

portrays in chapters 8–12 the newcomer's initial frustration, anger, and dislike of everything American: food, buildings, TV, people, and educational policies. The last two chapters of the book deal with important and controversial issues: language and culture loss in assimilation, language maintenance strategies in minority settings, and diverse stances parents may take with regard to their own children's bilingualism. With disarming honesty, Lvovich speaks of her disappointment with the Russian community and an overwhelming desire to disassociate herself from it. Unlike the prototypical immigrant narrative, the book does not end with a series of descriptions of the protagonist's current successes. Although we know that the author received a doctorate from a U.S. university and is now a college teacher, living with her family in a liberal middle-class neighborhood, her journey of discovery has not ended. Lvovich's unique multilingualism and multiculturalism have prompted her to continue to challenge herself and her readers with illuminating and, at times, painful questions that are bound to provoke animated discussions in any classroom where the book may be used.

Several features make the text unique: rich insider descriptions of life in the former Soviet Union and the Russian immigrant community in America, an in-depth discussion of how a linguistic identity may be created and used for no purpose other than to escape reality, a painfully honest acknowledgment of contradictions involved in bilingual and bicultural parenting and, last but not least, an appealing collection of photographs that portray the author's life and make the book even more personal and accessible.

As is unavoidable in any scholarly or literary enterprise, *The Multilingual Self* has several shortcomings. To begin with, the treatment of identity issues is not informed by contemporary social theory. As a result, Lvovich's discussion is limited to transformation of ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and professional identities, leaving out three crucial factors known to mediate second language learning: race, class, and gender. Emphasizing the Soviet totalitarianism and anti-Semitism that led to creation of a French identity, she downplays the fact that hers was a case of elite bilingualism, developed in a privileged setting. Similarly, in her attempts to provide encouragement to other ESL learners who may be struggling with similar transitions, she emphasizes her own exemplary hard work and intellectual curiosity but obscures the advantages ensured by her education and White middle-class background. These advantages may not be shared by her Haitian and

Southeast Asian students, many of whom come from working-class or rural families and some of whom may be illiterate as well. Gender is mentioned in the book only in passing, and the author does not ponder ways in which gender may mediate acculturation and linguistic assimilation. Another problematic aspect of the book, also raised in an insightful preface by Benesh, is the harsh treatment of New York's Russian American community, whose language use is described not from a linguist's point of view (as language variation), but from a Russian prescriptivist perspective (as deviation). Finally, although the author claims to have addressed important theories of language learning, except for a few references to interlanguage, we see little evidence of that in the text.

Despite these shortcomings, the book has wide appeal, because it adds a new and important dimension to the ongoing discussions of language and identity, illustrating the process of identity construction and negotiation. Its accessible prose would make it excellent teaching material, carrying a number of positive messages for students, and might successfully be used in high-intermediate and advanced ESL courses. The essays in the book can be read separately as well as chronologically and are bound to provoke discussion and encourage students to reflect upon and share their own learning experiences. This book should also find a place in the libraries of ESL teachers and other professionals who would appreciate a better understanding of what is involved in cross-cultural transitions. For students who are just being initiated into the study of applied linguistics, it will provide a welcome link between learning theory and practice. In short, this eminently readable and interdisciplinary book should occupy a prominent spot on the bookshelf of anyone interested in language, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, bilingualism, and multicultural education.

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WILEY, TERRENCE G. *Literacy and Language Diversity in the United States*. McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems, 1996. Pp. 241. \$19.95, paper.

In a cool but relentless confrontation of the conventional wisdom, the author proposes that bilin-

guals in the United States are not what we think they are, the United States is not linguistically what we believe it to be, and literacy in general is not what we think it is. Thoroughly documented with qualitative and statistical data and carefully grounded in scholarly theory, this volume puts these three topics together in a way that is sure to have great impact on the way readers look at language, and at reading, writing, and schooling in the United States. Physically attractive and carefully edited, with clear tables, a good index, useful chapter summaries, and short lists of additional references for each chapter, the book makes good reading for professionals and for the students to whom they should recommend it. The coverage is wide, sometimes too wide, because we are given copious quantitative information and literature reviews on topics ranging from the psychological correlates of memorizing Koranic verses to the U.S. controversy over bilingual education. Although this makes for occasional confusion, and makes one wish for a more focused book, the result, on the whole, is both valuable and timely.

Even though the United States is known as that rare exception, the monolingual country, Wiley thinks that it would be more accurate to conceive of it as a multilingual nation with English as a dominant language. Nearly 14% of the population speaks a language other than English. Contrary to the general conception that native speakers of languages other than English are foreign-born, most speakers of other languages are U.S.-born Hispanics or Native Americans. In addition, immigrants are at a statistical low point; they currently represent a much smaller proportion of the U.S. population than at any time since the mid-1800s.

Many speakers of other languages are literate and educated in that language, as were some native Americans, notably Cherokees, in the mid-19th century. Yet data on reading and writing ability in the United States are collected only for English, thus incorrectly equating English literacy with literacy in general, devaluing the skills of many Americans and exaggerating the extent of the U.S. literacy crisis. As Wiley documents, speakers of other languages who do not know English show a strong interest in learning the majority language, demonstrating that there is nothing to support the canard that immigrants and language minorities no longer want to learn English.

