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REVIEWS

American Indian English. By William L. Leap. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993. 312 pages. \$50.00 cloth.

This is a pioneering encyclopedic attempt to synthesize what is known about the varieties of English language used by American Indians other than or in addition to so-called standard American English. The author, William Leap, brings together his wide-ranging knowledge of the literature on the subject, in both scholarly publications and government reports, with results of his own original research in linguistic anthropology on the Northern Ute Reservation, at Isleta Pueblo, and elsewhere over more than twenty years.

The scope of Leap's work is very broad. Geographically, although the focus is on "the lower forty-eight" United States, a considerable amount of information comes from the English of Alaska Natives; even a few bits of research from Canada are included. Again, although most of the material comes from reservation communities, attention is also given to urban American Indians and nonreservation rural communities (especially in Oklahoma), insofar as the available research permits. Nonetheless, American Indians of the upper Midwest and the East—North and South—are greatly underrepresented in the work (and, at that, the Southeast is represented almost entirely by a case study of the Lumbee, an historically problematic group to say the least, a fact not fully acknowledged by Leap). These problems should not be taken as criticisms of Leap but as indications of the great

amount of work yet to be done in contemporary American Indian linguistic studies.

In its topical coverage, *American Indian English* is pleasingly broad. The introduction clearly specifies the aims, limitations, and theoretical/methodological assumptions of the work. In chapter 1, Leap develops a typology of American Indian speech communities. Along with this typology, the author sifts through available statistical data to estimate percentages of speakers and levels of proficiency in English among Indians in different age groups at various locations in the United States and to assess the continued viability of "ancestral languages" in various regions of the country. In all of this, Leap does a particularly good job of negotiating the terminological messiness of "American Indians" vs. "Native Americans."

The subsequent chapters of the first half of the book are quite technical. Those not familiar with the vocabulary and methods of scientific linguistics will find chapters 2 through 4 rough going, if not completely impenetrable (even this reviewer with several graduate courses in linguistics—albeit half a decade before Leap even began his researches—was drawn up short by many passages and reminded how rusty his knowledge of the field was).

Nevertheless, these chapters constitute the structural core of the book. In them, Leap surveys the formal characteristics of the English spoken in various American Indian speech communities, including phonology, grammatical processes, syntax, and discourse rules. Understandably, emphasis is on those features of Indian English—or, perhaps more accurately, Indian Englishes—that differ from other, non-Indian varieties of English. Some of Leap's section headings serve to give a flavor of these chapters: "Pronouns and Pronominal Constructions: Pronoun Deletion and Gender Marking," "Distinctions between 'Mass' and 'Count' Nouns," "Cognate Object Predicates in Isletan English," "Copula Deletion," and "Multiple Negation."

Rough going as it might be, Leap's discussion of these highly technical matters should be very rewarding to anyone—Indian and non-Indian alike—who has been exposed to forms of English used in Indian communities and wondered exactly what it was that gives those dialects their distinctive qualities. Much remains to be done, of course. Only a few dozen, at best, of the existing American Indian English speech codes are attested in the technical linguistic literature, but Leap's synthesis provides a pleasing set of guideposts for understanding the sound qualities, the

sentence constructions, and the performative styles that give Indian English its recognizable characteristics.

Some of the more intriguing parts of Leap's technical presentations, whether from his own fieldwork or the research of others, are his attempts to explain the differences in Indian English that he describes. Of particular importance are his demonstrations of how the formal rules of ancestral languages have influenced the structure of Indian English. Especially interesting in this regard are his demonstrations that superficial similarities, e.g., deletion or devoicing of certain consonants in the English spoken in different communities—for example, San Juan English vs. Northern Cheyenne English—may turn out to be not so similar on closer examination (pp. 122–23). Likewise, Leap is able to show that some superficial similarities between Indian English and other “nonstandard” dialects of English, e.g., Black English and Appalachian English, are the consequences of very different linguistic processes. Similarly, Leap shows that the deletion of forms of the verb “to be” in Ute English and Mohave English have very different linguistic derivations, clearly related to the tense-marking rules of the ancestral language in the case of Ute English but not so in the case of Mohave English (pp. 135–38).

To his credit, Leap does not limit his search for explanations for the distinctive characteristics of Indian English to the influences of ancestral languages alone. He also gives attention to such matters as social contexts and rhetorical conventions.

