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REVIEW

Language variation in the West Midlands

Urszula Clark and Esther Asprey, *Dialects of English. West Midlands English: Birmingham and The Black Country*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013. Pp. vii +170. Paperback £19.99, ISBN 978-0748641680.

Reviewed by Natalie Braber, Nottingham Trent University

West Midlands English: Birmingham and The Black Country forms part of the series *Dialects of English* which has so far included volumes on varieties such as: Urban North-Eastern English, Hong Kong English, Newfoundland and Labrador English, Irish English, Indian English, New Zealand English, Singapore English and Northern and Insular Scots. As such, it follows the general format of the series which covers the history and geography of a region, chapters on phonetics and phonology, grammar, lexis and a survey of previous works and bibliography. This contribution to the series follows this same general format and makes it applicable to the West Midlands region of the UK.

The first chapter deals with 'Geography, Demography, Culture and Research Design'. This chapter describes why this volume focuses on Birmingham and The Black Country and why it misses out some counties which officially make up part of the West Midlands. The two regions which form the subject of this volume have linguistic varieties which are linked to very strong senses of identity and belonging, particularly as they are varieties which are generally viewed within the UK as a whole in a negative way. There are maps and tables which help illustrate the regions which form the focus of this volume. This is backed up with some historical information about the regions and the final part of this chapter explains how the data were collected and what was carried out in the projects which form the basis of this volume.

Chapters 2–4 analyse the linguistic features of these two varieties. In Chapter 2, the focus is on 'Phonetics and Phonology'. The Birmingham and Black Country varieties are separately analysed using Wells' lexical sets (1982). Detailed data description is supplemented with quotes from speakers to illustrate points which are made. In Chapter 3, which examines 'Grammar', both varieties are discussed and particular emphasis is given to certain features of The Black Country such as the prepositional and conjunction system which vary greatly from Standard English. Throughout this chapter, references are made to other studies which have examined West Midlands English as well as quotes taken from interviews carried out by Clark and Asprey. The chapter on 'Lexis' deals with particular features which may be changing due to the decline of industries which employed many workers (including mining, glass-blowing and chain-making) as well as discussing lexical revitalization which seems to be taking place in the regions discussed. As some of the data collected as part of this project was made up by comic performances, it shows language being used in a self-reflexive way to represent the regions. This chapter contains particular lexical items collected using the SURE (The Survey of Regional Dialects) and SRNs (Sense Relation Networks) which have also been used in the examination of other local varieties (see Upton & Llamas, 1999).

The last two chapters examine previous surveys of the regions. In Chapter 5 'Surveys of Previous Works and Bibliography', an overview is given of previous linguistic research in the region. There is also an extensive bibliography allowing researchers to follow up interests and queries following from this volume. The final, very short, chapter is entitled 'Annotated Texts' and this gives examples of language use from a small number of participants in the studies carried out as part of this project and comments on their language usage.



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This volume is interesting to variationists and dialectologists at most levels and is particularly useful for allowing comparison between different varieties of English to be made. It is unlikely to be suitable for absolute beginners as there is no key to phonetic symbols or glossary of linguistic terms. Although there is mention in Chapter 1 of the linguistic diversity of the region, due to the large number of incomers, this is not discussed further in the volume, which would have been of great interest. However, this volume is of great interest to linguists wanting to learn more about variation in the West Midlands.

References

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REVIEW

The Context of L2 Learner Motivation

Ema Ushioda (ed.), *International Perspectives on Motivation: Language Learning and Professional Challenges*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Pp. xiii + 243. Paperback £19.99, ISBN 9781137000897

Reviewed by David Lyons

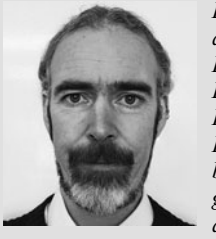
The present volume represents one of the most recent additions to a burgeoning number of publications in the field of L2 motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Murray, Gao, & Lamb, 2011). As in most of these, ideas of the self-concept and identity in learner motivation are clearly visible. However, a welcome aspect of this book is its focus on the local context of language learning and how this interacts with both the learner's concept of self and the motivation to pursue his or her language studies.

The book is divided into 13 chapters with an introductory and concluding chapter by Ushioda, and the remaining chapters falling broadly into six sections. Ushioda's introductory chapter eloquently outlines some of the major issues in L2 motivation research today while making a convincing case for local factors having a profound impact on learner motivation. She further emphasizes the vital importance of understanding how learners view English, its importance in their lives and its effect on their visions of themselves. She concludes by mentioning a number of motivational implications for teachers, who are equally susceptible to the influence of the local context.

The section on classroom practices provides illuminating insights into classrooms in Indonesia (Lamb & Budiyanto) and Bulgaria (Taylor) through vivid descriptions of the scene and the incorporation of learner voices into the narrative. The issues of helping learners reconcile their present selves with potential global identities and allowing themselves to engage their real selves in the classroom will resonate with many practitioners. What is perhaps just as instructive, though, is the perceptiveness of some of the learners' insights into their classroom and how what takes place there affects their motivation.

The following section deals with English as a medium of instruction and also highlights the role of the teacher in student motivation. Kuchah's chapter focuses on the importance of the teacher and how he or she is perceived in the decision of Francophone primary schoolchildren to pursue English-medium education in Cameroon, while Banegas highlights the role of the teacher and negotiation with the students in the successful incorporation of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in Argentina.

ESP and EAP are represented in two chapters by Malcom and Woodrow. Both illustrate the difficulties learners have transitioning from one stage of their education to the next, and both allow learners' voices to



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