant in EIL pedagogy. Some of these principles include a focus on curricula that recognize, respect and accommodate local cultures and languages. The authors show how the "discourse of Othering" has often influenced EIL pedagogy and suggest possible ways of reducing the tension created by this "Othering". In their conclusion, the authors emphasize that a socially sensitive EIL pedagogy is one that recognizes the diverse contexts in which English is learned and taught.

One of the major challenges the authors face in this volume is the issue of clarity of definitions, especially of three key terminologies used in the book: world Englishes, ELF and EIL. By offering a clarification of how they use the terms, the authors seem to acknowledge the fact that there are other possible definitions. Depending on how readers understand these terms, some of the usage in the book might be problematic. The term "world Englishes", for example, is quite problematic once taken out of the world Englishes paradigm consideration. A quick illustration of this concern is the supposedly simple definition given of who members of the concentric circles are; for example the authors say that according to Kachru, Inner Circle members are simply defined as "native users of English for whom English is the first language in almost all functions" (pp. xv). Taken out of its historical context, this definition becomes extremely problematic since

several users of new Englishes in countries that Kachru classified as Outer and Expanding Circle Countries fit into this definition. The other terms are not any less complex; while the authors argue that they use the term ELF to include “only interactions between L2 speakers of English who do not share a common culture”, they consider the term EIL to be “an umbrella term to characterize the use of English between any two L2 speakers of English ... as well as L2 and L1 speakers of English” (pp. xvi). Where then does cross-cultural communication fit in? Finally, readers would appreciate some clarity on the definition of International English (IE) since the book title carries this term. While there is a definite attempt to clarify how the term EIL is used in the book, nothing is said about IE. It is not clear whether the authors equate IE to EIL although they seem to use the terms interchangeably. One of the subheadings in the preface is titled English as an International Language, yet the content under that subheading is a clarification of how the authors use the term EIL.

Other than the few concerns mentioned above, McKay and Bokhorst-Heng have successfully come up with an excellent work that connects various aspects of language, ranging from language planning at national levels to classroom pedagogy, with particular emphasis on social factors affecting English language teaching. The other strength of the work lies in the scope of the material covered. In just about two hundred pages, the authors explore an extremely wide range of various social contexts of English use. Overall, this jargon-free and truly engaging book is a significant resource to anyone who uses English in any capacity. Policy-makers, language planners, and English language teachers, whether from the Inner, Outer or Expanding Circles, will all find this book to be an excellent resource.

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New-Dialect Formation in Canada: Evidence from the English Modal Auxiliaries. Stefan Dollinger. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008, xxii + 355 pp.

Reviewed by PETER COLLINS*

There is a dearth of scholarly documentation of Canadian English (‘CanE’) as a major variety of English, and particularly of the historical development of CanE. Studies of earlier stages have tended to be based more on settlement history than linguistic data. Also slow to gather momentum has been public acceptance of CanE as a variety in its own right, many Canadians even today believing that there is nothing that distinguishes Canadian from American English. The present book examines the development of a set of modal expressions in early CanE (more specifically Ontario English, the socially and historically dominant variety), used to test the validity of Trudgill’s (2004) new-dialect formation theory and such notions as ‘colonial lag’ and the ‘founder principle’, and to seek answers to general questions of the type: ‘How conservative is CanE usage?’ and ‘When did CanE become a distinct variety?’ These aims are ambitious indeed, given the restriction of the analysis to a single grammatical category.

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The origins of the book in a thesis (University of Vienna PhD, *New-Dialect formation in early Canada: the modal auxiliaries in Ontario, 1776–1850*) are evident, particularly in the extensiveness of the research review in the early chapters. Dollinger is aware that some readers may find this distracting: “from some perspectives one might consider the research review as in disproportion to the immediate needs of the empirical part of the study” (p. 6), but his justification is that the thoroughness of the review enables it to “serve as a starting point for newcomers to the study of CanE” (p. 6).

