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Language Policy and Identity Politics in the United States by Ronald Schmidt, Sr. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000, 282 pp.

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In his influential study on the rise and spread of nationalism, Anderson (1991) astutely noted that nations are "imagined communities" and that in modern times these communities are "conceived in language, not in blood" (p. 145). Indeed, the decision about which language or languages the nation should be conceived in, or, more often, whether there should be more than one language, can be a source of a heated conflict and public unrest. Ronald Schmidt's *Language Policy and Identity Politics in the United States* offers a comprehensive discussion of the language policy conflict in the United States, where in the past three decades language has emerged as a highly emotional and volatile political issue. The text has two main goals: to examine all sides of the U.S. language policy conflict and to offer an approach to language policy which could both meet the criteria of justice for language minority members and ensure the common good for the whole country. The author also has an additional aim: to demonstrate that the conflict over language "is not about language as such but about what kind of political community we are and wish to be" (p.183). From the perspective of applied linguistics, we can also add that this study focuses on the role of language in the construction of national identity.

The book opens with an introduction and is then divided into three sections. The introduction examines the premises of two conflicting approaches to U.S. language policy: linguistic assimilationism and linguistic pluralism. The ranks of assimilationists include the supporters of the English Only and anti-bilingual education movements, such as well-known writer Richard Rodriguez or California billionaire Ron Unz, who spearheaded California's anti-bilingual education bill, Proposition 227. Assimilationists seek policies that will ensure the status of English as the country's only official language. In contrast, pluralists, among them many prominent linguists, educators, and supporters of the English Plus movement, favor using the state to enhance the status and presence of minority languages.

The first section, entitled "The Issues and the Context," sets the background for the discussion and traces the evolution of the U.S. language policy debates over the last three decades. Chapter 1, "Language Policies in Conflict: An Overview," outlines three key areas of disagreement between assimilationists and pluralists: (1) educational policy for language minority children, (2) access to civil

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and political rights by non-English-speakers, and (3) the establishment of English as the sole official language of the United States and its political subdivisions. Chapter 2, "Making Sense of Language Policy Conflict," offers a theoretical framework for understanding the nature of language policy conflict and for evaluating claims made by the two sides in the debate. The chapter illuminates the fact that controversies over language are grounded in identity politics, as language policy can be used to facilitate or deny access to valued goods and services in the political economy or to allocate symbolic and material benefits differentially. The chapter also discusses four language policy approaches adopted in different states: domination/exclusion, assimilation, pluralism, and confederation. Domination/exclusion, an approach practiced by the British in their Asian and African colonies, and, more recently, by apartheid South Africa, prevents certain minority groups from learning the language of power and, therefore, from participating in the public domain. Assimilation, an approach assumed in a number of countries, including France, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, and the U.S., aims to eliminate linguistic controversy by encouraging all immigrants and linguistic minorities to shift toward the dominant language. Pluralism, adopted in Canada, Australia, or Nigeria, supports the use of more than one language within common territories of the state. Finally, confederation, an approach taken in Switzerland, Belgium, and India, is based on the assumption that true equality between languages and ethnolinguistic groups can be achieved only if each group can have their own territory in which their language can be dominant.

Chapter 3, "The Social Foundations of U.S. Language Politics," shifts the focus to the United States and describes the preconditions for political conflict in contemporary American society: language diversity, contact, and competition. The chapter also offers a brief discussion of issues of national identity and national unity, which makes clear that while all newcomers may become Americans, some Americans are perceived as (to paraphrase Orwell) more American than others, and thus become "more equal" than others. This discussion is particularly timely in the context of recent debates in the fields of applied linguistics and bilingualism on the nature of links between language and national identity (May, 2001; Pavlenko, 2001; Piller, 2001), as it offers a comprehensive view of sociopolitical and sociohistoric links between languages and identities conceived in different contexts at different points in time.

