

BOOK NOTES

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BRENDAN H. O'CONNOR, *Multilingual baseball: Language learning, identity, and intercultural communication in the transnational game*. London: Bloomsbury, 2023. Pp. 240. Hb. £85.50.

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Multilingual baseball investigates areas of interest for multilingualism, and specifically bilingualism, in the worldwide baseball enterprise. Illuminating unique spaces in baseball where language diversity contributes to linguistic and cultural collisions, the book takes an ethnographic approach towards filling a gap in current scholarship to express the abundant presence of multilingualism in transnational professional sports. Each chapter features in-depth conversations with 'baseball people' who work in the expansive moving parts of the sport's intricate system. Between interviews of people of interest and mentions of relevant anthropological and linguistic concepts, O'Connor clears up common misconceptions about the functions of language in professional sports while sharing deep introspections of multilingualism from differing positions in the transnational business of baseball.

O'Connor's observations begin with examples from US history that illustrate contradictory ideas of race, ethnicity, and language diversity. In providing context to past figures and events in baseball history, he claims that baseball is ripe with sociolinguistic discourse, although baseball fans may assert that race and language are negligible in the beloved sport.

The first chapter introduces us to the young Latin American prospects attending Major League Baseball (MLB) sanctioned institutions. Here, bilingual education is designed to serve the potential of their future success on the international stage, as adolescent players transform into professionals. The rigorous socialization based in MLB-approved behavior and English instruction found in these programs, O'Connor says, encourages values and skills that program faculty insist will result in the successful realization of their students' potential.

In chapter 2, the book expands on what comes next for these Latin American prospects, as far as how applicable the lessons taught in MLB club programs are when they leave the program. Language teachers take on the responsibility of supplementing these prospects with tools to thrive in English-speaking contexts and providing those left unrecruited to the Minor Leagues with marketable assets for non-baseball careers.

In chapter 3, O'Connor then turns attention from bilingualism in Latin America to the experiences of players in the US who become bilingual after joining multilingual



teams. The testimonials in this chapter support the book's initial commentary on the visibility of diversity in baseball. For instance, the language ideologies associated with white ballplayers in these testimonials reveal marked understandings of the relationship between race and non-English language competence. Specifically, O'Connor finds that white players who successfully become bilingual do so to build strong relationships with their multicultural team, doubling as language brokers to promote camaraderie on and off the field. The topic of language brokering extends to chapter 4, in which interpreters in the Asian baseball scene recount situations where bilingualism granted them social connections and career mobility in multilingual baseball contexts.


O'Connor's conclusion returns to race and language ideologies identified in the introduction by once again challenging the widespread belief that professional sports are exempt from the language disputes present in our multicultural and multilingual society.

As an accessible and informative exploration of language diversity in popular culture, *Multilingual baseball* is an engaging text meant for scholars and baseball enthusiasts alike.

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PATRICIA L. DUNMIRE, *The great nation of futurity: The discourse and temporality of American national identity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023. Pp. 216. Hb. £54.

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As a site of ideological and material contest, the future can form a vibrant part of political imaginaries. Actors may, for instance, propagate a particular vision of the future as a means of justifying their role within that vision while legitimating present actions taken to secure it. During the Cold War and its immediate aftermath, the United States, as Dunmire argues in this detailed qualitative study, did just that: it leveraged futurity to legitimate itself, against the spread of communism, as an exemplar of democratic society and to construe its 'privileged position vis-à-vis the future' as justification for leading the world (1). Such claims, Dunmire argues, align with the exceptionalist ideology and rhetoric inherent in American national identity, discourse that continues to shape how the US authorizes its geopolitical strategies and actions.

Dunmire situates these arguments in a manifold analytic framework that wedds discourse theory and speech acts to the mythopoesis of the American jeremiad and the politics of temporality. Specifically, she views the construal of space-time as