Chapters 3 and 4 respectively provide an overview of Ontario’s external language history from 1776–1850 with particular reference to the contributions of demographically distinguishable immigrant groups, and an account of the corpus used as the empirical base of the study, the *Corpus of Early Ontario English (pre-Confederation Section, or ‘CONTE-pC’)*. The first machine-readable corpus of historical Canadian English, CONTE-pC is of modest proportions (125,000 words of running text from diary entries, letters, and local newspapers). It is organized into three internal periods (1776–1799, 1800–1824 and 1825–1849) to comply with Labov’s desideratum of periods no less than 25 years for the detection of real, non-lexical, language change. To facilitate cross-dialectal comparisons Dollinger also uses ARCHER-1 (*A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers, Version 1*) and CL18P (*A Corpus of Late 18th-Century Prose*) as a further source of data. He concedes that his study is “at the mercy of the available data” (p. 166), and that his capacity to make effective comparisons is hampered by the absence of a corpus of early AmE (p. 283). As a result of the small size of the corpora at his disposal, many results do not reach statistical significance, forcing Dollinger to compensate by considering percentile changes in distributions.

In ch. 5 Dollinger reviews two ‘scenarios’ for the origins of CanE, both of which figure prominently in accounts of the development of the variety, despite having been published well before advances in the study of new-dialect formation. That propounded by Morton Bloomfield, an early adherent to the ‘Loyalist base theory’ who focuses on the influence of politically and linguistically conservative Loyalist immigrants from the US, contrasts markedly with that of Matthew Scargill, who emphasizes the importance of the British influence on CanE. These positions are considered in relation to more recently propounded theories associated with polygenetic approaches to colonial variety evolution. These include ‘swamping’, the ‘founder principle’, and ‘colonial lag’. It is however Trudgill’s model of new-dialect formation that is the most important to the present study. The attractiveness of Trudgill’s (2004) approach, which incorporates six key processes (mixing, levelling, unmarking, interdialectal development, reallocation and focusing) is that it is conducive to the type of empirical testing that Dollinger reports in chs. 6–9.

Chapter 6 presents the methodological background and explains the selection of variables. In referring to these variables there is some inconsistency: on p. xvii Dollinger claims to be studying “eleven modal auxiliaries” but later we discover that one of these items is actually the semi-modal *have to*. On p. 7 he refers to the “ten core modals and one semi-modal” (*ought to*, included as one of the ‘core modals’ is surely more of a ‘marginal’ modal!), and then again on the same page to “the data on eleven modals”. On p. 206 and p. 224 Dollinger refers to *have to* as a ‘modal auxiliary’.

Chapter 7 focuses on *can*, *could*, *may* and *might*. The data corroborates Kytö’s (1991: 209) finding that a stronger preference by *can/could* than by *may/might* for occurrence in negative contexts was already established in EModE. Dollinger’s claim (p. 195) that

AmE leads the way in the development of epistemic *could* is difficult to reconcile with the frequencies adduced by Collins (2009: 109) showing BrE to have a far higher overall frequency than AmE. The chapter has disappointingly few examples, making it difficult in many places to determine precisely what type of meaning is being talked about. Consider for example Table 7.4 “*COULD and MIGHT – semantic categories and examples*”, which has four cells resulting from the intersection of the categories ‘non-epistemic/epistemic possibility’ and ‘non-past/past’. Instead of providing eight examples to demonstrate the parallels between *could* and *might*, Dollinger provides only four. Furthermore, the interpretation of a number of examples is disputable; for instance in the following example *cannot* is claimed to be epistemic, but is more appropriately paraphrased by ‘possible for’ rather than ‘possible that’:

(7.6.b) and yet, if the people have settled themselves according to these offsets, in front, they **cannot** near be disturbed, unless it can be clearly ascertained that with a view of encroaching upon (CanE, letters-2)

Chapter 8 deals with *must* and *have to*. The weak obligation markers *should* and *ought to* are relegated to a later chapter where, curiously, they are discussed along with *would*. The preference for spoken over written genres that *have to* displays in ModE (cf. Collins 2009: 67) appears to have been in place at least from the late 18th century, with informal written genres of CanE outstripping formal, leading Dollinger to surmise, quite plausibly, that: “this distribution is indirect evidence that HAVE TO entered the language not only via informal *written* styles, but ultimately, via informal *spoken* styles”. The data shows that the path undertaken by *have to* in its contest with *must* was independent, simultaneously more conservative than AmE and less progressive than BrE, and this is noted by Dollinger to corroborate generalized statements about CanE characterizing it as “more conservative linguistically than the United States and Australia [and other ex-colonies]” (Chambers 1998: 253).

Chapter 9 deals with *shall* and *will*. Given the influence of the prescriptive rules enshrined in such widely used references as Lindley Murray’s *English Grammar*, it is not surprising that Dollinger should find these two modals to have been subject to high levels of awareness. CanE is noted to start conservatively with respect to ‘1st person *shall*’, but then become progressive in Stages 2 and 3, casting some doubt on the applicability of the Loyalist base theory. Dollinger stresses, however, that this finding does not necessitate rejection of the theory as a whole; rather, it “suggests the introduction of a different process for variables that operate above the level of consciousness” (p. 248).

