

"identity is unable to serve well the demands of social analysis" (p. 60), and while they may be either right or wrong, the conceptual and intellectual work "identity" is meant to do is never fully articulated by Coupland. Unbundling the "thick tangle of meanings that have accumulated around the term identity and parceling out of the work to a number of less congested terms," (p. 60), like identification, categorization, self-representation, groupness, may serve Coupland's stated goals better than his continued reliance on the term itself. The concluding chapter provides promise in its discussion of speaker "authenticity" as that which is discursively earned rather than automatically credited. This assumption directs research attention to the politics that surround authenticity and place immediate focus on social action and consequence, and this might seem like the very place where Coupland starts with that project.

Despite these two issues, the book is clear, erudite, and important. The chronology offered through its organization offers insight into the kinds of analytical impasses that key intellectual developments in sociolinguistics have attempted to overcome, and shows in what ways they were successful. This cements its utility as a course reader. Further, the references cited and the extracts used for analysis show a commitment to draw on two intellectual histories which are usually (albeit decreasingly) kept apart, viz. British Sociolinguistics and American Linguistic Anthropology, making it something of a consolidation of a range of past work, even as it attempts to go beyond.

Sociology & Equity Studies in Education
University of Toronto
Toronto, ON M5S 1V6
lgbell@oise.utoronto.ca

Little India: Diaspora, Time, and Ethnolinguistic Belonging in Hindu Mauritius. *Patrick Eisenlohr*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. xi + 328pp.

SONIA NEELA DAS
University of British Columbia

Eisenlohr's monograph on Hindu Mauritians represents a critical departure from prior studies of South Asian diasporas, as well as from many existing studies of multiethnic societies. By looking at the different forms and processes of linguistic mediation through which Hindu Mauritians belong to shifting landscapes of time and space, the author convincingly demonstrates how situated linguistic practices and performances both presuppose and creatively entail the formation of "diasporic communities" (p. 267) in Mauritius. In doing so, Eisenlohr builds a strong case for privileging the "social semiotics of language" as an analytic methodology for use among ethnographers of diasporas (as well as other scales of belonging, such as nations) and particularly among those who seek to describe processes of "diasporization" (p. 232) as historically driven, ideologically regimented, and culturally emergent. Also, in analyzing how sociolinguistic hierarchies in Mauritius are reproduced and transformed through practices of diasporic belonging, this monograph necessarily foregrounds a highly multilingual cast of characters who speak languages ranging from Mauritian Creole, French, English, Hindi, and Mauritian Bhojpuri, as well as purist Bhojpuri and *Creole fransise*. Eisenlohr's analysis of their multilingual speech events is ultimately the highlight of this book, as he identifies meaningful patterns in a wide variety of social interactions and metapragmatic discourses. At times, however, the complexity associated with this ethnographic, historical, and linguistic context destabilizes the narrative flow of the book, and it becomes the task of the reader to suture together elements of the author's overarching themes of ancestral language, temporal plurality, and linguistic shift from each of the chapters.

Even though this book is primarily focused on the contemporary experiences of majority Hindu Mauritians (who are of North Indian background), the author begins his narrative by suggesting that their present-day political and demographic dominance in Mauritius has been far from inevitable or uncontested. Eisenlohr's analysis of competing discourses of nostalgia and progress in chapters 2 and 3, divergent models of Mauritian nationalism and nationness in chapter 1, and ongoing processes of linguistic shift from Mauritian Bhojpuri to Creole in chapters 2 and 5 reveals undercurrents of tension between and among Creole and Hindu Mauritians, North and South Indians, and Indian Hindus and Muslims, each of whom seek

greater political entitlements or rights by either endorsing or contesting the idea of the “ancestral language.” Chapter 4 explains how these present-day tensions are recursively modeled upon prior ideological conflicts between Franco-Mauritian elites and British administrators, whose competing regimes of colonial governance in the 19th century first established a precedent for defining the Mauritian population in relation to its ancestral, or non-native “spatial and cultural origins” (p. 188). By the mid 20th century, the government’s large-scale public funding for ancestral languages and proliferating transnational religious networks with India had ushered in a new regime of political patronage based on the “cultivation and public display of diasporic cultural and linguistic traditions” (p. 200). As a result the “Creole Island” model of ethnolinguistic community, which valorizes the performance of indigenous origins, linguistic hybridity, and vernacular languages, was supplanted in Mauritius by the “Little India” model, which instead valorizes the performance of diasporic origins, linguistic purity, and ancestral languages.