The second half of *American Indian English* is easier going for the nonspecialist reader. In chapter 5, Leap provides a marvelously fluid (sometimes maybe a little too facile) outline of the development of modes of communication among speakers of different native languages, including trade jargons like Mobilian, and of the introduction of European languages and African and Asiatic pidgins to North America. His overview of the economic and political channels for the spread of English language among American Indians is enlightening.

The crowning achievement of the historical section of Leap's book is his discussion of the Indian boarding school experience. Although drawing largely on the published research of others, Leap offers insight into the way in which boarding school students themselves actively participated in the emergence of a distinctive “Indian English,” although all were subjected to a harsh regime of standard English and, in most cases, they came from many different native language backgrounds. At the same

time, Leap is careful not to underplay variation within boarding school Indian English, as, for example, in his presentation of research on the different kinds of deviations from standard usage in themes written by students from eleven different tribes at Haskell Institute in 1915.

In chapter 6, in a wide-ranging discussion of the functions of Indian English, Leap outlines, through a series of case studies, the many ways in which Indian English is integrated into and functions in the contemporary lifeways of American Indian communities. Touched on here are subjects ranging from child-rearing to political economy to status differentiation to religion. Likewise, Leap discusses how the local Indian English, in contrast with other varieties of English, takes on some or all of the group identity maintenance functions of ancestral languages.

At first, the reader might feel a little cheated by Leap's last four chapters. They are all about Northern Ute English and its interconnections with formal schooling. In the end, though, Leap's expositions of his efforts over many years to understand the differences and similarities between Ute and non-Ute students' usages, successes, and difficulties in reading, writing, and recitation leave one with a satisfied feeling. In these chapters, the reader learns how a well-done program of research on the seemingly esoteric subject of "Indian English" can have extremely important practical applications. Here is a model to emulate for others working on other Indian Englishes. It is in these chapters that Leap's illustrative examples of technical points are the most profuse and clearest; one wishes there had been much more along these lines in the earlier chapters on the formal characteristics of Indian English.

The author's conclusion succinctly ties together the many-stranded ideas developed in the book and offers some pointed implications for researchers, teachers, and Indian students. In a stylish flourish, Leap ends the book with a short essay on Indian English entitled "Utelish," written by a young man from Northern Ute.

Among his most important admonitions to educators, Leap urges teachers to be careful in their legitimate, often tribally endorsed pursuit of honing Indian students' mastery of standard American English not to "undo tribal efforts toward language self-determination" (p. 279). In part, this means that educators must take cognizance of and encourage the emergent literary possibilities of Indian English. As Leap writes, "[T]here is a 'new'

tradition of written English taking shape at Northern Ute, the first steps toward a Ute-oriented style of English literature, similar to that now fully viable among Tohono O'odham, Hualapai, Navajo, and elsewhere" (p. 279). As an example, I close with a theme written by a fourth-grade Northern Ute girl (p. 268), reproduced and analyzed by Leap with scientific precision and humanistic sensitivity in his chapter "Writing Ute English":

The Mountains in Autumn

In the mountains the deer is roaming
By the Pond and drinking from it,
as he sees a butterfly on a Autumn leaf,
suddenly a Big Autumn wind rushes by
and all the animal take to their homes
and Winter begins.

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American Indian Women: A Guide to Research. By Gretchen M. Bataille and Kathleen M. Sands. New York: Garland Publishing, 1991. 423 pages. \$57.00 cloth; \$8.95 paper.

There are 1,573 annotated sources, arranged in eight topical categories, in this bibliography that serves as the contemporary standard (as of the late 1980s) for teaching and conducting research about native North American women. The categories are "Bibliographies and Reference Works"; "Ethnography, Cultural History, and Social Roles"; "Politics and Law"; "Health, Education, and Employment"; "Visual and Performing Arts"; "Literature and Criticism"; "Autobiography, Biography, and Interviews"; and "Films and Videos." An index lists authors, individual Native American women, special topics (such as health care, alcoholism, abortion, puberty ceremonies, videos, and BIA schools), organizations (such as the American Indian Women's Service League and the Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan), regions (e.g., Pacific Northwest and Plains), and many other useful cross-referenced and cross-indexed categories.

In the preface and introduction, Bataille and Sands explain why and how they made this extensive and selective compilation. Begun "as a direct outgrowth of the bibliography [the authors] prepared for [their] study of American Indian women's personal narratives, *American Indian Women: Telling Their Lives* (Lincoln: