

Guri Ellen Barstad, Arnstein Hjelde, Sigmund Kvam, Anastasia Parianou, and John Todd (eds.) (2016). *Language and Nation. Crossroads and Connections*, Waxmann, 320 pages, ISBN 978-3-8309-3497-4

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Language and Nation. Crossroads and Connections is a transdisciplinary and multilingual book, which look at language to shed light on nation as a concept, and its relations to language. The editors, Guri Ellen Barstad, Arnstein Hjelde, Sigmund Kvam, Anastasia Parianou, and John Todd, place these relations in an introduction to “Make the case for an interdisciplinary approach to language and nation”. They refer language to discourses and narratives, which enable communication and negotiation around identities. Thus, language is both considered as structuring nations and being influenced by national identities building.

The 13 contributions cover various disciplines (History, Linguistics, Literature, Political Science, and Translatology), and various geographical areas (Canada, Ecuador, European Union, the French speaking community (*francophonie*), Norway, Scotland, etc.). The materials used to conduct the analysis are also diverse (literary texts, laws, speeches, news reports, etc., all being texts). Finally, contribution are written either in English (five contributions), German (five contributions), or French (three contributions). This choice of multilinguality seems especially relevant as it supports a thorough analysis of the language issues at stake, including toned and detailes immersion in national contexts, which inform readers about the discourse, meanings, wordings, and speech acts that are under study. All abstracts are in English.

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Hans Petter Hermansen's contribution is in German and focuses on the founding principles of nowadays two official language variants in Norway, despite some attempts in favour of a standard language. A concise but also clear and toned historical presentation of linguistic influences since the IIIrd century (and shared by Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) helps to situate the trade-off leading to the current situation.

Sigmund Kvam's contribution is in German and deals with the evolution of official identity in former East Germany. His analysis is based on the three constitutions of the GDR (1949, 1968, and 1974), looking at the frequency and the collocations of the following adjectives: *deutsch* (i.e. German) and *sozialistisch* (i.e. socialist); and the associated substantives (*Deutschland*/Germany; *Sozialismus*/socialism). The historical and political context is presented, which help to better understand the shift from a German national identity to an ideological national identity.

Franck Orban's contribution is in French and focuses on the French far-right various discourses towards General De Gaulle inheritance, which is widely politically celebrated in France. Beyond noticing the current use of language to be able to both claim and reject this inheritance (respectively referring to the adjective *gaulienne* and *gauliste*), Orban sets the historical background (and the related discourses) in which this choice is embedded. Looking at language underlines the machineries of the trade-off between, on the one hand, the need of an alternative support to undemonise (*dédiaboliser*) the National Front while seeking votes to reach political power, and, on the other hand, its core value where the greatness of France is considered as

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John Todd's contribution is in English and focuses on British eurosceptic discourses, which helps to understand the choice of people who voted for Brexit. Using discourse analysis and securitisation theory, Todd underlines how EU is assimilated in these discourses to several threats toward the British identity and sovereignty. His analysis is based on UKIP speeches and news reports written by unequivocal eurosceptic columnists. The analysis sheds light on the following identified threats: EU conceived as Nazi Germany, EU seen as mass immigration channel, EU seen as Soviet Russia, and the threat from terrorism and organised crime (however the two later threats are less mentioned).

Guri Ellen Barstad's contribution is in French and deals with the relation between nation and language in Canada. Her analysis is based on two novels: *Volkswagen Blues* (1984) written by Jacques Poulin¹⁵, and *Vers l'Ouest* (2011) written by Mahigan Lepage¹⁶. Barstad first presents the various uses and meanings of the word "nation" in Canada. Then, she focuses on how the chosen novelists enable a questioning within this national framework, without becoming a political manifest. While Poulin's text interlaced French and English (and the main characters agree with an ongoing building of nation without denying the past), Lepage's text focuses on the conflictive relation between these two languages in Canada.

Wladimir Chavez Vaca's contribution is in English and focuses on the contemporary social and political interests toward the figure of General Eloy Alfaro (1842-1912) in Ecuador. His analysis is based on a film (*La Revolución de Alfaro*, 2009, by Juan Pérez Ponce)¹⁷, a children's magazine (*Ábrete Sésamo*, 2013-2014)¹⁸, and a novel (*Alfaro en la Sombra*, 2012, written by Gonzalo Ortiz Crespo)¹⁹. After a biographical presentation of Alfaro, Vaca introduces the current political context, notably toward the consolidation of the Ecuadorian identity. Indeed, even not mentioned in the three cultural products of the corpus, it belongs to the fertile ground of this strong interest.