The second section, "The Arguments," offers an extremely clear and lucid analysis of the competing arguments offered by the two parties in the policy debate. Chapter 4, "Historical Perspectives on U.S. Identity Politics and Ethnolinguistic Inequality," examines two competing historical narratives of the origins of U.S. linguistic diversity. Linguistic assimilationists, in their attempts to understand present language policy problems, view the past exclusively through the lens of the myth of voluntary immigration as a search for freedom, pointing out that throughout history the only path to social mobility in the U.S. has been linguistic acculturation into English. In turn, linguistic pluralists emphasize that many

people of color did not originally become members of U.S. society through immigration and that they have experienced racial oppression throughout much of U.S. history. The oppressive efforts focused, in particular, on disparaging or eradicating the material and symbolic cultures of these groups, including their languages. Chapter 5, "Language Policy and Equality," compares another set of competing narratives: pluralists' and assimilationists' views on the relationship between language policy and social inequality. Pluralists believe that social inequality derives from unequal treatment of minority languages and cultures and argue for public acceptance and recognition of these languages in a wide range of public spaces, which include public schools, voting booths, and the workplace. In turn, assimilationists argue that bilingual education segregates rather than empowers learners, keeping them in subordinated positions, and that the only true path to greater social equality is offered through English immersion. Chapter 6, "Language Policy and National Unity," examines the pluralists' and assimilationists' arguments with regard to the relationship between language policy and national unity. The author demonstrates that the assimilationists' conception of U.S. society as monolingual leads them to view language policy as an instrument for making Americans out of recent immigrants and members of linguistic minorities. On the other hand, pluralists' conception of a multiethnic and multilingual United States leads them to argue that linguistic and cultural diversity may only strengthen the country, especially in a period of increasing gloabalization such as ours. This clear explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of the pluralists' and assimilationists' arguments is invaluable to all those engaged in language education and curriculum development, and in particular to ESL and bilingual education professionals. Schmidt's arguments raise awareness of ways in which class and race mediate the perception of bilingualism, making it a desirable—albeit not always necessary—attribute of upper- and middle-class children, who are required and encouraged to engage in foreign language learning, and an undesirable attribute of working class minority and immigrant children, who are discouraged from receiving any kind of bilingual education other than a transitional one.

Finally, the third section, "Critique and Reform," rather than taking sides, attempts to recast the debate and point it toward a productive new direction for language policy. Chapter 7, "Flaws at Every Turn," offers a comprehensive critique of alternatives offered by assimilationists and pluralists, as well as by those who suggest the possibility of a linguistic confederation. Subsequently, Chapter 8, "Pluralistic Integration," suggests an approach to U.S. language policy that appears most viable to the author at the present moment. Schmidt notes that while assimilationists ignore the fact that history has constituted the U.S. as a multilingual state, not only through immigration but also through conquest and annexation, pluralists must face the fact that, in the context of English hegemony, bilingual programs are not likely to result in both social equality and first language maintenance (an outcome which defeats one of the pluralists' primary goals). What is required, then, is a language policy that aims for universal bilingualism—sup-

porting the learning of English by non-English speakers while simultaneously aiming at fluency in two languages for all public school students. While many Americans intuitively support this view, Schmidt's book offers invaluable sociopolitical arguments that can strengthen the position of language educators who feel that bi- and multilingualism functions as the primary means to ensure intercultural communication in contemporary global society.