Chapter 10 deals with the left-over items *should*, *would* and *ought to*. Dollinger’s semantic classification, as for the other modals, is somewhat unadventurous – based primarily on Coates (1983) – and not explored in detail. With *would*, Dollinger’s excuse for failing to undertake any “detailed semantic analysis” is that, like *will*, it is often difficult to discriminate senses (e.g. root willingness and intention). This problem could surely have been solved simply by the inclusion of an ‘indeterminate’ category. Dollinger discusses the development of the epistemic use of *ought to*, noting a dearth of attention to it in the literature. If, as he claims, the moribund *ought to* is dependent for its viability on its expansion into the epistemic realm, the miniscule size of the expansion confirms that the future of this modal is bleak indeed.

Among the several significant findings reported in this book one may number Dollinger’s identification of an increase in the epistemic meanings of the modals, along with a

concomitant loss of root meaning (with *may* as the significant exception). Another is the demonstration that colonial lag is not a strong influence on the behaviour of the modals. Table 11.2 on p. 276 documents the non-conservatism of LMod CanE: of the nineteen variables listed (e.g. root possibility *can* and *may*, 3rd person *shall* and *will*), four are classified as ‘conservative’, eight as ‘neutral’, and seven as ‘progressive’. Another is the data-driven ranking of possible scenarios for the origins of CanE: drift (parallel development) → loyalist base (AmE influence) → independent Canadian development → British influence (a finding which, if accurate for early CanE in general, lends slightly more credibility to Bloomfield’s account than that of Scargill).

It is unfortunate that this book is beset by a large number of distracting typographical errors and infelicities (to mention but a few instances: on p. 22, “Geikie expressed his despise for all things Canadian”; on p. 166, “despite of unfortunate gaps in the AmE data”; on p. 169, “In the present study, it will be attempted to meet several aims”; on p. 226, “thesis of root loos”). The book is nevertheless a timely and welcome addition to the literature on CanE, particularly for its real-time diachronic basis and for its use of morphosyntactic, rather than the more familiar phonological data.

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The Comment Clause in English: Syntactic Origins and Pragmatic Development. Laurel J. Brinton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, xvii + 280 pp.

Reviewed by NANCY HEDBERG*

This book is about the historical development in English of comment clauses. The author defines comment clauses as pragmatic markers that are parenthetical and that comment on the clause to which they are attached in the sense of expressing speaker attitude or stance. A pragmatic marker is “a phonologically short item that is not semantically connected to the rest of the clause but serves pragmatic or procedural purposes” (p. 1). Many pragmatic markers are single words, like *well*, *okay*, and *now*, and are often called discourse markers (e.g. Schiffrin 1987) or discourse particles. Comment clauses are clausal in nature, and have been much less studied. Chapter 1 situates comment clauses within the larger categories of sentence adverbial, disjunct and parenthetical, and argues that comment clauses should be understood as pragmatic markers.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the syntactic and semantic development of comment clauses and other pragmatic markers historically, focusing especially on controversial

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aspects of the former. Brinton argues that comment clauses, like pragmatic markers in general, follow the clines of Traugott and Dasher (2002):

Truth conditional > non-truth conditional
 Content > content/procedural > procedural meaning
 Non-subjective > subjective > intersubjective
 Scope within proposition > scope over proposition > scope over discourse

The syntactic development of pragmatic markers has been less well studied, especially comment clauses. One salient hypothesis, which Brinton ends up largely arguing against throughout the book, is the ‘matrix clauses hypothesis’ of Thompson and Mulac (1991), according to which comment clauses develop according to the following cline:

Matrix clause > parenthetical disjunct > pragmatic marker.

There are various syntactic sources of comment clauses, including first, second, and third person declaratives (*(I) say, I mean, (you) see, I gather, I find*), matrix imperatives (*look, see*), adverbial/relative clauses (*if you will, as it were*), and nominal relative clauses (*what is more, what else*). The development of each of these is discussed in detail as a case study in the seven chapters (chs. 4–10) that make up the main body of the book. Each chapter contains a wealth of details and examples of the use of each form and its variants from each historical period.

