

**PATRICK, Donna, 2003 *Language, Politics and Social Interaction in an Inuit Community*, Berlin and New York, Mouton de Gruyter, Language, Power and Social Process, 8, 269 pages.**

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inédits, tirés pour la plupart des Archives nationales du Canada et de celles de l'Église anglicane du Canada (General Synod Archives); à cet ensemble s'ajoutent 65 dessins de commande illustrant la vie quotidienne. Ce très bel ouvrage collectif contient de précieux témoignages sur une période-charnière de l'histoire des Inuit, il a en outre le mérite de faire entendre une parole au moment de son passage à l'écrit.

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PATRICK, Donna

2003 *Language, Politics and Social Interaction in an Inuit Community*, Berlin and New York, Mouton de Gruyter, Language, Power and Social Process, 8, 269 pages.

*Language, Politics and Social Interaction in an Inuit Community* is the eighth publication in Mouton de Gruyter's Language, Power and Social Process series. In it, Donna Patrick describes and analyzes the current sociolinguistic situation in Great Whale River (Kuujjuarapik), Quebec, paying particular attention to processes of power, solidarity, and ethnic identity. The early chapters provide historical context of language practices, analyzing processes of early contact between the four groups currently inhabiting the community—Inuit, Cree, and English and French-speaking Euro-Canadians. The latter chapters describe the present-day interactions with comparisons to studies in other communities. The book's central argument is that Inuktitut, Cree, English and French each have a specific value in the community; these values are shaped by historical, political, cultural, social and economic factors, which influence the languages' use and thus their perpetuation.

Chapter one introduces the research in question: its guiding questions, its relevance, the method followed and theoretical framework adopted. Patrick explains that this book is about linguistic practices in Great Whale River, more specifically about the continued use of Inuktitut among the local Inuit; a vitality that she attributes to broader social processes: "The central argument of this book is that in order to understand the vitality of Inuktitut at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we need to look at both the wider historical, political, and economic processes and at their relation to everyday language practices at the micro-level of interaction" (p. 4). The work is interdisciplinary, inspired by a number of theoretical approaches, firmly anchored in Bourdieu's (1977, 1982) concept of the linguistic marketplace and symbolic domination.

The second chapter contextualizes the study. The research site, Great Whale River, is presented as a settlement composed of three smaller, distinct communities—Inuit

(Kuujjuarapik), Cree (Whapmagoostui), and *Qallunaat*, or Euro-Canadian (Poste-de-la-Baleine)—in which four languages (all thriving) have “currency”: Inuktitut, Cree, French, and English. As Patrick explains, the politics of ethnicity, nationalism, and Aboriginal empowerment over the past 30 years (in Canada and internationally) have molded the context in which current linguistic practices and social processes must be understood. To this end, she briefly discusses political milestones such as modern land claims, the evolution of formal schooling in the North, and Canadian constitutional talks of the early 1990s. These developments are interpreted as both reflecting and contributing to a climate of increased Aboriginal empowerment. Through such illustrations, Patrick shows how the interactions between Aboriginal and Euro-Canadians in Great Whale River are evolving in a national and international context of negotiations of power and identity, where ways of acting out ethnicity (including but not limited to language use) take on particular symbolic importance.

Chapter three goes further back in the colonial history of Canada to exemplify the evolution and impact of contact between the two Aboriginal communities, Cree and Inuit, and between these groups and the incoming Europeans. The influences of explorers, traders and missionaries, and, later, of the Canadian and Quebec governments (*i.e.* both English and French influences) are discussed. Patrick shows, through critical analysis of archival documentation as well as life history interviews, how Inuit, Cree, French and English have represented the other group in relation to themselves and how perceptions of ethnicity have thus been constructed, reflected and perpetuated. Such representations of the groups of people co-inhabiting Great Whale River have shaped and served to justify the social interactions and language practices that are the focus of the book.

Chapter four begins the more specific discussion of the case study in Great Whale River based on data collected through questionnaires, interviews, and participant observation. Patrick describes patterns of interaction and language use in terms of two competing and overlapping “markets,” each with its own system of exchange. The “dominant” (*i.e.* capitalist) market is shaped by “Southern Canadian” values, attitudes and practices and, due to various historical factors, is dominated by English. Although Inuktitut is most clearly associated with the “alternative” (*i.e.* “traditional”) market, Patrick suggests that its maintenance is intricately, and paradoxically, tied to its modernization and incorporation into the dominant market’s institutions, such as the workplace and schools. French is shown as an increasingly important language, though it is described as “a necessity but not a priority” (p. 128). Inuktitut, English and French are associated with different “forms of power and prestige” (p. 151), where their use is “exchanged” for jobs, relationships, material resources, ethnic and “national” social identities.