Deeply steeped in a tradition of reading books written by linguists for other linguists, I found a text written by a political scientist, with an in-depth understanding of linguistic phenomena, extremely refreshing. Throughout my graduate school years, I remember working through a myriad of linguistics texts which successfully managed to make the already complex content matter even more abstruse and obscure. In contrast, Schmidt manages to engage the reader and to elucidate and illustrate complex issues of language policy and planning with unmatched analytical precision. The comprehensiveness and depth of the analysis, the convincing and well-argued proposals, and, most importantly, the author's lucid writing style make the text appropriate for adoption not only in graduate but also in undergraduate classes. These classes could be in a variety of disciplines as *Language Policy and Identity Politics in the United States* addresses a very large audience of linguists, educators, policy makers, and scholars in history and ethnic and cultural studies. Placing the U.S. conflict over language in theoretical, comparative, historical, and social contexts, the author compellingly argues that what appears to be a language policy conflict is, in reality, a much larger debate that deals with the appropriate role of non-English languages and cultures in U.S. society, and thus concerns everyone. The discussion is thoroughly grounded in a number of literatures and demographic and census data and offers the most comprehensive and clear analysis of U.S. language policy to date. The importance of the book has already been recognized by the American Political Science Association, which awarded the author a "best book award" from the Section on Race, Ethnicity, and Politics. Now, this important text has to find its way to all those interested in language policy, language planning, language conflict, and language education.

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ated as "competent" by their mentors and future colleagues as they become licensed to practice medicine. Atkinson focuses on the ways in which doing rounds contributes to the particulars of sequential practice *à la* CA as it is situated within larger situational and rhetorical contexts. Each occasion of doing rounds is a sequentially organized activity that is simultaneously shown to be negotiated with reference to authority within the social structure of the encounter. This study examines how, in providing medical care, clinical decisions are made through presenting the particular details of the individual case. Atkinson's chapter is exemplary in demonstrating the ways in which ethnography, rhetoric, and CA provide key insight into the practices of members of the medical community, thus setting the tone not only for this section but for the whole volume.

In the remainder of the first section, Frederick Erickson's chapter, "Appropriation of voice and presentation of self as a fellow physician: Aspects of a discourse of apprenticeship in medicine," looks at the socializing function of case presentation between intern and mentor. Similarly, Cook-Gumperz and Messerman's chapter, "Local identities and institutional practices: Constructing the record of professional collaboration," examines the management of identity through organizational record-keeping as a face-to-face phenomenon. Finally, Aaron Cicourel, in his chapter entitled "The interaction of cognitive and cultural models in health care delivery," discusses the issues of medical expertise in relation to providing medical care in a teaching hospital. As is evident from these brief descriptions, the first section provides strong thematic coherence and insight into the kinds of arguments that variations in methodological choices make for analytic observation.

The second section, "Mediation, management and social care," is much broader than the first and lacks some of the internal cohesion provided by the thematic focus that medical discourse provides. The editors' section introduction, however, provides continuity by pointing out what the articles have in common: a focus on negotiated identities and roles as mediated action drawing heavily from the work of Erving Goffman. Without this introduction, the theoretical commonalities would be much less discernable. Two chapters are dedicated to social work and the negotiated identity between the designations *professional* versus *institutional* settings. Bredmar and Linell's chapter, "Reconfirming normality: The constitution of reassurance in talks between midwives and expectant mothers," deals with midwifery-client relations. Hall, Sarangi, and Slembrouck in their chapter, "The legitimation of the client and the profession: Identities and roles in social work discourse," offer reflections on the construction of role in the client and professional discourse of social workers.

Of particular interest is David Greatbatch and Robert Dingwall's chapter, "Professional neutralism in family mediation." Greatbatch and Dingwall discuss mediator *neutralism*, a stance taken by mediators when negotiating with clients in which mediators do not commit to particular points of view and attempt to curtail further discussion on certain topics. In contrast to the more recognizable term *neutrality*, neutralism refers to the interactional devices which the mediator engages

to remain actively impartial or at least be perceived as such by the disputants. Using CA as the analytic framework, Greatbach and Dingwall examine ways in which mediators enact and depart from neutralism within mediation settings. The authors conclude that neutralism is a discursive construct employed by mediators to reflect interactional caution during mediation sessions. As with other discursive resources, neutralism can be used as a strategic device to achieve some goal within the mediation itself. While neutralism is prominent in mediation work, the authors assert that this device is by no means unique to the mediation setting as it is routinely practiced in medical, legal, and other social service settings as well. A specific look at mediator practices, however, provides insight into the more general phenomenon of managing bias in highly sensitive settings.

