UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Native American Language Ideologies: Beliefs, Practices, and Struggles in Indian Country. Edited by Paul V. Kroskrity and Margaret C. Field.

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2pv8v6mv

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 33(3)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Marci, Martha I.

Publication Date

2009-06-01

DOI

10.17953

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Another important and final point is Rand's treatment of the Kiowa woman, without whose contributions and support there certainly would have been a collapse of the Kiowa people. We have read all the historical accounts about Kiowa warriors and their war deeds, but have very little to nothing to read about the gallant Kiowa women who worked very hard to keep their home life going while protecting their families from the many perils on the nineteenth-century plains. This is perhaps the best contribution to us about the Kiowa people.

Gus Pànth<u>á</u>i:dê Palmer (Kiowa) Oklahoma University

Native American Language Ideologies: Beliefs, Practices, and Struggles in Indian Country. Edited by Paul V. Kroskrity and Margaret C. Field. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009. 353 pages. \$49.95 cloth.

Language ideology, the ideas and attitudes speakers have about language, has been considered a valid object of study for about thirty-five years. This edited volume employs twelve case studies of Native American communities to demonstrate how an understanding of the language ideologies of community members and language professionals impacts current efforts in language revitalization. Two chapters are about Canadian programs (languages of the Yukon and Maliseet in New Brunswick), one is about Mayan languages in Guatemala, and the rest are about communities within the United States. Authors include Native and non-Native linguistic anthropologists.

The introductory essay begins by explaining that language ideology includes what we think about language in general, as well as our attitudes toward the specific language (or languages) we speak and toward other languages that we know about. In Native communities that have experienced the profound impact of colonization, virtually none have escaped the inundation of English, Spanish, or French directly or indirectly. The processes of language shift, moving from an indigenous language to a colonial language, and of language loss have been profound, in some cases lethal, to language and to traditional knowledge more generally. A brief summary of Indian education in the United States shows that the effects of federal policies on eradicating indigenous languages have been uneven; but these policies nearly always have been effective.

The introduction outlines several themes central to this volume, including the ideology of iconization between language and ethnic or tribal identities; the potentially negative consequences of academic language ideologies; an understanding of the effects that researchers may have on their object of study; language as a performative, dynamic entity; and links between heritage language and religion, poetry, and storytelling. Jule Gómez de García, Melissa Axelrod, and Jordan Lachler argue that English is the dead language in their remarks on Sandia and Tesuque Pueblos, the Navajo Nation, and the Jicarilla Apache Nation. Perhaps one of the most perplexing ideas to non-Native

Reviews 129

researchers is the value given in many communities to dialect diversity (within small groups, or even families) over standardization.

The editors caution that not only is there no single Native-language ideology, but also that even within a single community, such as the Fort Hall Shoshone, there can be found multiple beliefs about language, depending upon its members' attitudes, ages, and life experiences. Even a single individual may hold competing beliefs. Several authors point out that it is important that language specialists be aware of their own attitudes so as not to influence inadvertently the groups with which they work.

The scope of each case study varies dramatically. Jennifer Reynolds looks at language revitalization and Pan-Mayan activism in Guatemala. Barbara Meek describes language revitalization among the Yukon First Nations, and how governmental agencies, academics, and Aboriginal communities have conceptualized it jointly. In discussing Cherokee ideologies, Margaret Bender's account includes an incident from the 1960s with speakers from the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma and a more general discussion of identity among the Eastern Cherokee in North Carolina in the 1990s. Paul Kroskrity's chapter on the Western Mono community of North Fork in central California focuses on the ideology of a single speaker, Rosalie Bethel. The role of written language is discussed in almost every chapter, with communities such as the Kiowa conflicted about which of several orthographies to use, with others debating whether their language should be recorded in writing at all.

Nearly every chapter is enriched with direct quotations from Native people. Rosalie Bethel's autobiographical statements as well as eleven sentences in Mono and English from her story performance enhance Kroskrity's discussion of agency and language ideologies. Reynolds includes a transcript of a conversation in Spanish between a teacher and a young Maya student. Two exchanges, between Senator Edward Kennedy and Andrew Dreadfulwater (by way of his interpreter, Hiner Doublehead) and Senator Kennedy and Louis Gourd, come directly from records of Senate hearings. Justin Richland's account includes exchanges between the Hopi judge, the indigenous advocate, and the "Anglo" lawyer about whether to conduct the hearing in the Hopi language. In the chapter on language socialization and Paiute identity, Pamela Bunte includes exchanges in the Paiute language and a notable comment interjected by Mantsikw to her sister upon hearing Leanne Hinton say, "The first point would be to try not to use English." She comments to her sister, "Listen to that Na'aintsits!" (189).

A few authors are linguists active in language documentation; that is, they are linguists working to record endangered languages for the science of linguistics and, perhaps most importantly, for language learners now and in the future. Several authors view themselves as advocates for language revitalization and as participants within the communities they describe. A few write as distant observers removed from these cultural phenomena, though most are researchers with long histories of involvement. Bernard Perley explicitly discusses his personal identity, writing, he says, as a Native and an anthropologist, claiming full membership in both cultures. Nevertheless, due to the brevity of these accounts they are necessarily limited to a particular

time or place and should be seen, in the editors' words, as "a small sampling" and a "pioneering effort" rather than the last word on Native-language ideologies (27–28).

In addition to the volume's stated objective, which is to understand "language ideologies and their role in the sociocultural transformations of Native American communities," the book serves several other purposes (4). Virtually every chapter refers to the founding scholars of language ideology (Bambi Schieffelin and Michael Silverstein), language endangerment and language loss (Nancy Dorian, Joshua Fishman, Lenore Grenoble, Collette Grivevald, Jane Hill, and Michel Krauss), and language revitalization (Ken Hale and Leanne Hinton)—to name only a few. For students new to these disciplines the book provides a wealth of the most salient and up-to-date references.

Finally, in introducing the community or region of study, each author provides background in sufficient detail to demonstrate the true diversity of the political and historical events, as well as the economics and geography that have contributed to current circumstances. Consequently, in addition to serving as a text on language ideologies and revitalization, the book serves equally well as an introduction to a cross-section of contemporary Native peoples. In spite of using the term *Indian country* in the subtitle, the variety of ideologies described in this book virtually explodes the notion that the diversity of Native American cultures can ever be adequately described by sweeping generalizations.

Some specialized vocabulary of linguistic anthropology clarifies the discussion's concepts. However, unnecessary jargon such as "spatiotemporal homology" and "interdiscursivity" render several chapters less palatable to the general reader than they might otherwise have been (58, 261). The information in this volume is far too important for it to be limited needlessly. It is deserving of a large and diverse readership.

Martha J. Macri University of California, Davis

A New World: England's First View of America. By Kim Sloan. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007. 256 pages. \$60.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

The sixteenth-century painter John White's series of watercolors depicting early British attempts to found a colony in "Virginia" (now North Carolina), have rightly earned iconic status. As Kim Sloan remarks, the image of a Secotan werowance (both "man of riches" and "chief") used on this volume's cover has not only been used to represent his own tribe and their close neighbors but also has been used much more widely as an "authentic" representation of precontact Native peoples from many areas. As such "the reality of what this man represents has become increasingly difficult to separate from the fiction," a remark that, as we will see, speaks directly to this book's wider purpose and interest (120). The werowance stands with one hand loosely