In any case, monolinguals are in the minority among speakers of other languages, who for the most part also speak English. These bilinguals, it

seems, are very interested in their other language, but for different reasons than one might expect. They apparently tell survey-takers that their reasons for wanting to speak and read the other language are not related to ethnic pride or small-group identity. Practical, career-related reasons are cited instead. If we go along with Wiley's interpretation of the data, the term *bilingualism*, rather than an inaccurate euphemism for monolingualism in a language other than English, turns out to represent the reality as well as the aspirations of most Americans who speak languages other than English. And although one may quibble with whether 86% English monolingualism does or does not allow us to continue to describe the United States as a monolingual country, the author's presentation certainly deprives us of the security of accepted ideas regarding the place of English and other languages in the United States.

We are also deprived of the comfort of uncomplicated views of literacy. The "language diversity" of the title of this volume is not limited to other languages, given that the book addresses issues that affect both linguistic minorities and native speakers of English. This broad view of literacy is embedded in a rich theoretical context. Reading and writing are commonly seen in the United States as matters of individual achievement or failure, with important cognitive consequences that divide oral from literate users, and users, of language. But we learn here that this is one of several possible theoretical interpretations, and one that has been challenged by scholars, especially the contention that sharp differences exist between the oral and the written. The effects of literacy, as we learn, have to be teased apart from those of one of its more common forms, namely school literacy; it seems that current presence in a school or school-like setting, and not literacy per se, is what produces measurable, albeit short-lived, cognitive effects. Yet even these effects have come under criticism, as scholars argue that positive cognitive benefits among school literates may be an artifact of the school-like instruments with which such effects are measured.

Moreover, in order to be properly understood, literacy has to be seen not as an autonomous individual phenomenon, but as a social practice in a specific context where political and economic factors play an important role. For example, levels of individual literacy achievement still correlate in the United States with race and ethnicity. But U.S. schools are increasingly segregated, ethnically and racially, suggesting that

housing segregation and differential funding of urban and suburban schools have to be factored into our understanding of literacy-related successes and failures. A reminder in Wiley's historical chapter of the sinister uses to which literacy tests have been put in the past should give us reason to pause as we examine the current scene.

When turning to the present, Wiley reviews a body of literature that rightfully protests the equation that is often established between literacy and school achievement, on the one hand, and upward mobility on the other. The scholars cited by the author make the obvious, but nevertheless important, point that school failure is often used in the United States as a blame-the-victim strategy that absolves those in power from shouldering responsibility for persistent poverty and deepening economic stratification. Educational opportunities are not now, nor have they ever been, equal in the United States, and even when educational access has increased for language and racial minorities, it has also increased for majority members, leaving the stratificational pattern largely untouched.

As literacy and schooling continue to occupy an increasing share of the national discourse, and as this discourse continues to favor the commonplace and the platitude, Wiley's book will become increasingly valuable as a thoughtful and well-documented corrective.

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SPANISH

FRYER, T. BRUCE, & GAIL GUNTERMANN. (Eds.). *Spanish and Portuguese for Business and the Professions*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 1998. Pp. ix, 416. \$26.60, paper.

This splendid volume, published under the aegis of the AATSP, features articles by 30 well-known specialists in the burgeoning field of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP). Its aim is to provide "the background necessary for the development and implementation of a course, a sequence of courses, or a complete program in Spanish and Portuguese for the professions" (pp. xii-xiii). These professions include international business, described in detail in part 1; and medical and

health care, social work, legal interpreting, science and technology, business translation and law enforcement, presented less comprehensively in part 2.

Any teacher or administrator interested in designing a Business Spanish or Business Portuguese program will find a wealth of useful information in part 1 of this wide-ranging handbook. Topics are too numerous to list completely but include: how to conduct a needs assessment for designing a business language curriculum, the use of multimedia in LSP courses, internship programs abroad, a primer on international business content, the development of oral skills and proficiency testing in LSP, and a detailed look at written communication in the Hispanic business world. Among the favorite articles of this reviewer were "Curricular Connections in Language and International Business," for its insightful explanation of the three-pronged focus of a business-language curriculum: "language as the medium, culture as the context and business as the content" (p. 45); "Cross-Cultural Communication Training," for the detailed techniques and activities for teaching culture that could be used in the classroom tomorrow; "Hispanic Technical and Cultural Content," for the wealth of facts on Hispanic geography, climate, population, and cultural values and the highly specific technical vocabulary presented; and "Evaluating Learner Outcomes in Business Spanish," for its 52-item inventory of testing exercises in Spanish covering business vocabulary and content, correspondence, and cross-cultural concerns.

Materials are understandably more plentiful for Business Spanish, the LSP field that has received the most attention from educators, administrators, and government agencies. Part 2 of this volume, however, offers chapters on emerging areas in specialized language study, such as training in international business Portuguese, or underserved areas, such as medical Spanish, currently offered mostly at professional schools and teaching hospitals with their own faculty. Of particular merit is "Spanish for Social Work," which provides a rationale and program specifics to train social workers in Spanish language skills to serve the many Spanish heritage speakers affected by recent welfare reforms.

This book has many strengths, most notably its diversity of topics and concreteness. From the history of the LSP movement to teaching literature in the international business classroom to the Madrid Chamber of Commerce examinations, plus the many topics mentioned above, a