BOOK REVIEWS


Reviewed by COLIN BAKER

Across the social sciences, there are scores of books on research methodology. Some are written from a particular epistemological position; others promote mixed methods that include experiments and surveys, ethnomethodological and action research, case studies and biography.

Across bilingualism and multilingualism, there are even more books derived from inside disciplines such as linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and education, but also from politics, history, child psychology, cognitive psychology and, increasingly, neuroscience. A few books are multidisciplinary; very few inter-disciplinary.

A book that combines research methodology and bilingualism/multilingualism needs to have a value addedness that transcends both traditions. It cannot just repeat advice about research strategies and research tools that are present in research-methods books. Nor can it narrowly discuss research on bilingualism and multilingualism. It has to connect the two, such that both are exalted. It has to integrate so that researchers on bilingualism and multilingualism are truly educated well beyond the standard textbooks on research methodology and bilingualism. Such a book has to have two integrated subjects and no predicates. It has to avoid parading one tradition, with the other as an annex. Does this book succeed in integration?

There are 22 chapters, with a fairly comprehensive and detailed coverage of different research methodologies in bilingualism. It concentrates on three perspectives, namely linguistic, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistic. Some research traditions that surround bilingual education, for example, are not mentioned. In particular, the action research tradition that has become so strong education, involving intervention and change, is absent. This serves to make the book strong on theory and pure research; weak on bilingualism in practice – where research is also crucial for evidence-informed policy and provision.

Some chapters concern standard-research-methodological topics such as sampling, experimental design, interviewing, brain imaging, questionnaires, transcription, statistical analysis, ethnography, critical discourse analysis, project development and dissemination. Other chapters are closer to the subject...
matter of bilingualism and multilingualism: types and sources of bilingual data, bilingual speech, corpora, and resources for research on bilingualism and multilingualism. Many chapters managed to integrate successfully both research methodology and bilingualism, particularly in this latter list. Since most chapters are written by people expert in bilingualism research, then the synthesis between methodology and bilingualism and multilingualism is well achieved. Thus the book is cogent, coherent and cohesive in synthesising two traditions.

One chapter where this synthesis is not so well achieved concerns quantification and statistics (Chapter 12). The start of the chapter provides details about basic statistical analysis while the latter part of the chapter talks about corpus analysis and CHILDES. The two traditions are not really connected in the structure or style of that chapter. Another weak area of the book is Part Three – only 18 pages long – that provides some very broad research questions, brief details about attending conferences, writing for journals, and a list of resources without sufficient explanation and annotation.

But these criticisms are relatively minor. Overall, the vast majority are sound and strong chapters, with expert researchers not only indicating their methodological approaches but also revealing their expertise and experience in the actual conduct of research. In this sense, the book is very valuable in providing highly experienced insider knowledge about research approaches in bilingualism. This alone makes it a worthwhile contribution to the literature. For example, the chapter by Elizabeth Lanza on selecting individuals, groups and sites, that by Judith Kroll et al. on laboratory designs, and a particularly modern and excellent chapter by Jubin Abutalebi and Pasquale Rosa on imaging technologies, demonstrate how research on bilingualism is best understood by understanding the research methodologies that underpin such research. Indeed, a critical and balanced view of bilingualism and multilingualism (too often absent from many ‘committed’ authors) depends on a critical engagement with the research methodologies that underpin a piece of research. This book accomplishes something quite unique, in providing a background knowledge and understanding of research methodologies used in studies of bilingualism and multilingualism.

In conclusion, this book succeeds in doing what the novelist E. M. Forster in Howard’s End (1910) said about connecting. ‘Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted . . . live in fragments no longer’.

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In looking at the position of learners on the Scottish Gaelic scene, Alasdair MacCaluim focuses on learners’ potential role in reversing the shift from Gaelic to English in Scotland. A significant body of successful learners could expand spheres of Gaelic use, create a market for Gaelic-language products, and even foster intergenerational language transmission. Unfortunately no such body has emerged. MacCaluim rightly considers it a matter of serious concern that second-language learning (of Gaelic as of other languages) is so seldom successful and that most learners do not achieve fluency, even after years of effort. He wants to know why people try to learn Gaelic, how they go about it, why most fail to become fluent, and what can be done to help learners achieve better results. To this end he looks in successive chapters of his book at the infrastructure for Gaelic learning, the social identity of Gaelic learners, and the replies supplied by learners to an extensive questionnaire about their background, motivation, level of achievement, use of Gaelic, and opinions on Gaelic.

MacCaluim’s perspective is shaped by recognition that Scottish Gaelic has long been a receding language and can now be considered endangered. Issues of language learning are very different when the target language is a relatively seldom studied language used more often in the private sphere than in the public sphere as opposed to a widely studied and widely used language like French or German. No national government promotes the teaching and learning of Gaelic and no country-wide equivalent of the Alliance Française or the Goethe Institute offers plentiful courses on a regular basis. There are few areas where aspiring learners can be sent with a guarantee that they will hear Gaelic used as the routine daily language of local people. Learners are important to Gaelic in a way they are not to French or German. As the number of home-transmission Gaelic speakers declines, fluent learners become not merely additional users of the language and a pool of Gaelic consumers, but also potential transmitters. Without recruitment from the ranks of learners, the outlook for the future of Gaelic is poor. Against this backdrop some of the familiar weaknesses of second-language teaching and learning become serious indeed: unreliable provision of graded-level courses, teachers without specialized training in teaching their native language as a second language, inadequate teaching materials, little provision for exposure to the target language outside the classroom. MacCaluim considers all of these problems in the course of his study and concludes that many of the most basic underpinnings of effective teaching and learning are lacking in the case of Gaelic – e.g. central planning that could ensure reliable provision of various kinds of courses geared to different learner levels, up-to-date and effective teaching materials, and scholarship funding for aspiring learners.
MacCaluim locates Gaelic at stage seven of Fishman’s GIDS scale of language shift (1991: 87–109). At this stage a socially and ethnically integrated population still exists, but its members have not for the most part transmitted the language to the next generation. In the case of Gaelic, as in a good many others, initiatives at the high end of the GIDS scale, especially television broadcasting, have outrun efforts to support Gaelic at the lower and in Fishman’s view more fundamental end. The allure of television as a visible (literally) marker of modernity has been irresistible to many minority-language revitalization efforts, including the Gaelic effort, but its actual value in that role is seldom assessed. Investigation of the effectiveness of Gaelic television in promoting greater Gaelic use among Gaelic-speaking viewers and in attracting learners from among English-speaking viewers is one of many research projects the lack of which MacCaluim notes and the undertaking of which he recommends.

