English with an accent: **Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States**. By Rosina Lippi-Green. London & New York: Routledge, 1997. Pp. xvii, 286.

This engaging and highly readable book exposes American attitudes toward English found in a variety of contexts: classroom, court, media, and corporate culture to expose bias based on accent. L-G presents convincing evidence that unequal power relationships are supported and perpetuated by dialectists (those who make prejudicial distinction based on speech) who cause damage comparable to that caused by racists or sexists. It examines how language variation can be linked to geography and social identity through media portrayals that promote linguistic stereotyping and workplace discrimination, as well as reinforcement of language subordination in the judicial system to protect the status quo.

Part One, with liberal use of charts, reminds readers of existing empirical research on the structure and function of language, which is crucial to opening up discussion and examination of accent as a social boundary (6-40). The author contends that "common beliefs about language which concern attitudes towards language variation, and the personal and institutionalized behaviors resulting from these beliefs" (9) should be addressed on a broad social platform. L-G asserts that "beliefs about the way language should be used are passed down and protected in much the same way that religious beliefs are passed along and cherished" (xv). She presents generally held linguistic myths, where they originated and how they function to specific social ends (53-62). Unfortunately, public perceptions of literacy are not explored, which might have strengthened and clarified her arguments about attitudes toward speakers with accents.

The focus of Part Two is the institutionalization of bias in linguistic ideology. Specifically, this section explores how American popular culture teaches children to discriminate based on language usage. L-G engaged in a fairly extensive study of the use of accents in Disney films

(85-103), which points out, for example, the use of French accents in the movie "Beauty and the Beast" (98-100). Interestingly, the main characters and romantic leads speak in clear, mainstream US English (MUSE), while the magical servants at the castle and some of the provincial shopkeepers speak in French-accented English. In fact, her research showed a common practice of assigning foreign accents to villains, servants, sexy women, silly characters and country folk, while heroes and leads spoke MUSE. Perhaps most telling was the use of MUSE or R. P. by parents in Disney films. "When seen at all, mothers are presented without a hint of ethnicity, regional affiliation, color, or economics" (98). Readers may wonder why the important research by Rosenthal and Giles that children begin forming attitudes toward particular language varieties as early as age five, and between seven and ten show significant changes in attitude toward different varieties (250), is relegated to the notes when it seems central to the author's thesis.

Further explored are ways that institutions such as schools, government, media and courts, have developed ideological practices which limit access to discourse on the grounds of language linked to race, ethnicity, economics and homeland. Attempts to regulate the use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) or regional dialects in schools and by teachers continue to make headlines today (109-132). A perceived weakness in L-G's argument is her failure to accept almost any negative assessment of an employee's oral communication skills by an employer as anything other than racial prejudice. In fact, according to the author's own charts, lawsuits based on racial discrimination are much more likely to succeed than those based on language bias, which suggests the court recognizes the employer's right to determine communication skills that relate to job performance (163-5).

Part Three looks at how specific groups and individuals are affected by lifelong exposure to language bias. The author contends "standard language ideology is concerned not so much with the choice of one possible variant, but with the elimination of socially unacceptable difference" (173). It is noted that many non-blacks (and some blacks) carry the pejorative attitude that the use of AAVE indicates ignorance (176-187). L-G also found that "southerners exhibit insecurity about their language and a willingness to accept responsibility for poor communication or bad language, but they do so only when in contact with the direct criticism of the northerner" (213). However, she ignored the enormous Latino population in the southwest with its proudly bilingual culture, which includes a large number of role models who speak accented English.

Finally, despite outdated demographic facts (1992), and a desire for academic linguists to set language policy, L-G is effective in presenting her goal, "to make people aware of the process of language subordination. To draw their attention to the misinformation, to expose false reasoning and empty promises to hard questions" (sic) (242). "Language subordination is about taking away a basic human right" (243) to speak freely without intimidation. This volume provides a thoughtful, well researched, and entertaining look at American society through the author's views on language.

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