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The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures

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REVIEWS

THE OTHER TONGUE: ENGLISH ACROSS CULTURES (2ND ED.). *Braj B. Kachru (Ed.)*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992. Pp. xxv + 384. \$44.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

The spread of the English language is arguably unparalleled in human history. From a dialect spoken by monolinguals, it has transformed into typologically distinct varieties spoken by nearly a billion people. In spite of such a spread, the academic community has only recently started investigating the diverse social, political, educational, and cultural contexts in which English is learned, taught, and used. Two academic journals (*English World-Wide* and *World Englishes*), a popular magazine (*English Today*), and scores of books attest to growing scholarly interest. It is not an exaggeration to say that what triggered such interest is the publication of *The Other Tongue* in 1982. Exactly 10 years later comes a second, vastly revised edition, which promises to continue the stimulating debate it generated a decade ago.

This second edition addresses the challenges of the 1990s more adequately. It has six parts, instead of the earlier five. Nine chapters from the first edition have been omitted, and eight new ones added. Part 1 addresses the sociology of English as an additional language. Part 2 presents case studies from Africa, China, and Japan. Part 3 tackles the crucial question of attitude and power. Part 4 deals with the creative processes displayed in nonnative English literatures and their implications for expanding the canon of English. Part 5 explains how English is used in non-Western cultures consistent with local literary norms of creativity. Part 6 discusses various arguments for recognizing and teaching World Englishes as an interdisciplinary area.

As the 18 contributing scholars attempt to integrate several issues relevant to an understanding of the forms and functions of World Englishes, there emerge three recurring themes: linguistic, pedagogic, and attitudinal. The first relates to nativization, standardization, and codification of linguistic aspects of World Englishes. An analysis of literary and nonliterary texts from African, Chinese, Indian, and Japanese Englishes demonstrates that nativized varieties have characteristic features reflecting the culture in which they are used. The second theme is pedagogic. Contributors warn us that those involved in English language education in nonnative contexts can hardly ignore sociocultural contexts that shape the learning, teaching, testing, and use of World Englishes. The third theme is attitudinal. It relates to the attitudes overtly and/or covertly shown by certain strands of Anglo-American scholarship in turning a blind eye to the role of nonnative varieties while designing their theoretical models of SLA. One sympathetic interpretation is that "the basic reason for these native speakers' attitudes is ignorance—a total lack of awareness of the existence of flourishing, effective, functional, sometimes elegant and literary non-native varieties of English" (Stevens, p. 37). Kahane (chapter 11) recalls that the British initially denigrated American English as a "colonial substandard" before reluctantly accepting it as a "prestige language." Similarly, global sociopolitical changes may compel the SLA scholarship to come to grips with English language variability in terms of acquisition, function, and context of use.

In sum, the second edition of *The Other Tongue* has provided new perspectives based on the insights derived during the 1980s. There is little doubt that it will continue to stimulate further

empirical research into English in its social, political, and educational contexts around the world and, once again, prove to be an invaluable resource for students, teachers, and researchers alike.

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POLITENESS IN LANGUAGE: STUDIES IN ITS HISTORY, THEORY AND PRACTICE. *Richard J. Watts, Sachiko Ide, and Konrad Ehlich (Eds.)*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992. Pp. viii + 381. DM 152 cloth.

Politeness in Language promises to be an extremely useful survey and collection of papers on the notion of politeness and the way it is realized in language usage within particular languages. The book begins with a set of papers presented at a conference in Freiburg in 1988, with additional papers that include research done outside of the United States and Britain. The volume includes papers on the historical development of research on politeness and language usage, theoretical issues in this line of research, empirical studies, and discussions of theoretical and empirical issues involved in non-Western conceptualizations of politeness.

The introduction to the book provides a clear, concise, and very helpful outline of the way in which research on politeness in language usage has developed in the United States and Britain. A "side comment" in Grice (1975) is seen to lead to work by Lakoff (1973), Brown and Levinson (1978), and Fraser and Nolen (1981), who developed the theoretical construct of politeness and demonstrated the importance of the study of the linguistic markers of politeness. The editors of the volume, in their introduction, use Fraser's (1990) four ways of viewing politeness to structure their own survey and review of the literature in this area, discussing and evaluating such proposals as Brown and Levinson (1978), Leech (1983), and Fraser (1990).

Part 1, "The Theory and History of Linguistic Politeness," includes papers by Janney and Arndt distinguishing tact and social politeness, by Watts viewing politeness as marked social behavior masking the real intentions of ego, by Ehlich dealing with questions of terminology and of the historicity of politeness, by Sell combining historical considerations of politeness with the way texts are read over time, by Held contrasting American/British politeness research paradigms with earlier European paradigms, and by Werkhofer criticizing the Brown and Levinson model for its inability to treat politeness as a social phenomenon.

Part 2, "Empirical Studies in Politeness," contains three empirical studies. The first, by Knapp-Potthoff, analyzes nonnative speakers' perceptions of native-speaker politeness (or lack of it) in telephone conversations and their presentation of this information to third parties. The second, by Stalpers, describes politeness phenomena in negotiated business interactions between French and Dutch speakers. The last study, by Walper and Valtin, focuses on the way children develop the concept of the "white lie," the polite avoidance of telling the naked truth.

Part 3 contains four chapters on politeness in non-Western cultural settings: Blum-Kulka's study of the way in which Israelis evaluate polite behavior, Ide et al.'s investigation of Japanese and American subjects' reactions to the performance of six kinds of speech acts (concluding that the terms "polite" and "teineina" are conceptually quite different), Coulmas's description of the complex system of Japanese honorifics, and Kummer's consideration of Thai politeness behavior as influenced by the Buddhist principle of benevolent modesty and the hierarchical structure of the society.