

Li Wei (ed.), *The Bilingualism Reader*. London: Routledge, 2000, 541 pp.

Li Wei has republished 18 articles dealing, in one way or another, with bilingualism which serve as a reader for pedagogical purposes. Adding his commentary on the field as a whole, he has penned an introduction to this fascinating area, "Dimensions of Bilingualism" (pp. 3-25), and a conclusion, "Methodological Questions in the Study of Bilingualism" (pp. 475-86) -- on which see further below. Some observations in the introduction are extremely well known and could have been omitted. Consider but one example: "Thus, language is not simply a system of sounds, words and sentences. Language also has a social function, both as a means of communication and as a way of identifying social groups" (p. 12).

We certainly agree with his rationale that any prospective researcher should be familiar with the primary sources rather than read someone's digested and perhaps misinterpreted condensation of an author's ideas. In this connection, he affirms: "I am often amazed to see many of our otherwise quite brilliant students readily base their arguments on "'second-hand' interpretation and remarks" (p. ix). This perspective in and of itself is more than ample justification for the *Reader* under review.

Let me turn to the articles themselves. The first reprinted essay, William F. Mackey's "The Description of Bilingualism," was originally published in the (1962) *Canadian Journal of Linguistics*. Although 40 years old, it is nevertheless a fitting beginning to the tome in that it summarizes much of the scholarly work prior to its date of publication. That classic article is followed by Charles A. Ferguson's famous "Diglossia," which could have been omitted for two reasons: (1) it is not really germane to bilingualism research *per se*, since it is much more concerned with register or stylistic variation in a single language (originally, Arabic, Greek, Haitian Creole, and Swiss German), and (2) it has been reprinted many times before in a variety of publications dealing with sociolinguistic topics. Unfortunately, this reprinted version, omits some crucial diacritics which are necessary for an accurate transcription; e.g., for Arabic there should be a macron in *'ad-dārij* 'colloquial' (p. 67), or the voiceless pharyngeal fricative should have been

marked in the verb 'he went' *rā* (p. 74).

Some of the other reprinted essays which bolster this collection's usefulness include Joshua A. Fishman, "Bilingualism with and without Diglossia; Diglossia with and without Bilingualism," (p. 81-8), and his "Who Speaks What Language to Whom and When?," (pp. 89-108), Carol Myers-Scotton, "Code-switching as Indexical of Social Negotiations," (pp. 137-65), and Michel Paradis, "Language Lateralization in Bilinguals: Enough Already!," (pp. 394-401).

The author's conclusion offers eight summary principles for the field (pp. 485-6). Let me mention but two with which I concur: (1) the style which is the most regular is the vernacular, and (2) it is difficult to observe the genuine "vernacular" for many reasons.

This field is, in my view, ripe for future investigations, which might answer questions such as: (1) How do bilinguals use two different languages in comparison to the ways in which a monolingual uses one? (2) Do bilinguals, in fact, have better job opportunities in various societies? (3) What are the cognitive advantages or disadvantages to being bilingual? and (4) To what extent are speakers competent in both languages as they participate in both cultures or *Weltanschauungen*? When these questions are finally answered, linguistics will be far ahead of where it is at present.

ALAN S. KAYE

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