Sari Pietikäinen and Helen Kelly-Holmes (eds):
Multilingualism and the Periphery
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In this interesting and perceptive volume, Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes draw together almost a dozen scholars working in the field of sociolinguistics (in its widest interpretation) to consider aspects of the periphery, and its potential as a lens through which multilingualism can be explored. They seek to unpick the traditional opposition between a standard language perspective and a heteroglossic or polynomic approach by rethinking the relationship between the centre and the periphery as dynamic, fluid, and potentially contradictory. Through this collection of contributions, Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes seek to stimulate explorations of this relationship, especially in minority language contexts, with a view to understanding better language ideologies from several angles, including tourism, economics, and culture.

After the editors’ introduction, the volume opens with Monica Heller’s review of the phases of capitalism and how they reposition an understanding of the centre-periphery relationship. Tracing the development of this relationship in Francophone Canada from the eighteenth century to the present day, Heller challenges the reader to consider multilingualism as a construct in power relations. Also in North America, Mireille McLaughlin explores multilingualism and authenticity in art in Acadie, specifically from the perspective of a writer, an animation artist, and an electro hip–hop collective. She argues that peripheral multilingualism has been commodified in the arts, and that its peripheral nature authenticates the artistic capital.

Joan Pujolar reports on an aspect of a large project discussing language, tourism, and identity in Wales, Catalonia, and Francophone Canada. Taking the discourse of heritage as the prism through which to examine questions of gender and ethnicity, Pujolar focuses on Glanporth in Wales, and reaches a similar conclusion to McLaughlin, namely that peripherality is a linguistic resource in itself. Pujolar
contends that gender intersects with the commodification of a minority language in a way that is forward-looking, rather than nostalgic. Sari Pietikäinen takes the reader on a visit to a Sámi reindeer farm near Inari, in northern Finland, and presents this visit as a performance whereby practices of authenticity in a polycentric periphery can be explored. She argues that centripetal and centrifugal forces coincide to produce a new, authentic semiotic resource in Sámi.

In their contribution, Alexandra Jaffe and Cédric Oliva analyse the negotiation of borders and status through Corsican in commercial and touristic domains. Taking well established language ideologies as a starting point, Jaffe and Oliva examine several creative frames, including stickers, leaflets, advertising, and tourist interactions, and they conclude that domains play a key role in the enactment of ideologies. In tourism, what is peripheral and marginalised in one context, they argue, is authenticating and emblematic in another, especially in relation to Tuscan Italian. Helen Kelly-Holmes’ chapter takes as its focus the website of a pottery workshop on the Dingle Peninsula, in south-west Ireland. She asks whether the practices of an individual business centralise or peripheralise Irish, and concludes that, on the one hand, the website in question mirrors accurately language beliefs and practices in Ireland, whereby an incomplete Irish version of the website points to the status of the language across the country. On the other hand, the potentially surprising inclusion of a Danish-language version of the website underscores the complexity and highly personalised configuration of language practices in a given periphery.

Nikolas Coupland tackles the idea of tea as meaningfully Welsh in two historical American contexts, namely the nineteenth and twentieth-century USA, and contemporary Patagonia. Using tea advertising placards, newspaper advertisements, and tea house signs, Coupland suggests that Welshness is indexed and authenticated in these two peripheries because the criteria of Welsh tea’s historicity, systemic coherence, and shared value are met, despite the considerable spatial distance between Wales and North America or Argentina.

As part of their wider exploration into questions of language, space, and travel, Adam Jaworski and Crispin Thurlow take the reader on a step-by-step journey through their local airports (Sea-Tac in Seattle, and Cardiff in Wales) and examine the semiotic landscapes of these peripheral sites that exist in most major towns and cities. They conclude that airports are simultaneously peripheral and central sites, positioned within both local and global networks. From the perspective of language and discourse, they maintain that there are also spatial and indexical peripheries and centres within airports, and that it is in these peripheries that the richest multilingualism is attested.

Brigitte Busch examines the border space between what is now Austria and Slovenia, in the Austrian region of Corinthia, where what she calls ‘the spatio-linguistic configurations’ (p. 212) of the Slavic haček diacritic suggest a playful and ironic response to tensions between speakers of German and Slovene in this particular periphery.

This collection is generally cohesive, although the chapter by Coupland seems incongruous, in part because of its approach to the subject and the fact that the rest of the discussions are contemporary. Overall, the chapters are stimulating for