Elin Nesje Vestli's contribution is in German and deals with the literature produced in German-speaking countries, which invites to think about German literature from a wider point of view. Her analysis of the autobiographical based novel *Vielleicht Esther. Geschichten* (2014) written by Katja Petrowskajas underlines the questioning of transnational and multilingual identity, beyond the shift from Russian to German, beyond the fact that German stays unfamiliar (*fremd*) to the author.

André Avias' contribution is in French and focuses on *francophonie* (French speaking community)²⁰. The objective is to assess whether, in the capacity of an identity, *francophonie* it is much more related to linguistics, culture, or transnationalism. Avias' analysis is based on three novels: *L'Africain* (2005) written by JMG Le Clézio²¹, *L'enfant noir* (1953) written by

¹⁵ This novel is translated in English with the same title.

¹⁶ To our knowledge, this book is not translated in English.

¹⁷ Translation of the title: *Alfaro's Revolution* (no English DVD found).

¹⁸ Translation of the magazine title: *Open Sesame*.

¹⁹ To our knowledge, this book is not translated in English.

²⁰ When speaking about Francophone countries, the wording in French is *Francophonie* instead of *francophonie*. In the contribution, the focus is on the pragmatic use of French rather than on the linguistic system itself.

²¹ This novel is translated in English with the following title: *The African*.

Camara Laye²², and *Rue des Tambourins* (1969) written by Taos Amrouche²³. These three sources are all in relation to autobiographical elements. They all deal with a disappearing past, while celebrating the multiculturalism of *francophonie* identities.

Anastasia Parianou's contribution is in German and focuses on the small translation languages. She underlines that, in this case, as the link with culture and identity is still quite strong, translation zones may foster nation enhancement. While she depicts the correlation between language and identity as an illusion, she takes it into account as the studied representations are based on it. This contribution is theoretical, and thus may be confronted to all national contexts which involve small languages.

Vilemini Sosoni's contribution is in English and deals with Eurolect effect on national language, legal culture, and sense of Europeanness through the case of Greece. His analysis is based on 50 EU directives' official Greek translations in comparison with their transposition in into Greek legal system. Sosoni uses AntConc to implement the analysis with a focus on europeisms and collocations. The results show that the transposition into laws goes with linguistic changes, i.e. Greek Eurolect additions.

Arne Kruse's contribution is in English and deals with Scots, which was not included in the recent debate around Scotland's independence. After the presentation of a history of Scots as a language, Kruse focuses on nowadays situation. Notably, she asks if Scots is still a language today according Kloss' model. Indeed, for several decades, elites preferred the use of Standard English, and nowadays English is the most widely used language in Scotland. Associated to low social standing, Scots is still spoken, and linked to social belonging rather than national belonging.

Jürgen F. Schopp's contribution is in German and focuses on the use of scripts, and their relationship to national identity definition, as it happens here in relation to German national identity. *Broken* scripts (i.e. **BLACK** letter, instead of Roman-face fronts) were used for German-language texts. Schopp presents the strong link from language (*Deutsch*/German), to the name of the country (*Deutschland*/Germany), and to the script choice. While Antiqua is now used for international integration, still resorting to broken scripts is not neutral, having become nowadays captured by various positionings.

Arnstein Hjelde and Bente Kolberg Jansson's contribution is in English and focuses on the Norwegian-American community (in the US) acceptance and use of the language reforms implemented in Norway. Hjelde and Janssons underline the observed changes and the status quo, including their meaning in relation to the identity of Norwegian-Americans (who still use Danish for the written form, which is enough to support their identity) and Norwegians in Norway (whom identity is supported by using written Norwegian).

Overall, I found the volume very interesting for various reasons. First, each contribution gives access to a complex context, being accessible without being simplistic. This facilitates international comparisons among the contexts described by contributors, as between these and readers' research context background. Second, through its international scope, *Language and Nation. Crossroads and Connections* covers the various dimensions of how language may be linked to nation. Third, the detailed historical and national backgrounds enable to situate

²² This novel is translated in English with the following title: *The Dark Child*.

²³ To our knowledge, this book is not translated in English.

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contemporary national identity issues. Fourth, the written attention to readers makes this volume accessible to a wide audience, from undergraduate students to senior scholars, and including the experts interesting in understanding nation and identity building in the concerned contexts. Of course, this relies on the linguistic skills of readers. I choose here to underline the advantage of the linguistic choice for this volume rather than underlying the drawback if the reader is not familiar with English, German, and/or French. Indeed, gathering contributions in several languages in the same volume encourages multilingualism toward research, building bridges between various national contexts and languages. This enhances research dissemination without selecting scholars on the basis of their skills in solely one of the language used for the volume.