The chapter on ‘The Gaelic learning infrastructure’ is instructive reading for anyone interested in improving the position of small indigenous languages that are receding under pressure from a wider-currency language. MacCaluim has many advances to report for Gaelic:

- more courses on offer;
- more and better textbooks and reference works available;
- increases in radio and television programming;
- immersion education introduced in the schools;
- lists and blogs appearing on the internet.

But at the same time he details major weaknesses that have proved dismayingly persistent in these same spheres:

- for Gaelic courses – gaps in geographical availability, lack of coordination in learning levels, unreliability of provision;
- for textbooks and other teaching materials – belated replacement of traditional rural-based focus by modern urban-based focus, slow adoption of computer-assisted language learning, excessive cost;
- for broadcasting – gaps in reception areas, insufficient programming, forms of delivery that require special reception devices;
- for most Gaelic-medium school programs – Gaelic restricted to certain classrooms rather than used across the school as a whole; and
- for adult immersion education – high costs and lack of scholarship support.

The greatest overall weakness, apart from reliable funding, is lack of oversight and coordination at a high administrative and policy-making level; without it, such funding as is available tends to be ineffectively expended.

Even where ‘large’ languages are concerned, the reception learners receive from native speakers is various; a critical reception is typical in some countries, a more appreciative reception in others. Once again the issue is rather different in the case of receding languages, since they have often come to be used primarily in the private sphere, serving both as a symbol of identity and as an index of
solidarity and intimacy. ‘Ownership’ of the language can be an issue in Highland Scotland; learners who can not claim birthright membership in a local Gaelic-speaking community are sometimes rebuffed when they try to use what Gaelic they have learned with native speakers. Beyond whatever resistance native speakers may feel to using a language of solidarity with strangers, there is also the fact that native Gaelic speakers are at the same time fluent English speakers, so that a fumbling Gaelic conversation with non-native learners is bound to feel like an entirely unnecessary impediment to communication. MacCaluim points to the inevitability of growing tension in coming years about who qualifies as a ‘Gael’. While traditional transmission falls off and the number of English-only young people from Gaelic-speaking families rises, the effects of Gaelic-medium education will be seen in an increased presence of fluent speakers from non-Gaelic-speaking families; resolving the resulting tensions will be difficult. For the present he points to the value of adult learners as consciousness raisers and as advocates both for the Gaelic language in general and for more and better educational provision.

The extensive questionnaire survey that forms the basis of the final chapter of MacCaluim’s book was administered in 1988–89 to a population that included members of the Gaelic learners’ organization CLI, participants in Gaelic immersion courses, and students studying Gaelic at three Scottish universities, with a yield of 643 responses. Discouraging from the point of view of RLS was the relatively mature age at which most individuals had taken up the study of Gaelic. Respondents who were raising children, or were young enough to anticipate raising children, were highly positive about Gaelic-medium education, but their numbers were few. General attitudes towards Gaelic were gratifyingly favorable, but a considerable risk of thwarted aspirations appeared in the disparity between respondents’ avowed expectations of achieving fluency and their frequently long periods of study without attaining that result.

Authors are often much better at saying what is wrong with the institutions or policies they are criticizing than at offering suggestions for improvement. MacCaluim’s book abounds in practical suggestions for improving the position of Gaelic; it could serve as a primer for a central administrative body charged with that task, if only there were such a body. Where the needs of learners in particular are concerned he urges the adoption of successful initiatives already undertaken in Wales, such as community newspapers and community social centers for the indigenous language, the development of a system of intensive language teaching based on Israel’s Ulpan model, and the placement of adult learners’ officers in various parts of the country. A certification scheme for Gaelic tutors, greater allocation of funds to those organizations with the clearest link to acquisition and transmission of Gaelic, and the setting up of a coordinated strategy for Gaelic learners are among his many other useful recommendations.

This is an overdue study, in view of the extent to which learners represent a body of positive opinion toward Gaelic and a potential source of Gaelic promotion.
and transmission. It is also a readable and constructively critical work that deserves the attention not only of policy makers and Gaelic language supporters in Scotland but also of readers interested in the challenges that effective minority-language support presents. It is marred only by an almost useless table of contents (six bare chapter titles, no section headers) and a weak index.

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Recent years have witnessed renewed interest in the topic of new-dialect formation. This interest has been spurred in part by the principles set out in Trudgill’s (2004) three-stage model of the development of New Zealand English (NZE): rudimentary leveling and interdialect development (Stage I); extreme variability and apparent leveling (Stage II); and the survival of majority forms and reallocation of remaining variability (Stage III). Trudgill’s deterministic predictions call for verification in other new-dialect situations, a challenge that Dollinger takes up for Canadian English (CanE). Drawing on a corpus of written data from late-18th and early-19th-century Ontario, this study constitutes a quantitative investigation of the modal auxiliary system of early CanE.