Before proceeding with the case studies, ch. 3 discusses the historical development of comment clauses in relation to grammaticalization theory. The definition of Hopper and Traugott (2003: 18) states that grammaticalization is “the change whereby lexical items and constructions come to serve grammatical functions”. Brinton explores whether comment clauses should instead or additionally be understood as undergoing alternative processes, such as ‘pragmaticalization’, ‘lexicalization’ or ‘idiomatization’, and argues that comment clauses do undergo grammaticalization because their development exemplifies features such as decategorialization (in this case, often correlated with the loss of *that*, whereby they become frozen clauses that can appear in a variety of syntactic positions); semantic bleaching (loss of referential meaning); acquisition of discourse, pragmatic and politeness features; increased subjectivity; and sometimes phonological attrition.

As mentioned, the body of the book is taken up with case studies of the development of some interesting comment clauses, which have been little studied for the most part. The data is taken from a variety of corpora, including the *Oxford English Dictionary* quotation bank for all periods, and additional written corpora from five periods: Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English, Late Modern English, and Present Day English. For Present Day English, Brinton examined corpora of British, American, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand English and offers some comparisons between the different varieties. She does not include much comparison between synchronic varieties, but I believe the volume will still be of interest to researchers in world Englishes because it demonstrates clearly how comment clauses can arise in the development of a variety.

The first case study is discussed in ch. 4, which examines comment clauses with *say*. *Say* with alternatives *let's say* and *I say* represents the comment clause with the widest variety of distinguishable meanings and syntactic categories. Brinton identifies eight meanings and sub-meanings here, including *say*¹ meaning ‘suppose, assume’, and *say*⁴ meaning ‘tell me/us’, both of which can be analysed as imperative verbs; *say*² meaning ‘about,

approximately' and *say*³ meaning 'for example, suppose, let's imagine' (both of which can usually be replaced by 'like' in youthful contemporary spoken English) and which can be analysed as adverbs; *say*^{5a}, used to express a mild emotional response, *say*^{5b}, used to call or evoke the hearer's attention, and *I say*^{6b} used to express emphasis that the speaker has chosen certain words, all of which can perhaps be analysed as interjections; and finally *I say*^{6a} involves a subject plus a main verb and is used again to clarify or explain the use of words. These different senses arose at different times in English, with at least *say*⁴ and *say*⁶ dating back to the Middle English period. Brinton concludes that *say*¹⁻⁴ originate as second-person imperative verbs with clausal complements, with 'let's say' developing later from some of these forms; and that *say*⁵⁻⁶ originate from matrix 'I say' with clausal or nominal complements—although the matrix clause hypothesis is still problematic here because only 18 per cent of the 180 Middle English examples of *I say* occurred with a complement clause.

Chapter 5 examines the very frequent *I mean*. Schiffrin (1987) distinguishes two full meanings of 'I mean', which Brinton identifies as 'to intend [to do something]' (which is rare in present day English), and 'to signify, to intend to convey a certain sense.' She also recognizes four extended meanings: appositional uses of exemplification or repair (recent), or a reformulation or a greater degree of explicitness (older); causal meanings—'I'm saying this because. . .' (recent); expressions of speaker attitude (older); and interpersonal meaning (older). Brinton argues that parenthetical uses of *I mean* arise neither from a full matrix clause construction (*I mean (that) S*), usage of which has always been rare, nor from an adverbial/relative structure (*{as/to/which} I mean*), but rather from *I mean* + phrasal category (NP, VP, AP, PP, AdvP).

Chapter 6 looks at *see*. *You see* has been found to be more frequent in British than in American English, and Brinton's corpus findings support this. It is used to claim addressee attention and to mark transitions between arguments. Parenthetical *as you see* (dating from 1300 in the OED), *so you see* (dating from 1626), and *see* (dating from 1952) are less frequent. Brinton identifies the origins of *see* in parenthetical imperative forms *see here* and *see now*, which date from the 16th century, and identifies the origin of *you see* in *as you see*.

Chapter 7 focuses on *if you will* and *as it were*. These have much the same metalinguistic meaning. This sense of *as it were* dates back to Middle English and was possibly influenced by the Latin *quasi*, while this sense of *if you will* is much more recent. *If you will* appears to be more grammaticalized in Canadian English than in British English, since it is used parenthetically proportionately more frequently in the Canadian corpus.

Chapter 8 discusses *look*, which has imperative origins and occurs in several variants, including *look here* and *lookit*. *Look* and its variants as parentheticals primarily have an attention getting function rather than a concrete perceptual meaning. Non-concrete usage of *look* alone extends only back to the Early Modern English period.

