

## BOOK REVIEWS

***Language Strategies For Bilingual Families: The One-Parent-One-Language Approach.* By Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters. 2004. 220 pp.**

The hype surrounding the one-parent-one-language (OPOL) approach to bilingual childrearing has for some time intrigued me. Touted by many as *the* strategy for interlingual families, OPOL's rigid insistence on complete and consistent language separation seems overtly idealistic and impractical – at least in the Japanese context. Stated plainly, OPOL's theoretical foundation assumes a family model far removed from the reality of the everyday experiences of those trying to implement it. Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert, the author of *Language Strategies for Bilingual Families*, appears to have shared these concerns.

Barron-Hauwaert is an intermarried mother of three bilingual children, and also a researcher and experienced language teacher. She wrote the book with the intent of answering some of the questions raised during her own experience of bilingual childrearing. She "wanted to find out if the one-parent-one-language or any other specific language strategy is as important and relevant as the books and guidance for parents suggest" (p. ix).

The author is to be commended for highlighting some of the contextual challenges associated with OPOL that have been neglected in the existing literature. She argues that while OPOL can be an effective and relatively easy language strategy for families to implement in the initial stages of childrearing, as children become increasingly interconnected with environments beyond the immediate bounds of the home, parents should be prepared to consider modifying their language strategy to better cater to emerging circumstances. In this volume, the author refreshingly replaces a dogmatic methodological approach to the OPOL policy with a more realistic and flexible interpretation of the strategy.

The book adopts a multi-methods approach in its critique of OPOL. Barron-Hauwaert first conducted a questionnaire surveying a total of 93 couples and 156 children from a wide range of countries, cultures, and linguistic backgrounds. She then interviewed thirty of those families to construct a diverse but representative set of case studies, which she then thematically organizes through the chapters of the book. Such themes include the effects that formal schooling and peer pressure have on language use patterns.

*Language Strategies for Bilingual Families* is arranged in a logical and sequential format. The book begins with a thorough but accessible literature review. The author canvasses prior studies, detailing the history of the OPOL strategy, and appraises some of its more famous case studies (e.g., Saunders, 1988; Döpke, 1992). Chapters Two and Three deal with the first three years of a bilingual child's life and school age children, respectively. Chapter Four assesses the role of the extended family in the OPOL method. Perhaps most significantly, Chapter Five skillfully explicates the gulf that can emerge between the "expectations and the reality" for families attempting to implement the OPOL approach. Specifically, issues such as the gender of the minority language speaker and the hierarchical status that some languages are afforded over others are analyzed. Importantly, Chapter Seven discusses alternative strategies to OPOL, namely the Minority Language at Home, Time and Place, and Mixed Language

strategies. Finally in Chapter Eight, Barron-Hauwaert suggests a working model for OPOL for the twenty-first century. She concedes that it is important for interlingual families to consciously adopt a language strategy, but argues that it is essential to maintain a degree of flexibility and adaptation in the implementation of that strategy. “As we adapt our parenting styles to suit the age and cognitive level of the child,” she contends, “the language policy should also grow and evolve progressively with less emphasis on strict partition and more on an appropriate language usage to suit the circumstances of the global world we now live in” (p. xii).

The strength of this book is that it successfully elucidates the contextual factors (such as siblings, the community environment, and schooling arrangements) that render the implementation of OPOL complex for many families. Through anecdotal case studies, these issues are discussed within the framework of specific situations (such as when one parent does not speak the other language). OPOL need no longer be perceived as the stubborn, static method that it has been portrayed to be. Such practical and realistic advice born from a diverse range of experiences render this book an interesting, no-nonsense, and most importantly, accessible resource for anyone seeking a range of perspectives on OPOL—parents, students and researchers alike.

#### **References:**

Döpke, S. (1992). *One parent, one language: An interactional approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.  
Saunders, G. (1988). *Bilingual children: From birth to teens*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

*Reviewed by Lachlan Jackson, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan.*

***Discourse and Identity*. By Bethan Benwell and Elizabeth Stokoe. Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press. 2006. 314 pp.**

The discursive examination of ethnic and multiethnic identity has been a topic of research receiving much attention in the field of bilingual studies (and also in the pages of this journal) over the last several years. This timely volume highlighting the expanding field of discursive approaches to identity, written by two highly active British women researchers working in a wide range of academic interests and activities, makes an important contribution to this genre of literature on identity. While I have never personally met Benwell, I have come together with Stokoe on several occasions, and presently we are fellow contributors to a forthcoming book on methodological and theoretical approaches to gender research. Benwell has worked with spoken and written discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, educational linguistics, and gender—specifically, the construction of masculinity in men’s lifestyle magazines. Stokoe comes from a psychology background and has done much research in gender and interactions. In recent years she has been working in the conversation analysis (CA) and membership categorization analysis (MCA) trajectory of discursive psychology (as opposed to the more poststructuralist trajectory) on such topics as neighbor disputes, gender, and identity practice.