In the introduction, Dollinger provides an overview of his study and situates CanE with respect to other (post)colonial varieties of English. He justifies restricting his study to texts from Ontario because of the pivotal role played by this province in settling western Canada later in the 19th century, which accounts in part for the current uniformity of CanE west of Quebec (Chambers 1998: 252). The second chapter, ‘Canadian English: A research history of the “Other” variety of North American English’, surveys linguistic studies of CanE, noting their focus on lexical and phonetic features. While there is much recent work on English in Ontario and Quebec and a long tradition of research on English in Newfoundland (see, for example, the papers in Avery et al. 2006), Dollinger
rightly notes that there is little work on the history of CanE. In Chapter 3, ‘Ontario 1776–1850: An external language history’, he outlines the two waves of immigration that occurred in this period: the American Loyalists (1776–1793), who escaped to Canada following the American Revolution, primarily from the midland states (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Vermont); and the British immigrants who arrived after 1812 as part of a plan to bolster the British population of Canada. The British immigrants, who originated from regions far removed from London, tended to settle in more remote areas, while the Loyalists founded or increased the population of settlements such as York (Toronto), Hamilton and Kingston. These immigration patterns form the basis for two major scenarios for the origins of CanE, discussed in Chapter 5, ‘New-dialect formation in Early Ontario’: the ‘Loyalist base’ (Bloomfield 1948/1975) and ‘British origins’ theories (Scargill 1957/1975).

Chapter 4, ‘The corpus of Early Ontario English, Pre-confederation section (CONTE-PC), discusses the constitution of the 125,000-word corpus, consisting of samples of local newspapers, diaries and ‘semi-official’ letters from the Archives of Ontario. Chapter 6, ‘Late Modern English modal auxiliaries: Methodological considerations’, defines different types of modality, such as permission, ability, possibility, volition and futurity. The next four chapters provide analyses for each of the modal auxiliary variables (Chapter 7, ‘Can (could) vs. may (might)’; Chapter 8, ‘Must vs. have to’; Chapter 9, ‘Shall vs. will’; Chapter 10, ‘Should, would and ought to’). In each of these chapters, Dollinger discusses the semantic range of the variants and their development in Early and Late Modern English, before examining their quantitative distribution in different linguistic contexts and text-types.

In the conclusion, Dollinger relates his results to the history of CanE and the formation of new dialects. While he casts doubt on a simple summary of CanE as ‘progressive’ or ‘conservative’, he argues that epistemic readings in core modals were expanding and that CanE in this period was more progressive than conservative. In deciding between competing origins scenarios, he ranks parallel changes with other varieties of English first (‘drift’), followed by Loyalist input, then independent developments, then finally British influence. In contrast with Chambers (1995: 5), who locates the focusing of CanE in the early 20th century, Dollinger places it at about 1850. On the basis of his results, he supports Trudgill’s (2004) three-stage model of new-dialect formation, though he proposes that ‘extreme variability’ be extended from Stage II into Stage I. The appendices contain more detailed information about the corpus and demographic information about early Ontario, as well as detailed statistics for each of the variables. There is also a bibliography and a general index.

To what extent does this book succeed in shedding light on the history of CanE and the formation of new dialects? Unfortunately, there are a number of analytical problems that vitiate the results. Dollinger seems to equate any non-categorical linguistic behaviour with stylistic variation (pp. 153, 282), and he refers to modals alternately as ‘variants’ and ‘variables’ (p. 227). This confusion
extends to methods of calculation. In some cases (e.g. Figures 9.1–9.2), only the raw numbers are given, while in others (e.g. Figure 8.5) the distribution of one variant across contexts is shown, and in still others, raw number counts are ‘normalized’ per 10,000 words of text. For reasons of comparability, we need to know the relative frequency of each variant with respect to other variants of the same variable. For example, the normalized results in Table 8.2 suggest that HAVE TO occurs twice as much in CanE as in American English, but the relative frequencies of HAVE TO vs. MUST in each variety show quite similar percentages (19% vs. 13%, respectively), a difference that is not statistically significant. The normalized values serve as the basis for the dubious claim that the two varieties were ‘already distinct’ in this period (p. 211). Rather than using ‘distributions of shared features’ (p. 282) to distinguish linguistic varieties, it would be more convincing to show differences between varieties in the conditioning of variants by language-internal factors (e.g. Tagliamonte 2007).

However, this study does constitute a useful and important resource in the study of the history of CanE, and Dollinger is to be commended for assembling the materials analyzed here. Given the importance of the rural/urban split in the settlement of Ontario mentioned above, and in CanE more generally, future work should include a more detailed analysis by region. In addition, while there is some evidence that CanE differs from other varieties of English in its modal auxiliary system (e.g. Tagliamonte 2007), it would be useful to study a wider range of variables. I would like to see a comparison of the variables studied here with other features that were probably more salient to speakers at the time (such as American vs. British spelling practices).

For new-dialect formation, this study raises more questions than it answers. Although Dollinger draws parallels between CanE and NZE, early Ontario does not correspond to Trudgill’s definition of a tabula rasa situation (‘in which there is no prior-existing population speaking the language in question, either in the location in question or nearby’ (Trudgill 2004: 26)). Loyalists would have maintained contacts with their nearby U.S. neighbours, and British immigrants would have arrived to find an already English-speaking province. This difference makes it difficult to compare early CanE and early NZE. In contrast with other accounts of new-dialect formation (Trudgill 2004: 37–82; see also Britain 2008), Dollinger does not attempt to trace patterns in CanE to those in the British input varieties, a shortcoming he acknowledges. Such a comparison would help to distinguish dialect mixture from independent innovation. A bigger problem is the choice of variables used to test Trudgill’s model, which is concerned with phonetic features (and based on recordings of speech rather than written texts). Thus, it is unclear to what extent Trudgill’s model makes predictions about the development of the grammatical system in new-dialect situations. Nevertheless, Dollinger’s study serves as a useful starting point for addressing such issues. Apart from extending the study of CanE into the past, he has moved the study of new-dialect formation out of the southern hemisphere and above and beyond phonology.
REFERENCES