Chapter five effectively moves from the macro discussion of markets to a micro description of specific linguistic practices in the community. Despite the prestige of French in Quebec as a whole, and what Patrick reports as its increasing status as a language of power in Great Whale River, very few Inuit there use it on a daily basis. English and Inuktitut are used most frequently: Inuktitut among family, at community gatherings, etc., and English as a *lingua franca*, for employment and intercultural

communication. As Patrick points out, linguistic behaviour is closely linked to broader social processes. One's movement within different domains and interaction with various community members affects one's opportunity and need to use Inuktitut, Cree, English or French. Furthermore, bilingual or multilingual individuals exploit their linguistic resources for diverse ends; for example, use of Inuktitut, French and Cree within their respective communities is important for solidarity and for setting boundaries between groups. Patrick shows how these politics of inclusion/exclusion, and the power inequalities inherent in the choice of one language over another, both reflect and have helped shape the images of distinct groups in Great Whale River.

In chapter six, the ideas presented in the preceding chapters are synthesized. Patrick suggests that Inuktitut has been maintained, and predicts that it will remain strong, partly due to the "complex interplay of French and English in this region and on the relation of these two dominant languages to Inuktitut" (p. 211). The Inuit's political triumphs safeguard their ability to thrive as a community, providing the necessary context for continued use and modernization of their language. In brief, Patrick shows how discourse and related practices in the communities have shaped identities and how the current sociolinguistic situation can be understood in light of broader historical, political, social and economic influences. This concluding chapter is followed by an appendix, including three maps, figures showing the questionnaire results, and a copy of the bilingual questionnaire.

In sum, faithful to its title, this book presents a compelling analysis of language, politics and social interaction in Kuujjuarapik, Quebec. A major strength of the book lies in the contextualization and well-rounded picture that it traces. Very little prior knowledge is assumed; Patrick touches all the bases, and addresses most questions the reader might have, if only briefly. Also, Patrick quotes her research participants extensively, giving the reader intriguing first-hand insights into the realities she describes. As such, this book will appeal to a readership beyond her intended audience of academics, educational policy planners, and others interested in language issues in Quebec.

While Patrick is meticulous in providing the background information necessary for the interpretation of linguistic and social processes, she is also cautious throughout the book in attributing motive or interpreting actions. This prudence seems particularly appropriate to her goal of highlighting the intricacies of power struggles between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities as reflected in and created by discourse about the respective groups. One could question, nonetheless, certain of the author's conclusions. For instance, she refutes reports from elders in the community that youth are using more English in part by explaining that, in her observations, they used predominantly Inuktitut (p. 183-184). Based on her subsequent analysis of language being used for purposes of exclusion, it would seem fair to acknowledge this as a possible alternative explanation. One might also question the author's assertion that the "study has implications for an understanding of the mechanisms involved in the persistence of minority languages and for a sociolinguistic theory of language 'survival'" (p. 213). While Patrick is convincing in her argument that Inuktitut is strong in Kuujjuarapik, and that social, political, and economic factors have contributed to this

strength, the relative recency of contact between Inuit and Euro-Canadians in this region, as compared to other regions where language shift is evident (Dorais 1996: 57-66, for example, documents such shift), is almost certainly also a factor which cannot be ignored.

In terms of style, the book is written clearly and concisely. In line with its interdisciplinary approach, technical jargon has been kept to a minimum. There are a few typos that have slipped into the text, as well as one error in translation of a French quotation (notable because it alters the meaning of the quotation [p. 138]). Such inconsistencies are few and far between, though, and do nothing to detract from what is a thorough and fascinating ethnography of language use in a multilingual community in Northern Quebec.

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- SCHNEIDER, William  
2002 ... *So They Understand: Cultural Issues in Oral History*, Logan, Utah, Utah State University Press, 198 pages.

William Schneider, currently curator of oral history at the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Elmer Rasmuson Library, comes to the authorship of this volume honestly through decades of close, hands-on involvement in numerous Alaskan oral history endeavours. He has also spent time in South Africa helping a university there establish an oral history program to document the role of the university's students and staff in that country's resistance to apartheid. His book is enriched by this sojourn.