*Discourse and Identity* has two parts, both of which examine how “identity work” is accomplished. The first part presents an overview of various approaches to identity and discourse, including CA, MCA,

discursive psychology, critical discourse analysis, narrative analysis and positioning theory. The second part introduces several highly specific contexts in which identities could be explored through a variety of analytical approaches. I personally felt the latter half of the text to be the more interesting and informative part of the book, partly because of the coverage of the newly developing multi-modal, globalized realms of the three main types of contexts that the authors introduce in Part Two: “commodified identities” (situated in a consumer society), “spatial identities” (situated in such realms as spaces on the beach and the space between two neighbors’ properties) and “virtual identities” (situated in the digital world of cyberspace).

In the first part of the book, different types of spoken and written discourse data from various sites are examined, focusing on conversational identities, institutional identities and narrative identities. The first chapter reviews the various debates about discourse-based identity theories and the different types of methodological approaches to data analysis (with their differing transcription conventions) that the authors then go about applying in the rest of the book. Coming from a CA, MCA, and discursive psychology background, these authors make no attempt to hide their theoretical and methodological preferences, but they do present the issues on both sides of the on-going debates among the major theories. Fortunately, they don’t stop there, but instead, continue on to much more interesting and emergent ways of conceptualizing identity.

While much of Chapter Two looks at how identity is accomplished in “mundane”, naturally-occurring conversational data, Chapter Three examines institutional identities in such contexts as news interviews, using the turn-taking approach within CA. The authors clarify that institutional talk, as opposed to ordinary talk, occurs in a specific context comprised of interactions between participants in which institution-specific tasks are negotiated. Sites that the authors examine include post office service encounters, call-in radio programs, and a written text on a university homepage.

Narrative identities are examined in Chapter Four in both conversational data as well as written texts such as diaries and internet entries. Narratives are stories that people tell about themselves and their world in which they often work to build up a series of events as they reflect on their lives. CA is also one of the approaches they explore in order to analyze the turn-by-turn aspect of narratives, “because storytelling accomplishes many different interactional functions: to amuse, inform, accuse, complain, boast, justify, to build social organization and (re)align the social order” (p. 135).

The second part of the book begins with a chapter on commodified identities—the identity of consumers—including acts of consumption and advertisement. Here the authors examine what they refer to as “commodified femininity”; by analyzing advertisement data, they explore how advertisers appeal to gendered consumer identities in order to make a product more attractive. Another realm of commodified identity examined in this chapter includes “self-promotion” as a “self-commodifying discourse” in personal advertisements, job applications, CVs and so forth. Benwell’s (2002a, 2002b) earlier research on masculinities informs an interesting section of this chapter on what the authors refer to as “new lad” masculinity, in which they explore how advertisers have to accommodate to ideological dilemmas emerging in people’s conflicting identities. This new type of masculinity is described as follows:

The emergence of 'new lad' masculinity in the mid-1990's was a clear reaction to the feminist-friendly, sensitive, but also narcissistic 'new man' of the 1980's, and arguably an attempt to reassert the power of masculinity deemed to have been lost by the concessions made to feminism by 'new man'. . . . [Thus this 'new lad' masculinity] marked a return to traditional masculine values of sexism, exclusive male friendship and homophobia. Its key distinction from *traditional* masculinity, however, was an unrelenting gloss of knowingness and irony, and reflexivity about its own condition that arguably rendered it more immune from criticism. (pp. 190-191)

In order to accommodate this contradictory ideology, the authors examine data showing advertisers of men's grooming products using a sort of "dual-voicing" in which the men in the ads using the products are portrayed as masculine through such techniques as use of irony, vernacular and a "macho register". These techniques are employed in order to neutralize the conventional view of users of grooming products as being passive, feminine, and narcissistic.

Chapter Six examines "Spatial Identities" of space and place, first of all, using photographic data to look at the mundane realm of where people sit in the public space of the beach. Other forms of semiotic data that the authors examine in this chapter include signs, gestures and actions in interaction, where "space" is examined as a "location for discourse". The authors demonstrate how space confines identity within certain types of behavior in terms of where people are—"the locatedness of identity." This chapter also examines data from a televised transcript of a dispute between neighbors over a hedge on the property line.

Finally, Chapter Seven, entitled "Virtual Identities", explores identity on the internet, particularly Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) in multi-user domains (MUDs) and chatrooms. This chapter examines how identities are formed through interaction in virtual (or fantasy) realms without engaging in face-to-face communication. The authors show how users of chatrooms employ embodied aspects such as place, space and physical form through various techniques, textual devices, symbols and codes. They examine textual data from an online chatroom in which they explore how a "newbie" (a first-time user in a chatroom) performs and constructs their identity online.

Unfortunately, this book ends abruptly with Chapter Seven, offering no concluding chapter to tie together a coherent, integrated theme of the entire text. The reader feels left dangling in air here, hoping for at least a short summary to connect the stories which were so nicely told throughout the text. However, even without a conclusion or final message, I feel that this well-presented and easy to access text makes a valuable contribution to this developing field of discourse and identity.

While the authors present numerous data extracts from a variety of published research, including their own work and works of others within a range of disciplines using various approaches, as mentioned above, they reveal their preference for CA, MCA and ethnomethodological analysis. Since I, personally, have been doing research within the other more poststructuralist trajectory of discursive psychology, I found reading this book to be a very accessible entry into the basic methodology of these approaches, including use of the highly detailed Jefferson Transcription System, which is generally used for CA.

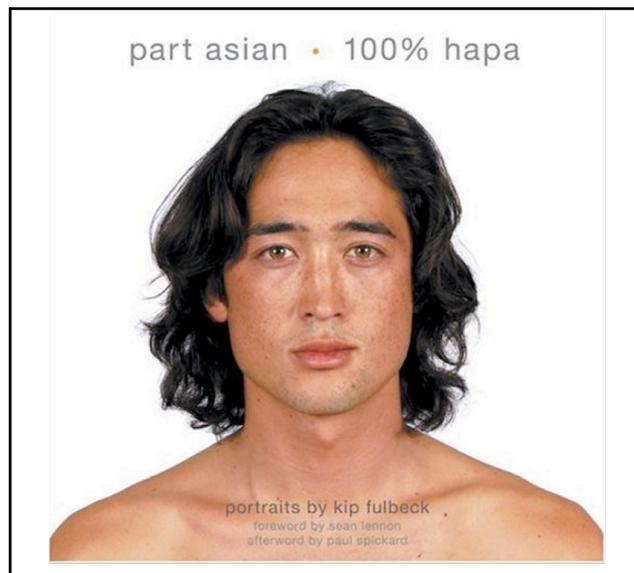
This text would be especially useful not only to novice researchers in the field of discourse analysis (including multi-modal and semiotic analysis), but also to accomplished researchers and educators looking for a single text presenting a broad overview of various areas of research that have been emerging over the last several years. It also informs a range of methodologies and contexts in which to

conceptualize and explore the discursive construction of ethnic and multiethnic identities in Japan.

### References

- Benwell, B. (Ed.). (2002a). *Masculinity and men's lifestyle magazines*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Benwell, B. (2002b). 'Is there anything "new" about these lads? The textual and visual construction of masculinity in men's magazines', in L. Litosseliti and J. Sunderland (Eds.), *Gender, identity and discourse analysis*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

*Reviewed by Laurel Kamada, Aomori Akenohoshi Junior College, Aomori, Japan*



***Part Asian • 100% Hapa\**. By Kip Fulbeck. 2006. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books LLC. 262 pp.**

Fulbeck is a professor at UCLA Santa Barbara, but this book is not an academic work, at least not in the traditional sense. It presents its data instead largely through photographs—250 portraits of multiethnic Asian people—combined with a brief statement from each of the participants about how they view themselves. Fulbeck, himself hapa, wisely avoids over-analyzing these responses, instead allowing the evidence to speak for itself.

The book opens with a dictionary-like definition of its focus:

**ha • pa** (hä'pä) **adj.** 1. *Slang.* of mixed racial heritage with partial roots in Asian and/or Pacific Islander ancestry. **n.** 2. *Slang.* a person of such ancestry. [*der./* Hawaiian: *hapa haole*. (half white)] (p. 5)

The participants range in age from toddlers to the elderly, and each is photographed from the shoulder up, expressionless and without clothing or jewelry, giving the sense that they are bearing

themselves at their most elemental, unadorned by whatever semiotic identifiers fashion or vocation might provide. In front of a white background, they stare directly into the camera's lens and, in turn, come face-to-face with the reader. This creates an evocative sense of intimacy with the book's audience, as if they themselves are responsible for one side of a conversation.

The opposite page consists of two types of text. At the top, in a small plain font, is a list of the ethnic groups with which the person being photographed claims to identify: a randomly selected page, for example, listed Korean, Hungarian, German, and Irish. Beneath that, in the participant's own handwriting is his or her own personal account of how they respond to the ubiquitous inquiry, "What are you?"

Some are simple, others long and complicated. Some are serious and soul-searching, others are light-hearted and poke fun at the question rather than accept it as a valid activity. All provide insight into the daily lived experiences of multi-ethnic Asian people. Their responses include:

- I am exactly the same as every other person in 2500. (p. 24)
- I am 100% black and 100% Japanese (p. 248)
- I am the guy who says and does whatever he wants because whoever I'm with, white or Asian, says to himself, "It's okay, he's half." (p. 230)
- I am whatever you want when you want it. (p. 228)
- I am as complex as any other person. It is a rare label that can describe me without its opposite also being true. (p. 226)
- People always speak to me in Spanish because they think I'm Latino. Of course, my Spanish is much better than my non-existent Chinese. (p. 224)
- What are you? Hard to say, except maybe self-contained, leftist and humorous...and increasingly impatient with the nonsense of others? Is hapa enough for you? (p. 216)
- The experience known as "Joe". (p. 114)
- I am a daily contest to guess what I am. (p. 108)
- Really? You don't look Thai. Well let me look again. Yeah, now I can see it around your eyes. You know Thai food is my favorite. Were you born in Thailand? Do you speak, what is it, Thai-wanese? Do you dream in English and Thai-wanese? You really don't have an accent at all. (p. 96)

The book includes a foreword by Sean Lennon, musician and son of John Lennon and Yoko Ono, and an afterword by Paul Spickard, an academic who has written extensively on multiethnic identity. But it did not really need these to gain the credibility it already achieves through the brutal honesty of the participants' portraits and the elegant simplicity of their statements. Fulbeck is not afraid of positioning himself in relation to his project, appearing on the front cover and giving an extended account in the introduction of what it means to him to be hapa. Indeed, the success of such a project may be largely due to the fact that it was initiated and carried out by someone who knew the hapa experience from the inside.

Up until now, hapa has not been a term that has been widely used among international families in Japan. Whether or not it is appropriate to extend it to multiethnic Japanese people in non-American contexts is ultimately probably a question for these people (our children) themselves to decide. Seemingly it might offer some advantages over the more commonly heard Japanese equivalent *haafu*, since its phonological distance from the English root word offers it protection from the negative connotations that being "half" can hold, instead purporting to exist as a new category in its own right. Moreover, adopting

the word *hapa* might allow our children to feel part of a wider international group of multiethnic people, a definite plus in the globalizing world that they inhabit.

Whatever the outcomes, Kip Fulbeck's collection of portraits offers a vehicle for recognition. Since the book leaves the participants' comments in their raw form, it allows the readers to formulate their own opinions, and because the level is accessible to pretty much any reader, it could be of direct use to children and teenagers who are struggling to come to terms with their multiple ethnicities. The criticism will inevitably be made that such a book exoticizes multiethnicity by encouraging readers to search for "racial" evidence in the participants' features, in exactly the way that many of the participants abhor. However, as Spickard points out in the afterword (p. 262), Fulbeck intends the portraits to accompany each individual's story, amassing a corpus of firsthand accounts of how the participants respond to ethnification in their everyday lives. With a range of ages, genders and life experiences covered, there will be something in this book that will touch every reader, multiethnic or otherwise.

More of Kip Fulbeck's work can be found online at [www.seaweedproductions.com](http://www.seaweedproductions.com) .

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*Reviewed by Tim Greer, Kobe University, Japan*