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Titles can at times be misleading. This book discusses, to be sure, the phenomenon of English as a lingua franca (aka ELF). But maybe not enough to warrant the title’s promise. ELFists are likely to be disappointed. Alternatively, maybe the title is intended to be a polemical come-on. Of the book’s 14 whole chapters ELF figures explicitly in two chapter titles, whereas in several of the other chapters, especially in Part I, ‘Background’, comprising six chapters, English as an International Language (EIL) and L2-learners of English figure centre stage. The same is the case in Part II, ‘Foreground’. This contains eight chapters and Chapter 14 explicitly addresses ELF, as the title makes clear, ‘Implications for ELF’. A short epilogue, a set of appendices dealing with idiomaticity and extracts

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from the data collected from L2-learners and a nearly 20-page bibliography round off the volume. Without doubt the subtitle, ‘A Corpus-based Analysis’, is more than justified.

Prodromou claims to have been among the first to apply corpus techniques to ELF. He is certainly the first to apply corpus linguistic techniques to the writings of ELF scholars themselves. The author sets out to uncover some of their interests and subtexts. For example, he does a collocational and colligational analysis of the combination of + ELF in texts from an ELF writers’ corpus. This very successfully teases out in a sophisticated fashion the rhetorical position of the writers. So one aspect of the book assesses what ELF scholars are doing and the implications for the teaching and learning of English as an international language of the ELF debate.

Prodromou argues that ELF writers ‘are “reconceptualizing” ELF and putting it on the applied linguistics agenda’ (p. 26). He goes on to note that although ELF is not a codified model ‘this development of ELF into model for pedagogic purposes is highly desirable, a consummation devoutly to be wished’ (p. 26). He indicates some paradoxes in the ELF literature, ‘Thus, while denying that ELF is a monolithic variety, Seidlhofer and Jenkins argue as if ELF were a model with prescriptive norms of its own’ (p. 32). Later Prodromou notes, ‘The very act of listing “common core” items in a supposedly emerging “variety” of international English suggests the potential for codification of these forms’ (p. 32).

At the same time, a further major focus of the book is a serious and sophisticated debate about idiomaticity in language (and especially English). This entails asking what its connection, if any, with the use and learning of English by speakers from the non-English-speaking world might be. Before the rise of corpus linguistics there were scarcely any empirical studies of ‘non-native’ use of idiomatic language. Prodromou partly sets out to fill in this empirical gap.

The notion of idiomaticity adopted by Prodromou, while not avoiding the traditional treatment of ‘colourful’ idioms and formulae, focuses on ‘minimal’ units of idiomaticity in line with the Sinclairian ‘idiom principle’. Simultaneously, Prodromou situates his treatment in a theoretical context that sees language as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Prodromou claims, ‘It is an approach which brings together important aspects of the work of theorists such as Vygotsky, Goffman and Bakhtin with the work of corpus linguists such as John Sinclair. What all of these scholars share is an approach to language referred to as “dialogic”’ (p. 77).

A major strength of the book is its empirical analyses. We have space to briefly mention only one example: the qualitatively different uses L2 and L1 speakers of English make of multi-word units like sort of and you see. Four complete chapters (9, 10, 11 and 12) analyze these items. The table 9.1 on pp. 126–127 with 31 analytic characterizations of the ‘pragmatic versatility’ of sort of is an eye-opener in its own right. To be sure, L2 speakers employ both expressions less, realizing a narrower range of uses than do L1 speakers. However, Prodromou’s data demonstrate that there are considerable overlaps with respect to the pragmatic functions; L2 speakers competently employ the
items in establishing commonality between speakers. Hence the L2 corpus data show that this ‘idiomatic’ usage is just as likely to figure in the ongoing give and take of interactions. At the same time, Prodromou rightly draws attention to ‘the close link between phonology and idiomaticity’ (p. 179). This may provide a further clue to the puzzle of L2 ‘difficulty’ in the use of such sequences.

Moreover, Prodromou’s detailed micro-analyses do not prevent him from paying attention to the Big Picture within which EIL proceeds and which he sees the ELF-scholars overlooking. An extended passage from p. 250 is worth quoting in full:

The mindset that flatters learners that their mistakes are as good if not ‘better than either British or America norms’ (Jenkins 2006a: 168) ignores the realities of political and economic power in a globalized world; in that world, English has become a gatekeeper of middle-class employment (Brutt-Griffler 2002). Underestimating the value of high-proficiency English has a class result in local communities, as it has a neo-colonial result on the international stage: ‘English is a linguistic capital and we ignore it at our peril.’ (Canagarajah 2006: 205)

So, to neglect the importance of high-proficiency English is to encourage a neo-colonial outlook. But it is also to underpin the social class distinctions, suggesting that not all ELF learners can or need to aspire to higher proficiency. This is clearly an ideal potential that will not be easy to realize in the ‘real’ world of class inequality and disparate economic and educational ‘power’.

In contrast to the distance between much of the work in ELF research and actual teaching of English, Prodromou’s proximity to, and 30 years of experience of, language teaching is a major base-line for his realistic assessment and analysis of what EIL/ELF users of English can usefully be prepared for. It is this position that makes his critique of the treatment of idiomaticity in ELF interaction by ELF scholars ring plausible and true. For Prodromou, conversational creativity is an important factor. He claims it ‘is the outcome of contextualized interaction and the co-construction of discourse, not a performance by a gifted individual’ (p. 224).

As EIL has expanded and the range of English-users has ‘flattened’ and spread to make partial competences in languages and intelligibility a more realistic scenario in ELT, the summarizing and synthesizing work Prodromou has undertaken in this book is a welcome antidote indeed. Also, Prodromou’s recommendations for teaching make good sense. It ‘will involve exposing students to an amplified form of their own emerging English rather a simplified English’ (p. 253).