The third and final section, "Methodological debates," focuses particularly on how methods shape studies in institutional settings. Contributors such as David Silverman, "Warriors or collaborators: Reworking methodological controversies in the study of institutional interaction," and John Gumperz, "On interactional sociolinguistic method," debate the relative merit of CA and interactional sociolinguistics as particularly important methods that contribute to workplace studies. Tony Hak's chapter, "'Text' and 'con-text': Talk bias in studies of health care work," clearly offers the most divergent perspective of the otherwise talk-in-interaction emphasis of this section and of the volume as a whole. Rejecting the overemphasis on recording and analyzing talk from workplace settings, Hak asserts a critical discursive perspective, calling on scholars of institutional discourse to recontextualize talk within the larger practices of the institutions themselves. Hak points to Sudnow's early ethnomethodological ethnography of dying in hospital settings, *Passing On* (1967), and Foucault's *Birth of the Clinic* (1973) as exemplars of his criticism. Similar to the position of the critical discourse analyst Michael Billig in the Schegloff-Billig debate on CA and Critical Discourse Analysis in *Discourse & Society* (1999, pp.543-582), Hak claims that any recording of talk is, necessarily, abstracted precisely because it is removed from the unseen features of discourse that serve to support and produce a particular instance of talk. The much-studied doctor-patient medical interview, for example, is not isolated simply because there are usually no other medical staff present. Rather, it is isolated because the interview is one stage along the whole process of going to the clinic, including interacting with administrative, nursing, and pharmaceutical staffs. By removing the interview from the larger context of the experience of going to the clinic, certain features of discourse are highlighted and emphasized while the larger context is obscured. While Hak's chapter is the most divergent both methodologically and analytically, editors Sarangi and Roberts included it in this volume presumably to give a full range of intellectual traditions that offer insight into workplace studies. After reading Hak's criticisms, it is easy to see that much of the work in talk-in-interaction, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics rely on a fairly objectivist and realist epistemological stance. In this sense, Hak champions an interpretive and hermeneutic tradition that challenges the objectivist implications

of the other studies in this volume. In an interesting side note, Hak acknowledges the influence of Dorothy Smith's feminist sociology, *The Everyday World as Problematic* (1987), which asserts that workplace and institutional studies can remain part of the shift away from functional structuralism to a more critical and eclectic position within the social sciences. This sidenote helps to contextualize Hak's position within the volume as not only methodologically and theoretically challenging to the other pieces but also foreshadows the editors' concluding remarks about how scholars can actively engage in social change through their scholarship. In this respect, Hak's piece serves as the ideal transition between this section's focus on theoretical and methodological concerns and the final chapter's call-to-action.

In the last chapter, "Hybridity in gatekeeping discourse," the editors return to summarize the findings of the chapters as a whole and discuss the theoretical and research implications offered by the various contributions. Paying special attention to the practical and ethical impact researchers working in institutional discourse can have within workplace sites, Roberts and Sarangi advocate that scholars make institutional studies in discourse relevant to the professionals and institutions which they study. According to Roberts and Sarangi, the next phase that scholars of institutional and workplace studies must enter is the problem of application. That is, the editors encourage scholarship in workplace studies as a form of "engaged scholarship" wherein academic discourse is employed for social-structural change and improvement within the workplaces that are studied. This reflexive component of the volume challenges academic researchers to consider a wide range of ethical obligations to the environments in which they work by making empirical and theoretical work potentially understandable and, hopefully, applicable within the workplace. The strength of the conclusion contextualizes disparate points of view without simplifying the complexity of issues in combining methods and perspectives. Overall, this volume is, as its back cover suggests, an important collection for students and scholars alike interested in the developing field of workplace discourse.

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