
BOOK REVIEW

M. Rafael Salaberry (Editor). (2009). *Language Allegiances and Bilingualism in the U.S.* Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, 212 pp.

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In this collection of eight essays, Professor Rafael Salaberry's editorial aim is to compile a body of research that "focuses on the analysis of the concept of language allegiances, and, more broadly, on the analysis of language-based identities" (p. 16). The introductory chapter, written by Salaberry, provides a general introduction to the notions of language and identity with an emphasis on majority–minority language relationships. Salaberry provides ample research to document many of the issues surrounding language and identity: In 16 pages, he presents arguments and references for as many issues—including those related to language, identity, culture, cultural identity, dialects, majority–minority language relationships, cultural homogeneity, and stereotypes. At times, Salaberry reveals a position clearly influenced by critical pedagogy and theorists such as Paulo Freire (1970), Peter McLaren (1997), and Donaldo Macedo (2006) as when he states that "I will argue that the promotion and support of education in languages other than the majority one strengthen (as opposed to compromise) the project of developing a liberal and democratic society" (p. 10). In general, this was a very informative and well-documented introductory chapter that concludes with a general summary of each of the following eight essays, which Salaberry achieves by providing a rationale as to why they were included in the collection and how they connect with each other—a connection that, at times, was not very clear as the transition from one essay to the next seemed sometimes a little strained, in part because of the wide variety of topics and areas covered by the essays. The essays move from attitudes to popular beliefs to legal implications to views of bilingualism to lack of support for bilingualism in the U.S. to bilingual education—a journey that, as mentioned above, felt natural and smooth at times and a little forced and artificial at others.

The overall research approach of the essays is qualitative in nature with some instances of mixed-methods research, as in the essays by Almeida Jacqueline Toribio ("Language Attitudes and Linguistic Outcomes in Reading, Pennsylvania") and Dennis R. Preston ("Linguistic Profiling: The Linguistic Point of View"). In fact, those two essays are the only ones in the collection that employ empirical research methods. The remaining essays are opinion pieces, in

particular reviews (Nancy Niedzielski's "A Sociolinguistic View of Speech Sciences," and Sandra Del Valle's "The Bilingual's Hoarse Voice: Losing Rights in Two Languages"), and analysis (Thomas Ricento's "Problems with the 'Language-as-Resource' Discourse in the Promotion of Heritage Languages in the U.S.," Ronald Schmidt's "English Hegemony and the Politics of Ethno-Linguistic Justice in the U.S.," Ofelia García's "Livin' and Teachin' *la lengua loca*: Glocalizing U.S. Spanish Ideologies and Practices," and Salaberry's "Bilingual Education: Assimilation, Segregation and Integration").

In the first essay of the book, Toribio employs phone surveys and ethnographic interviews to decipher views and perceptions about the Spanish language and Dominicans in Reading, Pennsylvania—a small town that has seen an increase of Spanish-speaking immigrants from the Dominican Republic in recent years. This case study reveals that the population of Reading does not see the arrival of new immigrants (and their language) as a threat or a negative event, which seems to contradict popular belief about perception of immigrants, while at the same time, the majority of the population of Reading believes that bilingual education should not be offered in their schools. Other findings revealed that only a minority of residents in Reading (27%) believe that Hispanics in Reading do not want to learn English, and even a smaller percentage (15%) believes that Hispanics should not teach Spanish to their children. The author concludes that even though it is clear that "social attitudes are sensitive to social changes" (p. 33), it is also true that "the cultural distinctions specific to Hispanics in Reading (paramount among these is language) do not negatively impact the perceptions and attitudes of the larger community" (p. 39). In addition, Toribio posts that the findings reveal that "the cultural practices of the dominant society are not necessarily the most vital in achieving social and economic success; maintenance of distinct cultural practices are also implicated" (p. 39). These are the two most important findings of this essay inasmuch as they seem to contradict popular belief around the perception of immigrants in the U.S. and the value and prestige of minority culture and language. However, Toribio is clear to state that these findings are applicable exclusively to Reading and that comparison data is needed to generalize these findings to other communities. As a contrast, it is worth noticing that about an hour from Reading, in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, there was the infamous case of Luis Ramírez, a Mexican immigrant beaten to death by six White teenagers in the summer of 2008.