This is an inspirational book. It will reward a careful reading with a human and warming response. One can feel the experience of the writer on every page. In many respects, it is a welcome breath of fresh air to counter much of the run of the mill work that approaches the subject of EIL or ELF from a ‘merely’ instrumental perspective on language learning. Prodromou’s book constitutes a significant corrective to the scholarship and research on ELF (EIL).
Maybe it takes a fluent bilingual in English and Greek, an individual who has spent their whole life straddling and living in two or more language-cultures to seriously grasp what it can mean to employ language(s) ‘fluently’ or at least communicatively successfully. An insight into the variable ‘layers’ of proficiency involved in ELF and EIL interactions is one of the most instructive and informative features this reviewer came away from this book with. The book also contains a splendid list of references which researchers on idiomaticity, in particular, will be able to mine for some years to come. Finally, it is worth stressing just how ‘readable’ the book is: Prodromou is witty and humorous in his choice of data as well as his droll analytic comments. I warmly recommend that students and scholars of both English and sociolinguistics together with teachers of English ensure that they have this book sitting on their bookshelves, after having read it carefully.

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Scholarly work on the topic of social identity has been voluminous over the last several decades, and yet it seems that, given the obvious centrality of social identity to issues of greatest significance to humanity, important and illuminating work continues to emerge. In Language, Culture and Identity, Philip Riley delves into the complex questions surrounding the ongoing formation of social identity by examining the interactive process of social being and action within the milieu of culture and language. Understanding the nature of identity is an intellectually daunting task, as the author illustrates through an interesting and useful review of the literature on identity drawn from philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and ethnolinguistics. Riley emphasizes that social identity is developed through an individual’s active life experience. It is produced interactively and situationally. It is claimed by people who are intentionally agentic, and so the genesis of social identity is never the consequence of an inescapable determinism. Not only is identity a claim put forth by an individual self, but it is also contingent, in that identity claims will ultimately be either accepted or rejected by others. Social identity is the ground on which the individual self and the socially perceived person meet.
Riley defines social identity as ‘...the sum of the numerous sub-groups of which the individual may be a member. ...[s]ituationally salient facets of social identity, roles, are manifested by the performance of particular kinds of communicative acts, requiring specific forms of knowledge for their competent performance or interpretation’ (p. 122). A successful claim for a given social identity is accomplished through an individual self’s competence in appropriating and mastering an identity group’s ‘communicative practices,’ which are regularities in the way a group communicates and identifies members and non-members (p. 93). Through this definition of social identity, Riley ties together the three elements found in the book’s title: language, culture and identity.

People claim and act out a great variety of social identities, depending on what they are trying to accomplish in a given social situation, and so the salience of one possible identity over others is the result of roles and acts that a person is engaged in with others at a certain time in a certain space. ‘Role is defined as the occupation by an individual of a discursive position, conferring a set of socially warranted linguistic and non-linguistic rights and duties which legitimate the performance of certain categories of act: non-verbal, illocutionary and interactive’ (p. 99).

Referring to the work of Simmel (1950), Riley asserts that the expression of an identity claim through the enactment of a ‘role’ culturally understood as a ‘social type,’ involves the appropriation and performance of identity-group-appropriate behavior within a given ‘social form.’ Social forms are macro-level ‘structures’ such as institutions, that provide the situation, or intersubjectively ‘exteriorized’ context, for taking roles and performing acts. ‘Social types are categories of person defined according to their relationships with others. ...These relationships can be specified in terms of the expectations of and reactions to the type’s behavior. These behaviors fix the individual’s behavior within the social matrix’ (pp. 165–166).

In order to press his argument on the formation and functioning of social identity, Riley examines what he refers to as the ‘social knowledge system,’ and this, in turn, leads him to tackle the complex questions surrounding the nature of ‘culture.’ As argued, culture can be usefully understood as knowledge that individuals appropriate and master as a result of their participation in various communities. Because language use is the action-conduit through which most social activity is conducted, it is not only folded into the category of culture: it is the most central part of a culture. Riley treats language in a broad sense, as the successful performance of semiotic activity, thus the discussion of language includes not only a given phonetic, morphological, and syntactic set of regularities, but also elements of deixis, pragmatics, gesturing and signage. According to the author, most human beings come to master more than one language, in the sense of standardized languages such as Spanish, Mandarin or English, and anyone can also master specialized languages necessary to function in the many smaller groups of which each individual has membership, such as
the languages of gender, ethnicity, professions, and social class. In this broader sense, an individual's inclusion in an identity group is very heavily dependent on competent linguistic performance.

Cultures as social knowledge systems are not discrete block-like entities, rather they shade into one another at a macro level as a result of similarities of practice at a micro level. Within a given culture, each individual acquires a somewhat different knowledge set due both to the variety of groups in which an individual is a member, and also, groups in which an individual is denied membership. Membership in any given group requires competencies for successful performance based on certain kinds of knowledge. Referring to the work of Hymes (1970), Riley states that these include linguistic competence, communicative competence, and sociocultural competence, which respectively refer to mastery of a grammar, cultural knowledge of how to use language in a given situation and knowledge of a culture's perspective on itself and the rest of the world (pp. 52–53).

