BOOK NOTICES

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Academy, Academy, Academy, tioned Catford's *Fundamental problems in phonetics* (1976), Ch. 6. [BRENT VINE, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA.]


This short and very readable book succeeds admirably in its twin goals of presenting important issues from the linguistic literature on language and the sexes to a general audience, and of raising 'linguistic consciousness' about language use and its social implications. Its patient, elementary, and often witty explanations and exemplifications of how language reflects sexism in society make this the perfect book to recommend to friends, students, and even colleagues who persist in maintaining that English usage and language attitudes in our society are not sexist, or who simply want to know 'what all the fuss is about'.

'Naming names' (9–23) shows how naming practices differ for men and women, and how this is linked to the arbitrariness and power of names—as well as to the use of name changes to mark significant events in one's life. 'Talking like a lady: How women talk' (25–50) examines common beliefs and stereotypes about sex differences in language behavior, and the extent to which these traditional notions correspond to reality. 'Hey lady, whose honey are you anyway?' (51–62) is concerned with forms of address (titles, first names, surnames; pronouns; Ms.; honey, dear, boy). 'Of girls and chicks' (63–77) studies asymmetry in vocabulary and in collocations, in slang and obscene terms, and in the 'generics' he and man. 'What is to be done' (79–93) deals first with the general issue of language reform, then more specifically with twelve language changes proposed by feminists. The book concludes with some suggested research projects for each chapter, a well-selected bibliography, and a summary 'Guidelines for non-discriminatory language usage'. Throughout the book, an excellent balance is maintained between data drawn from English usage in contemporary American society, or from other languages and societies, and historical examples. Sex differences and sexism in language are also related well to other 'women's' issues (such as women's place in the work force, and non-parity in wages), and excellent parallels are drawn with racism and racist language.

Apart from its usefulness to a general readership, this book could also be an effective text in advanced high-school classes in language arts or family studies; as introductory reading to units on language and sex in Women's Studies or sociolinguistics courses; or as pre-course reading for courses specifically devoted to language and sex. [SHEILA M. EMBLETON, York University, Toronto.]


SK's book could well be used in a course on 'Language and social issues'. The issue addressed here is the difficulties which minorities and foreign ('guest') workers have in using their own languages and in acquiring the languages of 'host' countries. SK is impassioned about the injustice that characterizes the 'ways in which minorities are prevented from enjoying their fair share of the world's goods' (305), arguing that educational policy fulfills the aims of industrialized nations in exploiting guest workers and immigrants (296). It is in the last chapter ('Violence and minority education') where her thesis is expounded powerfully and convincingly; she claims that physical violence (e.g. corporal punishment in schools) has been largely replaced by structural or symbolic violence or force, as in the use of shame (307, 314).

But the book is not an emotional one—far from it. It reads like a textbook about second-language acquisition by young children, and the chapter titles indicate that this is what SK is really concerned with: 'Something about language', 'What is a mother tongue?', 'Two "languages"', 'What is bilingualism?', 'Different aspects of bilingualism—dichotomies', 'Planning the education of prospective bilinguals', 'How can a child become bilingual with the help of school and family?', 'How is bilingualism measured?', 'Double semilingualism—does it exist?' and 'The function of immigration—a compari-
son between different countries’. This is not to criticize the book, only to suggest that a different organization might have more effectively aroused the reader with respect to social injustice in schools. By contrast, what makes this book valuable—coming from a Scandinavian writer—is the amount that one learns about problems similar to those experienced by minorities in the US and Canada. Of the estimated 1,176 works cited in the bibliography, about 300 are in languages other than English. (Unfortunately, there is no index of any kind.)

From her personal experience and from this vast literature, SK arrives at some interesting observations about second-language acquisition: e.g., bilingualism seldom develops when a child hears two languages in different environments (22); an immigrant’s life is bad for a child’s language development (27, 29). Interesting also is the contrast between immersion language programs (‘something voluntary and rather enjoyable’) and submersion (the sink-or-swim approach); these are known in Swedish as ‘language bath’ and ‘language drowning’ (139). Whatever merits submersion may have for other children, SK seems to believe that it is not appropriate for minority children.

As a scholarly treatment of its subject, then, this book has considerable merit, even though it was first written with a Scandinavian audience in mind. One of the things I especially appreciated is SK’s willingness, in some cases, to withhold judgment, and, in others, to criticize the way research was undertaken (189–190, 217 ff.) [William J. Samarin, University of Toronto.]


Stadler here addresses a problem of language in Canada. The general direction of language shift from German to English is, by and large, clear and not surprising. However, S attempts a more detailed analysis of the motives and efforts necessary for the maintenance of language and ethnic identity, and the factors which favor linguistic assimilation into the Anglo cultural mainstream. Assimilation usually involves at least two aspects or dimensions: (a) cultural, in which a minority group loses its distinctive cultural features, language, and even religion; and (b) economic-structural, referring to the social and economic relationships that are established between different groups. S’s study focuses on the cultural dimension of assimilation—in particular, on language behavior and language attitudes.

S’s subjects are (a) a random selection of children attending a local school where German is taught after regular school hours; (b) the parents of these children; and (c) a control group of German-speaking families whose children receive no formal instruction in German. Various elicitation techniques are used, both direct and indirect: questionnaires, error perception tests, and a language attitude test of the matched-guise version (using a semantic differential scale). Many of the results are interesting. German-speaking immigrants make few conscious and deliberate efforts to keep their ethnic language. One reason is the lack of psychological, social, and cultural distance between their group and the Canadian English-speaking society. Mother-tongue maintenance is practiced only to a small extent in the family, and parents have the tendency to shift this responsibility onto the school. However, extra-curricular schooling in the ethnic language does not appear to influence linguistic habits in the home. The main reason is the lack of linguistic input outside the school. Parents believe that these schools are the best place for their children to learn or improve their German, but very few children share these feelings. Socio-economic status is intimately related to language behavior and attitudes: the higher German-speaking immigrants climb on the ladder, the more they prefer to speak English. Economic-structural assimilation seems to trigger cultural assimilation. German-speaking immigrants, equipped with skill, education, and motivation to succeed, have ‘played the game' according to Canadian ‘rules', and have ‘won'. Thus, concludes S, ‘if Canadian society can be described as two melting pots, Anglophone and Francophone [notwithstanding official propaganda about the Canadian mosaic], then the German-speaking Canadians not only tend to float to the top, but prove to be soluble in an Anglo-Canadian cultural solution' (101).

This is a valuable book. Ch. 1, ‘Theoretical framework', is an interesting discussion of the