

Hearing the voice of a new generation

THIS issue of *ET* has a special focus on English among more recent migrants in the USA and Canada, guest edited by Renée Blake.* Immigration from diverse sources continues to be an important defining feature of these societies and their linguistic landscapes.

The first three articles cover Asian American communities that have been traditionally viewed as 'model minorities' in terms of their assimilation to the norms of the white mainstream. We travel to New York City, the most populated Chinese city in the U.S., where Amy Wong introduces us to 'American-born Chinese' (ABCs) who use varying degrees of New York City English, depending on their social network ties and lifestyle orientation to the culture of their parents. Across the nation to San Francisco, Lauren Hall-Lew and Rebecca Starr remind us that the migration history of Chinese Americans in the San Francisco Bay area goes back over 200 years, forcing us to look well beyond the second generation. Nevertheless, they find that today the English and culture of new immigrants 'fresh off the boat' (FOB) are also important for ABC's identity. From the East to the West and onto the South-central U.S., Vincent Chanethom takes us to a small community of Laotian Americans in Amarillo, Texas. Here children of Lao immigrants are not only mastering English, but also influencing the native language of their parents.

Next, Sai Samant reveals a little studied, but rapidly growing community of Arab Americans in the Midwest 'heartland'. In southeast Michigan, we learn that Arab American youth, like their white counterparts, are drawing on English to express differences among themselves, in terms of gender, place of Middle Eastern descent, or degree of connection to their Muslim faith. Back to New York City to another understudied group, whose parents have long histories of migrat-

ing to the United States--West Indian Americans. Renée Blake and Cara Shousterman show that West Indian Americans, alongside African Americans use English in distinctive yet subtle ways that reveal the complexities of being black in NYC. The next two articles look at English among Latino Americans. Carmen Fought discusses the rapid shift to English by second generation Mexican Americans in the U.S., particularly in the West and Southwest. Mexican Americans may use Chicano English alone, or code-switch between English and Spanish to assert their identities. Lourdes Torres moves us back to the Midwest to look at Puerto Rican and Mexican American communities in Chicago. She too points to the loss of Spanish to English dominance which she laments. Torres also discusses the ethnic and linguistic divisions that exist between Puerto Ricans and the more recent Mexican Americans in a Chicago high school.

Finally, we leave the U.S. to its neighboring Canada. It is important to remember that Europeans are still migrating to the North America and should not be erased from the linguistic landscape with the assumption that they will just assimilate. How do they do this? Lisa Del Torto offers us a glimpse into an Italian family and community in Ontario. She shows us that although Italian is virtually lost by the third generation, the second generation relies on Italian to stylize their English and create distinctive identities. Del Torto refocuses our attention away from language loss to the ways English is used to reflect 'linguistic creativity and innovation as elements in linguistic maintenance'.

In this edition, we experience a new generation speaking. We should listen carefully.

Guest editor Renée Blake, with the ET editors.

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