In both discussion and diagrams, Riley neatly illustrates the structure and functions of the social knowledge system and how it forms individuals who nevertheless maintain a capacity for agentic action. Each social knowledge system is characterized by a number of generalized features, including the production of knowledge, its organization, its storage, its distribution, its legitimization function, and its uses or applications. Through intersubjective experience within the social knowledge system, individuals acquire knowledge and form cognitive categories, memory, social identity, and 'eidos,' or world-view (p. 30). The process of acquisition of this knowledge takes place through social learning, which produces intersubjective meaning through discourse. Categories of social knowledge include 'know-that,' 'know-of,' and 'know-how' (p. 40). The first of these categories, 'know-that,' refers to belief systems, including religious dogma, ideologies, world views, and 'common sense' (p. 108). Identity groups share a common sense, things that are taken for granted by group members. The reader is struck by the similarity of this kind of common sense to Pierre Bourdieu's (1980: 68) concept of 'doxa,' that is, things that have been rendered as thoroughly 'natural,' and therefore are ignored, invisible, below the level of conscious observation, and thus unchallenged. 'Know-of' includes knowledge of events or public figures and issues of salience to the cultural group. 'Know-how' refers to competencies in doing things the way they 'are done' in a particular community. These forms of knowledge can be seen in an individual's appropriation of what Riley calls 'cultural markers' (pp. 41–42) which include acronyms, abbreviations, significant places, organizations, noteworthy dates and days of observance, familiar characters, signs, newspapers, and games.

To be a part of an identity group is to not only be adept at employing group-based knowledge in performing an identity claim, but also entails the recognition of incompetent performance leading to attempts by the claimant at repair and compensation strategies (p. 200). In other words, identity membership allows for a range of performance behavior, and behavior outside of that range indicates
the presence of a non-group member, the Other, which Riley refers to as ‘The Stranger.’ In tracing the history of scholarship done on otherness, Riley notes an interesting difference of emphasis between Europe and the U.S. The European focus was on the experience of the Stranger, while the U.S. concern was with the assimilation of the Stranger. In the case of the United States, Riley suggests that ‘assimilation’ was an issue due to the perceived threat of cultural pluralism to the continuance through time of the characteristics of the national group. With regard to ‘The Stranger,’ the author emphasizes that all identity groups, by categorical definition (Burke 1966: 44–62), entail insiders and outsiders, ingroup members and outgroup members, and that ethnic and national groups are particularly salient in terms of their scope, intensity of commitment, and potential for large scale mobilization.

Riley summarizes his approach to social identity by re-emphasizing its inherently social nature in his discussion of Aristotelian ‘ethos.’ Ethos is defined as ‘[an] amalgam of speaker identity (who I am and who I want to be taken for) and perceived identity (who you think I am and who you take me for)’ (p. 213). Through the concept of ethos, the author manages to pull together many of the threads of argument offered earlier in the work, illustrating how social identity cannot be fully understood as an individualistic disposition.

Language, Culture and Identity is an insightful work in its multi-disciplinary approach to the critically important but intellectually challenging questions surrounding the ongoing formation of social identity. The book’s extensive and helpful bibliographic passages on the evolution of scholarly thought in the areas of identity and culture, and its intriguing theoretical work on the interdependent relationship of these three areas of human experience, constitute a welcome and valuable contribution to the social identity literature.

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Politeness, and more specifically the verbal expression of politeness, has attracted a good deal of attention over the last 30 years since the publication of Brown and Levinson’s (1978) ground-breaking article on Politeness Theory, (subsequently published with an extensive additional introduction as Brown and Levinson (1987)). Much of the subsequent research followed the familiar trajectory of a new paradigm, namely a spate of research using the new framework in the 1980s and early 1990s, followed by increasingly critical assessments of the model which identified a range of weaknesses. Naomi Geyer’s book is firmly located in the latter mould. She eschews Brown and Levinson’s attempt to formulate universals of politeness based in a rational, cognitive approach to the analysis of politeness, instead adopting the postmodern perspective advocated by Eelen (1999, 2001), and developed by Watts (2003) and Locher (2004).

What this book contributes to previous research is a specific focus on the broader concept of ‘facework’, and a sustained attempt to ground the analysis of the relationship between the concepts of politeness, face (‘speakers’ interactional social image’, p. 6), and identity, in empirical data from Japanese teachers’ meetings. Geyer adopts a dynamic, postmodern approach in order to demonstrate ‘how face is constructed and negotiated in interaction, and how it is related to interactants’ emergent discursive identities’ (p. 2).

I should make it clear at the outset that I am unfamiliar with Japanese and so this review is undertaken from the perspective of a reader who is very dependent on the translations provided in the text. It is possible that this book offers richer insights to Japanese sociolinguists and discourse analysts. Geyer states that she focuses on *kedo, ne* and *masu* forms as linguistic resources used in accomplishing facework, and Japanese scholars will be able to judge how useful this is from their perspective.

The first chapter defines a number of concepts which are fundamental to Geyer’s enterprise: face and facework; politeness; identity; discourse; and so on; and then summarises past and recent developments in politeness research, and outlines her objectives and approach. Chapter 2 reviews research in the area of discourse analysis and politeness in some detail, capturing many of the complexities and subtleties of previous analyses, and paying attention to methodological as well as theoretical issues.

In Chapter 3, the general research objectives are re-introduced and the rather eclectic approach she intends to adopt (briefly outlined in Chapter 1) is here described more fully. She plans to combine aspects of conversation analysis (CA), with an ethnographic approach, including the concept of the Community of Practice (Wenger 1998), as well as drawing on discursive psychology in order to deal with more ‘psychological aspects’ of talk such as ‘stance, investment,
The fact that researchers who are committed to a CA approach steadfastly avoid recourse to ethnographic data, and that discursive psychologists have rather different goals from ethnographers, does not appear to be problematic for Geyer.

The database is also described in this chapter, namely, audio-recordings of six small faculty meetings, ranging from 20 to 90 minutes, involving six to seven participants, at four different Japanese secondary schools in the Tokyo metropolitan area. Since three of the meetings involved the same group of teachers, the database is not as broad as it at first appears.

