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Social Media and Minority Languages: Convergence and the Creative Industries.
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Kyle Conway

(University of North Dakota, USA, kyle.conway@und.edu)

Social Media and Minority Languages is a collection of timely, meticulous reports about minority language media (MLM) in the era of convergence. In different ways, the contributors all address the question of how MLM can strengthen language use and speakers' sense of belonging to a linguistic and cultural community. They adopt an engaged approach and investigate a wide range of phenomena, such as the tensions between centralized and decentralized modes of production and between passive and active modes of reception.

The book is divided into three parts sandwiched between an introduction and a conclusion. In the introduction, Donald R. Browne and Enrique Uribe-Jongbloed provide a thorough overview of the state of MLM research. They begin with the historical development of MLM, from newspapers to radio to television. They identify five factors that have influenced the development MLM, including 1) the cost and availability of technology (for reception historically and production more recently), 2) the economic viability of MLM outlets (based on the potential audience size), 3) the presence of social movements that seek to provide a minority voice, 4) the resistance by members of the "national" community who are suspicious of minority voices, and 5) the perceived utility of MLM to the majority community (i.e., whether MLM outlets are worth the expense). They also provide an overview of MLM research in which they identify 1995 as a turning point after which research increased dramatically. They conclude with a list of future perspectives for MLM research, including 1) language (standards, dialects, and language instruction), 2) professionalism (as MLM norms converge with and deviate from "mainstream" media norms), 3) financing, and finally 4) the development of a sense of community among minority language speakers organized around MLM outlets.

Part 1 includes three chapters on MLM theory. Uribe-Jongbloed (chap. 1) asks a series of conceptual questions about the trade-offs and contradictions of policy-driven and user-driven approaches to media as the boundaries between formerly distinct technologies blur. László Vincze and Tom Moring (chap. 2), working within the uses-and-gratifications tradition of media studies, ask whether “ethnolinguistic identity can be a motivational factor worth considering when studying the impact of media on language minorities” (p. 47). Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones (chap. 3) reconsiders the role of media as indices of linguistic vitality. Historically, she says, such indices have privileged interaction in community, but in the convergence era, notions of “interaction” and “community” have both moved online.

Part 2 examines social networking, and part 3 examines the creative media industries, with a focus on radio and television. The distinction is artificial, of course, because of the way users incorporate televisual content into their social networks, either directly (through hyperlinks) or indirectly (through their discussions of TV), and the chapters at the end of part 2 might have fit equally well in part 3. The fourteen chapters in these sections present a wide range of brief reports that each address one main point, although they address their respective points well. (Their brevity seems due to the fact they were originally papers presented at a conference.) They address the combinations of language and media described in Table 1.

Their methods are also varied. They include quantitative approaches, including surveys, sampling, and various forms of content analysis (Dunliffe *et al.* [chap. 4], Wagner [chap. 5], Johnson [chap. 6], and Cunliffe and ap Dyfrig [chap. 8]) and ethnographic/participatory approaches (Dołowy-Rybińska [chap. 7] and Lysaght [chap. 16]). They also draw on policy analysis, often in light of authors’ professional experience (Law [chap. 11], O’Connell [chap. 13], Cordonet and Forniès [chap. 13], Chalmers *et al.* [chap. 14], and Pavón and Zuberogoitia [chap. 15]).

In the final chapter, Mike Cormack returns to the book’s central theme, MLM in the era of convergence: “But if the *raison d’être* [of MLM studies] is language, the question arises as to how media—and more specifically, new media—can be used to help languages” (p. 255). New media

Table 1: Media and languages examined in parts 2 and 3

		Medium			
		Internet	Television	Radio	Film
Language	Welsh	Cunliffe et al. (chap. 4); Johnson (chap. 6); Cunliffe and ap Dyfrig (chap. 8)			
	Luxembourgish	Wagner (chap. 5)			
	Kashubian	Dolowy-Rybińska (chap. 7)			
	Catalan				Cordonet and Forniès (chap. 13)
	Irish		O'Connell (chap. 12) Lysaght (chap. 16)	O'Connell (chap. 12);	
	Gaelic (Scottish)		Chalmers et al. (chap. 14)		
	Basque		Pavón and Zubero-goitia (chap. 15)		
	Māori		Lysaght (chap. 16)		
	multiple	Mac Uidhílin (chap. 9); Lacour <i>et al.</i> (chap. 10)	Narbaiza et al. (chap. 17)	Law (chap. 11)	

pose a range of conceptual challenges: notions of text and audience rooted in broadcasting cannot be translated easily to the internet because hyper-texts do not necessarily have a stable form and internet users are far more individuated than the term “audience” implies.

The book coheres well in its structure. The case studies in parts 2 and 3 are valuable on their own as contributions to the empirical study of MLM, but they also provide material for the inductive approach the authors take in the more theoretical sections of the book. Indeed, throughout the book, the authors make explicit links with the work of the other contributors (a benefit, no doubt, of the book’s origins in a conference). The book’s main weakness, however, is the brevity of the case studies. For instance, Bea Narbaiza and her coauthors (chap. 17) interviewed managers at eight European media companies, who described the different industrial and cultural factors that influence which communities get broadcasts in their language and which do not. But Narbaiza *et al.* relate these discussions in a rather cursory way and, while their summary identifies the major factors manag-

ers consider, it seems they might have a lot more to say about the relationships between languages and the construction of “national” audiences.

The interplay between the theory chapters and the case studies suggests another way the book’s analysis might expand the range of questions scholars ask about MLM. Various chapters hint at (but do not explore in much depth) the links between language, community, and geography. These questions are central to those media scholars who ask more broadly about globalization. As Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2009) writes, “What globalization means in structural terms [...] is the *increase in the available modes of organization*: transnational, international, macroregional, national, microregional, municipal, local” (pp. 72–73, emphasis in original). Mapping where minority language speakers are located, how they move, and how they use MLM could provide insight into how people experience these modes of organization. That insight, in turn, could provide answers to questions about language use and people’s sense of community, especially as it expands to include virtual communities on the internet.

The idea that it might be possible to expand this research, however, does not detract from the quality of *Social Media and Minority Languages* as it stands. It is a solid contribution to the literature on MLM, and it will be of interest not only to MLM scholars but also to communication scholars, linguists, sociologists, and others interested in language, media, and community.

References

Nederveen Pieterse, J. (2009). *Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange* (2nd ed.). New York: Rowman and Littlefield.