Throughout much of the remainder of this book, Eisenlohr explains how the category of ancestral language is reproduced through a variety of linguistic practices, performances, and institutional discourses. Although not defined by the author as such, these semiotic acts of “enregisterment” (“Voice, Footing, Enregisterment,” Asif Agha, *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 2006: 38–59) presuppose an iconic link between purist linguistic styles (i.e., Hindi), heroic ancestors (i.e., indentured laborers), religious activists (i.e., Hindus), ethnoregional personas (i.e., rural Bhojpuri speakers of northeastern Mauritius and Bihar), and sacred geographies (i.e., Grand Bassin/Ganga Talao), thus entailing a comprehensive “representational economy” (*Christian Moderns*, Webb Keane, University of California Press, 2007) through which slippages between Hindi, Hindu, and Bhojpuri can be naturalized. These acts of naturalization are most evident in the de facto segregation of Hindi language students according to Hindu names (chapter 1), the performance of bivalent and bilingual Bhojpuri-Hindi devotional acts and sermons during state-sponsored Shivratri pilgrimages (chapter 6), and the broadcasting of sanskritized or purist Bhojpuri-language programs on public television and radio (chapter 5). The author further argues that the teaching, ritualization, and broadcasting of ancestral languages evoke a “plurality of models of language-based authority” (p. 140) through which Hindi/Hindu activists can mediate experiences of temporal disjuncture between Bhojpuri-speaking Mauritian Hindus and their Indian ancestors. For example in chapter 6, Eisenlohr discusses how “diasporic calibrations” (p. 263) between homelands and diasporas enable Hindu Mauritians to imagine two distinct chronotopes of ethnolinguistic belonging, one which emphasizes an iconic “likeness between the world of the ancestors and the world of their diasporic descendents” (p. 240) and one which narrates a tale of socioeconomic progress, linguistic decline, and genealogical indexicality between Indian indentured laborers and present-day Hindu Mauritians.

At the same time, these institutional practices hierarchically subsume Mauritian Bhojpuri as a dialect of Hindi, just as Mauritian Creole was once subsumed as a dialect of French during the British colonial period. Together, both processes of linguistic regimentation have produced mutually exclusive genealogies through which Mauritians can trace and enact their ancestral origins. Ranging from Mauritian Bhojpuri (the vernacular) to purist Bhojpuri (the mother tongue) to Hindi (the ancestral language) for Hindus and from Mauritian Creole (the vernacular) to *Creole française* (the educated language) to French (the language of business elites) for Creoles, each set of linguistic repertoires is also organized into a hierarchical scale of increasing purity, prestige, and political power (chapter 3). Ironically, as Eisenlohr describes in chapter 5, the act of sanskritizing or “up-scaling” Bhojpuri has both extended the political power and prestige of Indo-Mauritians and reduced their demographic presence by accelerating the linguistic shift from Bhojpuri to Creole among Hindu Mauritian youth and Muslim Mauritians. In addition in chapter 3, Eisenlohr describes how rural Hindu Mauritians alternate and laminate linguistic elements from both Bhojpuri-Hindi and Creole-French linguistic scales to align themselves with multiple and shifting subject positions, interactional stances, and moral discourses. These bivalent and bilingual practices are apprehensively viewed by Mauritian Hindi teachers and Hindu religious leaders as unfavorably shifting the cultural politics of Mauritian nationness from the diaspora-centric model of “Little India” to the indigenous-centric model of “Creole Island.”

Eisenlohr’s careful attention to these disjunctures between linguistic ideology and practice in the diasporic politics of Hindu Mauritians provides a useful model for posing additional questions about the formation of sociolinguistic hierarchies in Mauritius. I note two examples in Eisenlohr’s ethnographic material that merit further explanation or ethnographic inquiry. The first concerns a disjuncture between the ideological conflation versus hierarchical posi-

tioning of Bhojpuri and Hindi. Given the post-World War II expansion of ancestral language classes in Mauritian public schools, it seems plausible that younger generations of Hindu Mauritians, while less competent in Bhojpuri, are relatively more competent in Hindi than older generations. If so, how are ideologies of ancestral language expertise (and prestige) mediated by these opposing processes of Bhojpuri linguistic decline and Hindi linguistic revitalization? The second example concerns the author's somewhat cursory description of social relations and marriage practices between ethnolinguistic and ethnoreligious groups. Despite claiming that cultural and institutional sanctions exist to discourage the "creolization" (p. 64) of Indo-Mauritians and Creoles (and Hindus and Muslims as well as North and South Indians, to a lesser extent), the author notes that intermarriage between Tamil Christians and Hindus, Tamils and Telugus, Marathis and north Indian Hindus, and even Creoles and Indians has been or still is relatively commonplace. What statistical or ethnographic evidence could be provided to assess how changes in marriage practices correspond (or not) with the progressive factionalization of ethnolinguistic groups? Are there obvious disjunctures in the biological versus ideological reproduction of ethnolinguistic categories and, if so, are they discursively erased through laws of hypergamy or hypogamy? More empirically, how do children of mixed marriages get assigned to specific ancestral language classes? These questions, while attempting to elicit greater ethnographic detail about the constitution of intergenerational and multiethnic social hierarchies in Mauritius, do not detract from Eisenlohr's accomplishment in demonstrating how diasporic belonging in Mauritius is linguistically mediated. In fact, the rich historical context and linguistic evidence presented in this text renders it a highly informative and thought provoking read for students and scholars of performance, transnationalism, and multilingualism as pertaining to South Asian diasporas in particular and multiethnic societies in general.

Department of Anthropology
University of British Columbia
6303 NW Marine Drive, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1
sndas@interchange.ubc.ca

Sociolinguistic Variation: Theories, Methods, and Applications. *Robert Bayley and Ceil Lucas*, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. xvi + 405 pp.

ERIC J. JOHNSON

Washington State University, Tri-Cities

It might be best to consider this volume as a celebration of Walt Wolfram and his tremendous contributions to the field of sociolinguistics over the past 40 years. As a tribute to Wolfram, Bayley and Lucas have assembled a group of widely recognized sociolinguists to capture the breadth and depth of the field of linguistic variation. In recognition of the impact that Wolfram has had on sociolinguistics, Bayley and Lucas remind us that "the important connection in variationist studies between theory, methods, and applications reflected in this volume has consistently shaped and informed the work of Walt Wolfram" (p. 2). The contributing authors demonstrate their appreciation for Wolfram's emphasis on equity, variety, and real language by highlighting his work throughout the chapters. The aim of this book is not only to provide a thorough sample of variationist research, but also to establish an accessible resource for students and other scholars interested in such work. The 17 chapters compiled by the editors span three general categories: Theories, Methods, and Applications.

The eight chapters in the Theory section illustrate the extensive nature of sociolinguistic research. Chapter 1 (Guy) discusses variation and phonological theory. In his argument against the assumption of invariance as a fundamental design principle of human language, Guy explains that "phonological theory now has the tools in hand to replace it with more realistic models that can hope to achieve elementary observational and descriptive adequacy, in addition to pursuing the capacity to explain" (p. 23). Green's discussion (Chapter 2) of syntactic variation echoes Guy's push for a more encompassing theoretical approach to variation. Green contends that "incorporating variation in syntactic theory—Optimality Theory (OT) and the Minimalist Program (MP) have been characterized as being well-suited for dealing with variation" (p. 25). Green aptly concludes that "consideration of variation in theoretical syntactic