The analysis is qualitative and focuses on ‘interactionally delicate social actions’ in meetings (p. 7). It is not made clear why Geyer selects just these types of interaction for her focus, though they prove a fruitful enough area of inquiry. Chapter 4 examines disagreement and conflict talk, Chapter 5 focuses on teasing, and Chapter 6 analyses ‘troubles talk’. In each of these chapters, the discussion is based around a number of transcribed excerpts, selected to illustrate Geyer’s analysis of ‘facework’ as complex and dynamically negotiated in interaction.

A number of interesting insights emerge from the analysis. The ways in which alignment and opposition are managed interactionally in collaborative disagreement (when people operate as teams), is well illustrated; and in particular, the pivotal role of the second dissenter in a disagreement sequence is convincingly demonstrated. The second contributor’s alignment with, or opposition to, the position of the initial dissenter often proves crucial to precisely how a conflict plays out.

Affiliative and disaffiliative moves also emerge as very relevant in the analysis of teasing, which is construed as a means of censuring marked deviations from the group’s normative patterns of interaction. A footnote (fn 5, p. 194) implies that it is just chance that it is always ‘he’ who is regarded as ‘teasable’, but since gender is nowhere explicitly discussed in the research, it is difficult to know how to interpret this.

The analysis of troubles talk nicely demonstrates the complex facework required to maintain an authoritative identity, as befits a competent teacher, while also seeking collegial sympathy in the face of challenging classroom behaviour which could be regarded as undermining that authority. This is perhaps the clearest reference to the ‘ambivalent face’ which features in the books’ title, and which is otherwise rather puzzling. Through their talk teachers claim both ‘sensibility’ and ‘responsibility’. For those who speak Japanese, the significance of the kedo forms in this balancing act will be of interest. Finally, Chapter 7 adopts a rather different approach to that in the preceding chapters, describing how participants co-construct a version of an incident over the span of an entire meeting, and in the process accomplish various face-related actions.

As I have indicated, Geyer’s detailed analysis of authentic recorded discourse offers many valuable and perceptive insights regarding how people accomplish
complex facework in interaction. However, there are also aspects of this study which are frustrating. The concept of community of practice is invoked in Chapter 3, but is nowhere operationalised or meaningfully exploited in the analysis. Similarly, the focus on a complete meeting in Chapter 7 makes no reference to distinctive structural characteristics of meetings, such as power relations, and significant discursive constraints on contributions. Moreover, it is not always possible to thoroughly understand what is going on from a discussion of three short excerpts taken from different meetings.

On the other hand, Geyer is very aware of the problematic role of the researcher as interpreter in the analysis: e.g. the issue of ‘warranting’ of interpretations – an issue attracting increasing attention within discourse analysis (e.g. Cameron in press; McRae in press). Geyer claims three bases for the analytical validity of her analyses:

1. primary attention to details of talk;
2. ethnographic knowledge of the community of practice; and
3. the researcher’s understanding of the previous academic treatment of the subject matter (p.3).

This book makes a valuable, explicit contribution to the discussion of this contentious issue. Consequently, it will be useful recommended reading in discourse analysis courses, and a valuable resource for researchers in this area, as well as for those interested in the socio-pragmatic aspects of interaction in Japanese.

Overall, this research monograph is aimed at scholars and researchers, rather than at a more general audience, and although it has doubtless undergone rewriting for publication, the style, and especially the amount of repetition, strongly suggest that its origins lie in a doctoral thesis. The cover claims that it ‘will be of interest to researchers in discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, pragmatics and Japanese language’, and, unlike many such book cover claims, I think this is a very reasonable assessment of the range of areas in which it has something to offer. It could provide useful supplementary reading for postgraduate courses in the areas of pragmatics and politeness. Certainly, readers of the Journal of Sociolinguistics who have an interest in the concepts of ‘face’ and ‘politeness’, or in the pragmatics of Japanese, will find much of interest, and discourse analysts, in particular, will find this a rewarding read.

NOTE

1. I would like to express appreciation to members of our reading group who discussed this book at one of our sessions. Their comments were very valuable: Jeannie Fletcher, Angela Joe, Brian King, John Macalister, Meredith Marra, Nicky Riddiford, Mary Roberts, and Elaine Vine.
This book presents an ethnographic study of play among minority-Turkish and majority-Greek primary-school children in a Greek neighbourhood in the capital of Greece, Athens. It offers a comprehensive picture of the way Turkish and Greek children use teasing and play to display and construct sociocultural identities inside and outside the classroom drawing on current Greek media and cultural discourses.

The book is a significant contribution to the study of the integration of minority groups in multicultural societies, and more particularly the intercultural relationships of minority and majority children in the presence of different cultural identities and practices.
of the ‘ever increasing cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity’ (p. 3) of Greek society. It tackles a number of important topics, such as the socialisation of minority children, children’s play, intercultural relationships and identities in talk. By examining the lived experiences of the children in the intercultural school, it also contributes to the examination of the operation of such intercultural schools in Athens, which have been introduced after the latest curricular reforms. Such studies help raise educators’ awareness of racism and help combat stereotyping and overgeneralisations of minority and immigrant languages and cultures, not only in Greek society but also in other multilingual communities. As Lytra notes, children’s play ‘has rarely been a key focus of sociolinguistic investigations in schools and classrooms’ (p. 9).

The book’s Introduction clearly states the three main aims of the study:

1. to examine the way minority and majority children employ historical and interactional resources to negotiate identities and social roles;
2. to examine playful talk as a locus for establishing identities; and
3. to explain the links between the children’s playful talk and their lived experiences in the schools and the institutional order.

In the following chapters, the book successfully achieves all these aims through the author’s detailed analysis of the children’s talk.