The other essay in this collection that employs empirical research is written by Preston, and it investigates the notion of linguistic profiling, which he defines as hearers using "speech as a means of identifying people according to such categories as class, ethnicity, age, sex, sexual preference, native language background and so on" (p. 53). The overarching question for the study is, "Are lay persons experts in identifying language varieties?" The question has legal implications because in the past, lay persons or witnesses in the U.S. have been allowed to testify in court as able to identify "a voice as being that of a particular race or nationality" (p. 57), or in other words, to linguistically profile a person, and their testimonies have been accepted by the judges as in *People v. Sánchez* (1985). In his study, Preston analyzes responses to online polls and other empirical studies where participants were asked to identify and label different speech samples and found that the general population possesses, in fact, an uncanny ability to identify speech, but at the same time, the author found that some aspects of speech recognition should be left to experts and that linguistic profiling should not be taken at face value. Preston questions why judges make pronouncements about language without considering the science of language (linguistics) because "judges don't make pronouncements about chemistry without consulting chemists; or about psychology without consulting psychologists; and so on." As a suggestion

for lawyers who select witnesses, and for judges who accept testimonies, Preston provides four important points that should be considered when legally accepting language-profiling testimony: first, the person making the identification must belong to that particular speech community; second, the person being identified must be an authentic speaker of such speech community; third, the speaker should not try to disguise their own voice by imitating another variety of language; and fourth, there should be “no evidence that any well-known stereotype of speakers of the class being identified has led the witness to assume facts about the speaker’s language which were not actually present” (p. 75).

As mentioned above, the remaining essays included in this collection are reviews and analyses that do not employ empirical research, and none include a section that explains which studies were selected and which criteria were used for the selection of said studies. Nonetheless, they do offer interesting information regarding language allegiances and identity in the U.S. today, but it is difficult to group all six in any particular categories as they provide vastly different perspectives on the issue of language and identity. For example, Niedzielski studies perceptions about language varieties and concentrates on the negative beliefs about dialects (nonstandard language) varieties of English, which account for the mistaken belief that speech needs to be remediate, a situation with serious implications for speech pathologists and educators today in the U.S.

Del Valle utilizes a legal lens (antidiscrimination laws) to review the use of minority languages in the workplace and provides ample and alarming examples of civil rights and antidiscrimination law violations, even though the courts have yet to recognize them as such. Equally important, the author recognizes and echoes an incongruence that has been acknowledged before (Escamilla, Shannon, Carlos, & García, 2003) when he states that “while bilingualism is generally perceived as a positive for the nation, those most likely to carry that vision forward, immigrants, have also been the most maligned for the use of their native languages” (p. 106).

Ricento digs deeply into Ruiz’s “language-as-problem,” “language-as-right,” and “language-as-resource” metaphors, presenting a case against those who use it, particularly the “language-as-resource” metaphor. He invites advocates of heritage languages to consider and “look more critically to the assumptions to which they may, perhaps unknowingly, subscribe in their discourses” (p. 129) and “to consider in what ways those discourses may help promote the status quo with regard to the status and utility of languages other than English, and to consider developing alternative discourses which identify the causes and nature of the current problem” (p. 129). In this context, the author argues that when minority-languages speakers are referred to with the military term *strategic assets*, they are in fact “commodified as economically exploitable units” (p. 126) and marginalized as useful to the state. It is this type of language, the author argues, that may in fact be indirectly serving the status quo instead of challenging it.

Schmidt reveals English hegemony, U.S. nationalism, liberal individualism, and lack of organized support for a multilingual society as the main factors that impede the U.S. from being a multilingual society. Particularly interesting is his analysis of American nationalism and English monolingualism in the U.S. when threatened by “outside” forces.

García argues against the two monoglossic ideologies that surround the teaching of Spanish: one from the Anglo world that sees Spanish as a minoritized language, the language of the poor, the immigrant; and the other from the elite Spanish-speaking world (particularly Spain) that sees Spanish as a global language, a language of access to power and resources. Both of these ideologies, the author argues, deny most U.S. Latinos the development of a bilingual citizenry

constructed upon the language identities, ideologies, and practices that are a reality for U.S. Latinos today.

Finally, Salaberry closes the collection of essays arguing that bilingual education can provide a platform in the U.S. to soften language and cultural allegiances that are strongly formed in monolingual early childhood education. By softening those ties, the author argues, bilingual education can actually serve as a tool to “develop a more coherent and demographically representative new mainstream civic identity” (p. 193) instead of segregationist identities—a position heavily influenced by “Appiah (2005), Gutmann (2003), Nussbaum (2001) and other proponents of a new type of multiculturalism embodied in a cosmopolitan civic culture” (p. 194).

The variety of perspectives and points of view covered by the book also brings out the issue of identifying an audience for the text. Based on the title, it would seem logical to argue that this book is intended for bilingual scholars, and no doubt, readers who dedicate themselves to the research and study of bilingualism will find this text very useful; professors should be able to use it (or some of the essays in it) as required reading materials in their bilingual education classrooms. However, the book has a more general reach, and educators of all levels, particularly those who teach English language learners, would also find much of the information in this book useful to their practices and inspiring, at times. Legislators, lawmakers, linguists, and anthropologists will also find this text informative and revealing. Lastly, the language of the text is very accessible to the avid reader, and I believe this text could be very helpful for educated readers within the general public—regardless of professional or personal backgrounds—who would like to be informed and participate in the ongoing national debate on bilingualism and bilingual education.

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