Chapter 9 looks at *what's more* and *what else*. The former dates back only to the end of the 16th century, and along with *which is more* has its origins as a relative clause modifying a clausal element. *What else* originates as an elliptical interrogative construction, and dates only to Early Modern English as a comment clause.

Chapter 10 compares *I gather* and *I find*, and situates them in the class of epistemic parentheticals, such as *I think* and *I guess*. Brinton reports that *I gather that* is more frequent than *I gather* \emptyset in Canadian English; while the opposite is true in British English.

I find in general is much more frequent than *I gather*, but parenthetical uses are less frequent. Brinton argues that *I find* originates in the parenthetical *as I find*, which dates from Middle English, rather than from a matrix clause. The parenthetical *I gather*, however, likely originates from a matrix clause. *I find* has conveyed a non-concrete meaning when functioning as comment clauses since Middle English, but *I gather* as a comment clause only dates to the late 19th century.

The concluding chapter of the book summarizes the findings, especially regarding conclusions about the dating and syntactic sources of the different comment clauses discussed, and how their development exhibits features of grammaticalization. The author concludes that construction grammar (e.g. Kay 1997) should be a good syntactic framework for the further study of comment clauses, since such clauses appear to be constructions *par excellence*—that is, conventionalized chunks of language with identifiable syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features, that have autonomy and can fruitfully be studied as a package.

This book fills a gap in the study of pragmatic markers, and is thorough and detailed in its coverage. I highly recommend it.

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Conversations with Mexican American Writers. Languages and Literatures in the Borderlands. Elisabeth Mermann-Jozwiak and Nancy Sullivan. Jackson (eds.). Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2009, xxv + 161 pp.

Reviewed by K. RAJAGOPALAN*

This is an absolutely fascinating book – insightful, thought-provoking, and penetrating, while at times also profoundly poignant and even unsettling. It is composed of nine one-on-one (mostly structured) interviews with leading contemporary North-American writers of Mexican ancestry – Montserrat Fontes, Diana Montejano, Pat Mora, Benjamin Aline Sáenz, Sandra Cisneros, Helena María Viramontes, Dagoberto Gilb, Norma Elía Cantú and Denise Chávez (in the same order as their interviews are presented in the book).

But the book's appeal is, beyond the shadow of a doubt, universal. As an ex-pat Indian who has made Brazil his home, after having studied in India, the UK, as well as the USA, the present reviewer could not help feeling directly involved by some of the observations made by the interviewees and also feeling a sense of deep empathy with their sufferings and crises of identity, especially as they touch on issues like their confessing to being

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constantly haunted by an eerie sense of ‘unbelongingness’ to any one language or culture, interspersed with the equally strange sense of ‘feeling at home’ in a multiplicity of alien milieux. But there are plenty of lessons to learn on how each of these creative writers – by definition, persons who are highly imaginative and endowed with a heightened sensibility – have managed to cope with their feelings of uprootedness, largely stemming from years of discrimination, veiled or otherwise, resulting in their being made to feel unwelcome ‘foreigners’ in their own homeland.

I was particularly struck by the struggles these writers go through as they ponder the way others – their own fellow citizens – designate them or the way they identify themselves. When, not so long ago, the black community in the US demanded that they be referred to as African Americans instead of blacks, they were asking to be considered US citizens, different from Scottish Americans, Italian Americans, Irish Americans and so forth, but on a par. It had to do with the politics of identity and representation. But when Montejano emphatically concludes her interview with the claim “I am not a hyphenated American. I am fifth generation Tejana; I am very proud of it. Go tell me what is American anymore?” (pp. 33–4), it made me wonder once again, as I have done in the past, whether Shakespeare wasn’t getting it all muddled up when he wrote “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet”! On his part, Sáenz is indignant about the sheer metonymic arrogance he senses (and, on this, many Latin Americans would readily concur) in the politically sensitive use of the synecdoche that substitutes America for the United States when he says: “It’s so problematic, so ingrained in me that the United States is called ‘America’, a term that we have absolutely misappropriated [. . .] I like to think of America in a more pan-American way, though that’s not the way that we view it in the United States” (italics mine) (p. 55). I must hasten to add though that I find some tension here (especially as regards the italicized, presumably *exclusive we* in opposition to *I*), when a little later, he affirms “I never considered myself an American. I was a Chicano, I was a Mexican American! Then I went to Europe, and I never felt so American!” What clearly comes out of these snippets and several others in the book is the realization on the part of many of the writers of the shifting and constantly mutating sense of their own identity and their struggles to come to terms with it. As Sáenz puts it himself, “It is always dialectical; it makes sense in a particular context and in relationship to your environment” (p. 55)