Chapter 1 presents the book’s conceptual framework drawing on an array of discourse analytic and sociolinguistic traditions and approaches. The author explains meticulously each of the frameworks and the functions they serve in the analysis of playful talk. She specifically includes Bauman’s (2002) approach to talk as performance to investigate how playful talk enables children to enact social roles. The concept of frame proves to be another useful tool applied particularly to Lytra’s analysis of school play. Frame is a dynamic construct through which participants structure their experiences and it includes playframes, sociocultural and instructional frames. To this ‘ethnographically informed sociolinguistic approach’ (p. 13), Lytra adds Gumperz’s concept of contextualisation cues (1992), and a range of studies on identity including the work of Hall (2000) and Holmes (2006) who view identity as co-constructed and negotiated by the participants in everyday talk. All these frameworks strengthen the validity of her data analysis. Finally, she offers ‘snapshots’ of the protagonists (p. 31) of the book, which contributes to the reader’s lucid identification and understanding of the characters and their personalities.

Chapter 2 offers a detailed account of the author’s ethnographic approach to data collection and analysis that comprise interviews, observation, written questionnaires completed by the children, end of the year pupil reports, school newsletters, and detailed transcripts of group- and teacher-fronted interactions in the classroom. The wealth of the data sources presents a thorough picture of the difficulties and interchanges between majority and minority children in a biased, predominantly monolingual neighbourhood in Greece. The author offers
an insider’s perspective in her account of the conservative society in Athens and juxtaposes that with the efforts of the Ministry of Education to promote cultural exchange through the διαπολιτισμικά σχολεία (intercultural schools), catering to the educational needs of minority and immigrant children.

In Chapter 3, Lytra begins the analysis of children’s playful talk through the examination of their participation in institutional and recreational playframes in classroom and out-of-classroom contexts. The author examines a range of semiotic and contextual resources children employ to engage in playful talk. For example, she observes that boys and girls draw in their talk from different sorts of media sources, which – she argues – reflect gendered-socialisation practices. Boys are said to prefer chanting football cries, singing and humming snippets from rap music, while girls prefer mimicking and parodying the talk and conduct of pop singers. Equally important to note is the finding that none of the children draw on culturally specific – either Greek or Turkish – media symbols as much as they draw on American-European singers or actors, which illustrates the pervasiveness of western globalisation in Greek society.

Chapter 4 focuses specifically on the resource of teasing in children’s play, and discusses the sequential organisation of teasing, its initiation, development, and enactment through the use of play frames. Teasing is described as a situated practice, based on inference based interpretations and utilisation of contextualisation cues, such as mock challenges, insults, mimicry, code-switching, prosody, laughter and giggling. Lytra points out that teasing occurs at transition points during which participants shift status such as settling in the classroom before teaching starts or after a break. It is also demonstrated that the sequential rules for teasing resemble the verbal-duelling research, where each teasing activity has to be responded to by another otherwise there is admission of defeat. Interestingly, teasing very rarely leads to aggression or serious fights, signalling the pervasiveness of teasing as an engagement activity marked by humour, agonistic qualities and playfulness, characteristic conversational qualities in Greek and Turkish culture (Antonopoulou and Sifianou 2003).

Chapter 5 examines how playful talk is organised in classroom settings during groupwork and teacher-fronted class interactions. Lytra also demonstrates that children integrate playful frames with instructional frames and that playful talk is supported by the teachers. ‘By transforming work into sociability’ students reveal and negotiate a range of social identities influenced by social, cultural institutional practices. (p. 203).

Chapter 6 discusses the way playful talk contributes to the construction of social identities. For example, girls negotiate female identities drawing on their out-of-school practices that subvert the traditional views of femininity as passive, while boys engage in performances of aggressiveness and toughness. Within this joint construction of playful talk, children show off their academic and cultural knowledge and sometimes minority children are questioned on their bicultural
identity. Majority children are seen to play with the Turkish culture by asking for clarifications thus raising its visibility in the Greek culture and minority children develop their expert identity by acknowledging expertise in their Turkish culture. These findings are enlightening and exceptionally indicative of the cultural and discourse practices that the children experience in school and out-of-school settings.

One of the highlights of the book is the invigorating discussion of the children’s life histories six years after the original data collection, which adds to the dynamic nature of the book. It simultaneously acts as a ‘coda’ (Labov 1972), signalling the end of the narrative of the book but also functions as an ‘evaluation’ of the book’s narrative, in that it confirms the complexity of the children’s social, personal and career trajectories. As this book brings together a unique combination of multiple analytical perspectives on the interpretation of talk and cultural play in educational settings, it will certainly appeal to sociolinguists, researchers in language and multicultural education, as well as to Greek educational stakeholders involved in decision making about intercultural schools. The book clearly bears the traces of its origin as the author’s PhD dissertation completed in 2003, especially in its dense academic style. Chapter 2 is particularly impenetrable and could have been simplified to address a wider, lay audience, for example teachers, educational administrators or even parents.

REFERENCES


Written by leading experts and practitioners in the field, The Blackwell Guide to Research Methods in Bilingualism and Multilingualism presents a really outstanding collection for students aspiring to do their own research in bilingualism and multilingualism. Professors Li Wei and Melissa Moyer have edited a really outstanding collection for students aspiring to do their own research in bilingualism and multilingualism. They've assembled 22 chapters, which teach about methods of research like imaging technologies, recording audio and video, transcription, stats, corpora, critical discourse analysis essentially all the major research methods that students need to learn about, but this is the first volume that brings together these disparate topics for the student who's just venturing in. The Blackwell guide to research methods in bilingualism and multilingualism, Ed. by Li Wei and Melissa G. Moyer. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008. Pp. xvii, 403. More detailed descriptions of methods can be reached following the references. From this book, the reader can expect to receive a basic idea and understanding of research methods and of various approaches, as well as types of research questions characteristic of each approach. Some chapters reflect the individual inclinations of their authors more than others, such as the chapter on transcription which is devoted to only one transcription system. In addition to the seventeen chapters on research methodology and theoretical approaches, the book also includes two introductory and three concluding chapters.