

## Book Review

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**KIWITALK: SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY.** Donn Bayard.  
Palmerston North: Dunsmore Press, 1995.  
243 pp, figs, index. NZ\$39.95.

Donn Bayard's *Kiwitalk* is an affordable and highly readable book which the general public as well as students with a broad interest in linguistics, anthropology, or New Zealand society would enjoy reading. Bayard writes from a subjective point of view, covers topics in controversial ways and provides lots of anecdotal evidence to keep readers interested. At the same time *Kiwitalk* is an invaluable resource for students due to its summary of research on a wide variety of topics from fairly inaccessible sources such as unpublished conference papers and MA theses. The book's bibliography and index are also useful as a starting point for students doing research papers on New Zealand English (NZE).

The book is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1 is a basic introduction that outlines a number of folk-linguistic myths relating to accents, race and gender and where Bayard stands on these issues as an anthropologist who was brought up in America but who has lived in New Zealand for a considerable period of time. Bayard's background accounts, in part, for the numerous comparisons between American and New Zealand English language usage throughout this book.

Chapter 2 is a brief introduction to the field of linguistics. The first eight pages of this chapter contain a very basic overview of Phonetics, Morphology and Syntax with examples from American and New Zealand English. Although phonetic symbols are introduced, many of the examples here and elsewhere in the book still rely on folk transcriptions. Although I could see the rationale for a basic introduction to linguistics, I felt it was a bit out of place here and would have preferred the chapter to have started with his discussion of linguistic variation and language attitudes. Chapters 1 and 2 are a bit slow going if you are expecting to read about New Zealand English but the next three chapters make up for this.

Chapter 3 starts with a description of the theories of the origin of NZE which includes a discussion of Elizabeth Gordon's recent work on the history of NZE. This is followed by a short overview of the distinctive features of NZE vowels and diphthongs. Included in this overview is a chart on page 48 which compares cardinal, NZ, RP and NZE vowels that might be of use to those teaching phonetics. Chapter 4 is my favourite. This chapter looks at the relationship between language and society. In this chapter, Bayard claims the most important demographic variable in New

Zealand society is age. Although this is an interesting claim, he provides little evidence in support of his ranking of social variables. Under the variable of age, Bayard discusses (hw) loss, the bear/bare merger and (i) diphthongisation in words such as "be". Bayard considers class to be the next most important variable in New Zealand society. In his discussion of class, Bayard discusses the (ou) variable in the Dunedin study. He also shows how social variables may be sensitive to more than one demographic factor using the (i) and (hw) variables as examples. The variables (ei), (ou), linking (r) and HRTs are presented as examples of variables that are sensitive to gender. Two examples from the Porirua project, (h) drop and (eh), illustrate how ethnicity interacts with other social variables. In addition to the highly readable summary of selected results from the Dunedin and Porirua projects, this chapter is useful to students interested in research methodology. Bayard provides both a short description of some of the problems with analysing social variables and a brief "highly readable" description of common statistical tests used in sociolinguistic research.

Chapter 5 focuses on attitudes to NZE. This chapter starts with a variety of examples of prescriptive attitudes New Zealanders have and have had since the early 1900s about their speech. This is followed by a section which I particularly liked on the necessity of standardising written English (p 94-97). The remainder of the chapter summarises attitudinal research of New Zealanders towards a number of varieties, including their own. Most of this chapter is a summary of Bayard's own work which shows that the NZE accent does not generally rate high in solidarity features, Australian accents are sometimes confused with NZ ones, rhotic NZE accents are rated less favourably than their non-rhotic counterparts, and there is a current lack of evidence for a number of distinct NZE dialects.

Chapter 6 and 7 have a more sociological focus. Chapter 6 discusses populist myths and racist attitudes in New Zealand society towards the Maori and their language. It includes a discussion of the status of Maori in the Austronesian language family and theories on early Polynesian immigration before focussing on the demise of the Maori language from 1840 to 1970 and its revival in the 1970s. Although Maori examples are scattered throughout this chapter, I felt the chapter could have been improved by a brief description of the structure of the Maori language. Chapter 7 begins with a definition of ethnicity and a distinction between it and race. It is again more of a sociological comment on New Zealand than a linguistic one. It focusses on populist views and ethnic prejudice in New Zealand society. In terms of linguistic content, there is a brief mention of some possible linguistic features that might be more prominent among Maori such as devoicing of final obstruents, unaspirated (p) and (t) and the lack of centralisation of (u) (p 144). This chapter also contains a summary of the attitude research on Maori English which shows that Maori and Pakeha speakers are not distinguishable and that other factors such as fast audible speech samples are more likely to be the source of judgments. The chapter ends with a brief section on the meaning of the terms "New

Zealander" and "Pakeha" and a short section on the research completed by Holmes and her associates on language maintenance and language shift in minority communities in Wellington.

Chapter 8 focusses on issues relating to gender. It introduces some of the classic research on gender differences with respect to word frequency and overlapping speech as well as Holmes' extensive research on tag questions. There is also a short section on differences in frequency and use of expletives, a section on the advantages of women's facilitative speech and another on sexist language and its effects. This is followed by yet another section on language attitudes which demonstrates that females typically downgrade female speech. Although most of the book was highly readable, I found the section on attitudes in this chapter difficult to follow.

The final chapter moves on to look at the effect of Americanisms and the influence of Maori on NZE. The discussion of Americanisms becomes particularly interesting when Bayard speculates on the possible differences in the rate of shift in Auckland and Dunedin. The discussion of Maori words in New Zealand English contains a useful summary of Bellett's research on Pakeha recognition of Maori words (p 211–212) as well as some information on the number of Maori speakers and the need for tolerance towards the Maori language. The chapter ends with a final plug for better attitudes towards NZE, a decrease in racist and sexist attitudes, and the promotion of the Maori language and a multicultural New Zealand society.

Overall, I found the information contained in the book accurate, easy to read, interesting, and although definitely not a linguistics textbook, useful as a starting point for undergraduate students doing short research papers on NZE. Finally, the book is written on reasonably good quality paper and the printing is very well done for the price. The only typographical error I found was the schwa on page 47 (which should have been [e]) and the only printing errors were minor smudges on a few of the characters on the bottom of pages 45 and 47.

### References

- Bellett, Donella. 1995. 'Hakas, hangis, and Kiwis: Maori lexical influence on New Zealand English.' *Te Reo*, 38:73–104.
- Gordon, Elizabeth. 1991. 'The development of spoken English in New Zealand'. *Dirty silence: aspects of language and literature in New Zealand.*, ed. by Graham McGregor and Mark Williams, 19–28. Auckland: Oxford University Press. 19–28.
- Holmes, Janet, Roberts, Mary, Verivaki, Maria and 'A. Aipolo. 1993. 'Language maintenance and shift in three New Zealand speech communities', *Applied Linguistics*, 14.1:1–24.