‘Sensitive also to the exigencies of the political climate existing at any given moment,’ he might have added, especially in view of the fact that what we are looking at here is a question of the politics of self-representation. One begins to wonder at this stage if this politics of self-identification and the designation of others as ‘part of them’ or ‘one of us’ (whether inclusive or exclusive) has relevance for other research areas, such as for instance the way we contemplate the spread of English worldwide and, in particular, our continued reference not only to Australian English, Jamaican English and the like, but also to other ‘hyphenated varieties’ such as Indian English, Kenyan English, Singaporean English and so forth. Would it not be to the liking of many of the users of such varieties to be considered just speakers of English (a world English – in the singular, if you insist), rather than be saddled with a qualifier that, despite all denials to the contrary, only reminds them of their subaltern, peripheral status as citizens of this transnational linguistic polity? The answer is far from simple, as the divergent stances taken up by the interviewees clearly indicate.

This pervasive uncertainty is also reflected in the way these writers refer to their own linguistic baggage. Terms like Caló, Tex-Mex, Spanglish keep cropping up as do the (often) idiosyncratic ways in which each one of the interviewees goes about defining them. Sáenz

is happy calling himself a bilingual speaker and referring to Spanish as a “holy language” (p. 58), while Viramontes admits to the charge of her limited competency in Spanish, and Gilb evinces no qualms about admitting to feeling more ‘Western’ or at ease with his ‘Anglo friends’ from childhood days, and confessing “[...] I look like a Mexican, but I don’t feel like one.” Surely Mexican American writers do not form an ethnic or linguistic monolith. Also, I cannot help feeling that some stereotypical views about languages and their speakers also creep in occasionally, unbeknownst to the interviewees, as when many of them consider Spanish the language of passion in opposition to ‘dry and prosaic’ English – the hot-blooded Latino versus the sober, cool-headed Anglo and stiff upper-lipped Englishman!

Much the same uncertainty is further illustrated by what Montejano calls ‘braiding languages’ – a metaphor, I think, that captures with admirable elegance what goes on in a true bilingual’s ease and unconcern with sliding between languages. Once again, exactly what to call it is a matter of disagreement, although the phenomenon itself is present in the writings of many Mexican American writers (mind you, I am simply following the lead of the editors in so designating them). Braiding is not straightforward code-switching; it is more like changing horses in mid-stream and getting away with it! Cantú calls it ‘Spanglish’ and approaches it armed with the concept of syncretism of language and culture, but ends up defining it along much the same lines as linguists define pidgins and creoles. She considers Spanish as a basilect and other languages (besides English, French, German, and even Nahuatl) as contributing influences, though she refuses to consider it a hybrid. Cantú rejects the wider biological metaphor and prefers a botanical one of grafting (p. 120), whereby the different traditions continue producing different fruits. Mora sees it as a problem of the high levels of intermixing forcing language choices.

But, through the course of each of these interviews, there are also moments of intense pathos, when the interviewees reminisce about the brutality with which Spanish was suppressed by their school teachers, especially nuns, as many of them were brought up as Catholics and went to schools run by nuns – of “the Order of the Unhappy Housewives of God,” as Cisneros (p. 70) resentfully recalls them. Viramontes says that “[...] there wasn’t so much Spanish because we were told not to speak Spanish . . . We were punished” (p. 88). Cantú recalls, “The racism in San Antonio was so blatant and so severe that it literally erased people’s language. There is a whole generation, my generation actually, who would not speak Spanish to their children for fear that they would be punished, discriminated against – things that happened to *them*” (p. 121).

But out of the trauma experienced by many of these talented writers in their formative years, there also sprouts a spirit of defiance, of resistance, which testifies to the indomitable spirit of man against forces of oppression. This comes out in all sorts of ways, some least expected as when, as professional writers, they often have to resist the demand from their publishers to italicize all the Spanish words that occur in their texts on the grounds that those words are simply not ‘foreign’ to them.

The book brings out the role of the border between Mexico and the United States both as a metaphor and as a concrete reality in the daily lives of millions of Mexican Americans. Many people across the world, like this reviewer, are sure to relate to many of their traumas, as well as trials and tribulations. The book is a veritable intellectual treat as well as a source of inspiration.