

Bryn Mawr College

Scholarship, Research, and Creative Work at Bryn Mawr College

German Faculty Research and Scholarship

German

1981

Review of *Language, Ethnicity, and Education in Wales*, by Bud B. Khleif

Nancy C. Dorian
Bryn Mawr College

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.brynmawr.edu/german_pubs



Part of the [Linguistics Commons](#)

[Let us know how access to this document benefits you.](#)

Citation

Dorian, Nancy C. Review of *Language, Ethnicity, and Education in Wales*, by Bud B. Khleif. *Language in Society* 10, no. 3 (1981): 463-466.

This paper is posted at Scholarship, Research, and Creative Work at Bryn Mawr College.
https://repository.brynmawr.edu/german_pubs/4

For more information, please contact repository@brynmawr.edu.

REVIEWS

Angeles. "Of the over 2500 terms I have collected in almost nine years, fully 75% of the expressions represented in the lexicon are known to black teenagers, and approximately 50% of those terms are claimed as active words and phrases in teenage vocabularies" (207).

Folb combines the use of "Dialectology" and "The Ethnography of Speaking" to produce this work. And, because language serves the needs of its immediate users, her analysis provides clear - and often painful - insight into the lives and social values of these teens. It is largely for this reason that this work should be of use to scholars, educators, and laymen; that is, both now and in the future, as time changes the corresponding speech community and vocabulary.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, E. (1978). *A place on the corner*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Baugh, J. (1979). *Linguistic style shifting in black English*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Dissertation.
- Day, B. (1972). *Sexual life between blacks and whites*. New York: World.
- Labov, W. (1972). Some principles of linguistic methodology. *Language in society* 1: 97-120.
- Liebow, E. (1967). *Tally's corner*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Mitchell-Kernan, C. (1971). Language behavior in a black urban community. *Monographs of the Language-Behavior Research Laboratory*, 2 (February). Berkeley: University of California.
- Stack, C. (1974). *All our kin: Strategies for survival in a black community*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Whyte, W. F. (1943). *Street corner society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wolfson, N. 1976. Speech events and natural speech: Some implications for sociolinguistic methodology. *Language in society* 5: 189-209.

Reviewed by JOHN BAUGH
Department of Linguistics
University of Texas
Austin, TX 78712

(Received 24 March 1981)

BUD B. KHLEIF, *Language, ethnicity, and education in Wales*. (Contributions to the Sociology of Language, 28.) The Hague: Mouton, 1980. Pp. xv + 331.

This book is timely in its concerns. Interest in ethnicity and language, as well as in ethnicity in general, has run high during the last decade (see, for example, De Vos & Romanucci-Ross 1975; Giles 1977; Glazer & Moynihan 1975; section IV of Mackey & Ornstein 1979), and movements pressing for some degree of autonomy have been more visible among many of the "submerged" peoples of Europe in recent years than was the case before World War II, for example.

Khleif joins Michael Hechter (1972, 1975) in viewing the Celtic populations of earlier Great Britain and the present United Kingdom as "internal colonies," supplying foodstuffs and raw materials to England just as far-flung regions of the British Empire did. He notes that Welshmen like to say that Wales, annexed in 1536, was England's *first* colony (11). The fates of Brittany, annexed by France,

and Galicia and the Basque Country, annexed by Spain, were similar, as he points out.

In a useful early chapter, "A Brief History of Nationalism: European, Celtic, and Welsh," Khleif traces the use of the internal colonialism concept in American sociology, as well as its application to the Celtic fringe populations. Welsh nationalism in particular is the focus of another chapter and a major theme throughout. Khleif is sensitive as well as sympathetic to the grievances of the Welsh as a suppressed nationality. The seemingly trivial matter of the ordering of the two languages on bilingual road signs is not unimportant, after all, when it is always English at the top of the sign and Welsh at the bottom. This is indicative of a far-reaching inequality in the status of the two languages within Wales as well as within Britain generally. The intensely nationalistic English fail to recognize their own nationalism until the Welsh nationalists shock them by reading them back their own propaganda with the word *Welsh* substituted for *English*: "We state what appears to us to be an *incontrovertible primary fact* that for *English* children no form of knowledge can take precedence over *English*..." (45; italics in original).

Khleif makes fairly frequent reference to others of the submerged peoples of Europe, especially the Bretons, perhaps as nearest kin to the Welsh. Though he seldom draws the parallels, many of the affronts to Welsh pride, and threats to Welsh identity, are perfectly matched closer to home by conditions in Gaelic Scotland. These include lack of official status for the language, inadequate allotment of time to the language in broadcasting, siting of military installations in the linguistic heartland where the damage is greatest, increase of English holiday homes in areas where the indigenous language has been relatively strong. Some developments, however, represent a price Wales pays for its location not far from English population centers: for example, the flooding of Welsh valleys to provide water reservoirs for English towns, with resultant dislocation and dispersal of old, Welsh-speaking communities.

Provision made for Welsh in various public institutions (e.g., courts, post office, broadcasting media) is discussed in a short chapter on "The Language vs. Interlocking Institutions"; but far greater emphasis is placed on the development of Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools in Wales, and on the teaching of Welsh history as a "catechism for identity" within those schools. Each of these topics has a chapter to itself, and this is not by any means a misplaced emphasis, for reasons the author makes clear. In rural, traditionally Welsh-speaking areas, the erosion of Welsh continues as it has for decades. With the rise of a strong Welsh middle class in the towns and cities, however, ethnic awakening has led to the founding of schools through which a new Welsh-speaking population can be recruited. In 1973-74, countering the loss of native speakers in the countryside, there were 67 Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools, with 12,089 pupils enrolled. Most pupils did not have Welsh as mother tongue at school entry. Originally fee-paying schools, the Welsh-medium

schools have been absorbed into the state-funded system of education. They are, paradoxically, at one and the same time the most antiquated, poorly equipped of the country's schools (a sign of official hostility, in Khleif's view), and considered "snob" schools because the pupils attending are largely drawn from well-to-do or professional families.

These schools have succeeded in doing what they had to do in order to guarantee a full pupil population: they have produced pupils who not only do much better in Welsh than pupils simply studying Welsh at an English-medium school, but also do better on the average in their *other* subjects, despite learning them through Welsh, than the pupils who study at English-medium schools. It is an outstanding success story, giving rise to increasing demand for more Welsh-medium schools and for university programs taught through the medium of Welsh.

Teachers and administrators of Welsh-medium schools are well represented by interview quotations in Khleif's book, but pupils from these schools are not represented at all. It is an omission that could of course give rise to considerable skepticism about the degree of success in producing active Welsh speakers claimed for the Welsh-medium schools and ought for that reason to have been repaired. It is largely from the book's testimony about student pressure for university degree programs through the medium of Welsh, and likewise about the level of Welsh linguistic nationalism among the young of the middle class, that the reader is brought to believe in the schools' success in promoting not just proficiency in Welsh but linguistic loyalty to Welsh.

Khleif does not tint the Welsh linguistic landscape with rosy optimism. He is aware of, and gives space in his pages to, the voices of what he calls the anti-Welsh Welsh: native Welsh speakers who have made their way in the English-speaking world and who have no sympathy with those who wish to turn back the clock in order to reproduce a "Welsh Wales," which they say has not existed for centuries. There cannot be many linguistic minority groups that have not produced a goodly number of such self-proclaimed pragmatists; often they reveal a certain pathology in the very vehemence with which they speak against their mother tongues. This familiar phenomenon of the "mother-tongue renegade" is a fascinating one and deserves a full study in its own right, perhaps by a team of investigators expert in such various areas as clinical psychology, social psychology, sociology, and ethnic studies.

Khleif's book, as I hope I have made clear, is valuable both in its focus and for the material it brings together. The subject matter is terribly ill-served, however, by the manner of presentation. The author has a disconcerting habit of giving up suddenly on connective tissue in his prose and resorting to a list format. There are even lists within lists; at one juncture the reader finds himself on item (a) of item number 7 within item (b) of a previous item number 7 (176-77). The list problem is a truly pervasive one and detracts from the impact of the material. In discussing the teaching of history in Welsh-medium secondary schools, for example,

REVIEWS

Khleif chooses to present, in rather full list form, history syllabi from five schools. This occupies ten pages and inevitably produces a certain amount of repetition. One fortunate author's books are listed no fewer than three separate times, and several others' twice. Apart from the disappointing substitution of lists for a well-wrought, cogently organized prose framework, there is a problem with consistency of tone. The early part of the book maintains a style reasonably consistent with the subject matter and with itself. But about a third of the way into the book, colloquial usages and unmotivated asides begin to appear in distracting numbers; they are strikingly out of keeping with the basic academic prose in which they are uncomfortably lodged.

More substantive drawbacks to this work are the total lack of an index and the rather large time lapse between the fieldwork on which the book is based (1973-74) and the date of publication (1980). An addendum notes that the book was actually written in 1975 and offers an update of 13 pages (plus references), to bring the reader to August 1979. But this has been a complex and rapid-moving period for Britain's ethnically distinctive regions, and a good deal more would be required to bridge the intervening years in an adequate fashion.

Despite the drawbacks noted, however, readers greatly interested in the preservation of minority languages, especially indigenous minority languages such as Lappish, Frisian, and Scottish Gaelic, will want to read this account of unusual success in promoting a threatened minority language through high-quality schooling.

REFERENCES

- De Vos, G., & Romanucci-Ross, L. (eds.). (1975). *Ethnic identity: Cultural continuities and change*. Palo Alto: Mayfield.
- Giles, H. (ed.). (1977). *Language, ethnicity and intergroup relations*. New York: Academic Press.
- Glazer, N., & Moynihan, D. P. (eds.). (1975). *Ethnicity: Theory and experience*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Hechter, M. (1972). Industrialization and national development in the British Isles. *Journal of development studies* 8: 155-82.
- . (1975). *Internal colonialism: The Celtic fringe in British national development, 1536-1966*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mackey, W. F., & Ornstein, J. (eds.). (1979). *Sociolinguistic studies in language contact: Methods and cases*. The Hague: Mouton.

Reviewed by NANCY C. DORIAN
Departments of German and Anthropology
Bryn Mawr College
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

(Received 3 April 1981)

PER LINELL, *Psychological reality in phonology: A theoretical study*. (Cambridge Studies in Linguistics, 25). New York (Cambridge and London): Cambridge University Press, 1979. Pp. xvi + 295.

It is regrettable that in this book, Linell never succeeds in closing the gap between title and subtitle. Although he acknowledges that in phonology the most