

William L. Leap y Tom Boellstorff, eds.
Speaking in Queer Tongues: Globalization and Gay Language.
Champaign, IL: The University of Illinois Press, 2004.

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Through the collection of essays contained in *Speaking in Queer Tongues: Globalization and Gay Language*, the editors attempt to contravene the general conception that Western constructions of gay culture may be percolating the gay communities around the world, forging a transnational gay identity. Essentially, their assertion is that theories and studies in sexual identities should shift from the previous theoretical frameworks about globalization which are embedded with the modernist fantasy of convergence. Instead, they argue that such theories and studies should incorporate a scheme which reflects a more inclusive, respectful and decentered sexual politics through which we will be able to comprehend how each gay community around the globe negotiates and re-constructs gay identity through constant contact with the hegemonic North Atlantic white gay culture. In order to advance their viewpoint, the editors focus on the encounter between various gay languages and gay English in France, Germany, francophone Canada, Israel, South Africa, New Zealand, Indonesia, Thailand, Cuban American Miami and urban African America.

Although the collection departs from the understanding that language is a fundamental tool for shaping identity and community —and thus its focal point is how different communities build sexual identity through language and cultural encounters and how the latter two social phenomena may determine sexual identity— in the end, the book offers more than a linguistic or anthropological perspective. In fact, the authors of the ten essays that make up the collection surpass with their insightful reflections and storytelling the limits of the linguistics and ethnographic studies. As a result, they have produced a

book of personal and historical accounts that serves as a reflection on current constructions of gay identity in various cultures, current status of gay communities around the world, and the different challenges that gays in dissimilar parts of the globe have encountered while reclaiming citizenship and their subsequent victories. However, the main purpose of the compilation is never lost. Defying the misconception that globalization, and specifically gay globalization, means becoming more like Western gay culture is effectively weaved throughout the collection in a progression of three stadiums.

The first stadium can be called *Gay Globalization within the Western Gay Realm*. The first three essays of the compilation examine how North Atlantic white gay culture lexical items regarding consumerism, mass-media, and activism have penetrated different Western cultures as part of a shared network that has facilitated the inclusion not only of gay English lexical items into non English culture, but also of shared knowledge of desire, sexual identity, citizenship and capitalist values. Nevertheless, the essays purport that the use of gay English in not English cultures has not nullified the agency of the gay men and women in those communities, since they have been able to construct a distinctive gay identity apart from the U.S. gay culture. For example, Dennis M. Provencher concludes that selecting English lexicon and other elements of gay English cooperative discourse has not impeded French gays to articulate a French way of being gay. Mining also establishes that the use of transnational gay items in Germany has not been able to supplant local traditions; on the contrary, it helped build a sense of a global gay “we”. Finally, the editors end this part of the collection with the reflection of Higgins on gay language and his hypothesis that gay language, rather than being an entity, is a process through which the locals can accommodate national pressures and not a global force from which they cannot recede.

With this conclusion the editors move to the second stadium in their compilation: *Instances of Resisting Globalizing Gay Forces*. The examples in this part come from non-Western cultures that to some extent, through colonialism or political and/or economical exchanges, have established contact with North Atlantic white gay culture. The examples can be divided into four categories: 1. use of gay English lexical items giving them new significance; 2. confrontations of gay language conceptions of gay identity with local cultural conceptions on this matter; 3. use of gay English lexical items to broaden the definitions or conceptions of gay identity; and, 4. the creation of a new gay language altogether albeit the constant influx of gay English. Through

the examples portrayed in this stadium, the editors not only convey the reality of resistance towards gay language globalization, but also demonstrate the close relation between sexual identity and national and/or ethnic identities. This relationship is what, in the end, opens a space for resistance and allows gay communities to forge they own identity and move away from the globalizing forces.

Two essays of the five that compose this second stadium of the book stand out: Jackson's on Thailand's gender/sex minorities and Boellstorff's on gay Indonesians and cultures of belonging. These two authors question Foucauldian theories of sexuality, as they do not seem to fit the evidence collected in their studies. In turn, their data forces us to rethink the idea of "global queering" and the Western ideas of sexual identity and sexual discourse.

This questioning of Foucault's sexual theories unlocks the door for the last and most daring stadium of the compilation, which can be called: *Contestation Forces within the Gay Western Realm*. In this part of the book, the editors present two essays that illustrate how other gay linguistic practices—rather than the one from North Atlantic white gay culture—exist within the borders of gay U.S. These practices come from two important groups in the U.S.: blacks and Hispanic (specifically Cubans).

Susana Peña's essay on "Language and Meaning in Miami's Cuban American Gay Worlds," which forms part of this last part of the book, is, in my opinion, the key essay in the collection. Peña offers a theoretical framework for understanding how and why languages of gay expression and pleasure are increasingly plural and shifting. She proposes that Fernando Ortiz's concept of transculturation be used in the study of gay languages and identities. Such a proposal fits perfectly with the accounts contained in all the essays of the collection, as it furthers not only the understanding of the processes that arise from the interactions of various gay communities, but it also serves to explain the proliferation of different gay identities around the globe even though the presence of globalizing forces.

In short, the compilation is a commendable endeavor to provide gay communities around the world not only with an account of their histories and current realities, but also to bestow researchers in areas such as linguistics, anthropology, queer studies, cultural studies, citizenship, sexual identity and globalization with new tools for understanding the linguistic and social realities of gays as well as the interaction between globalizing forces, identity (sexual and/or ethnic) and language. Part of this effort is contained in the

introduction of the compilation which offers a theoretical framework to understand the interface between globalization, language and sexual identity. Yet, even though the introduction offers a preview of the ten essays and connects them to some extent, the collection lacks a final reflection on how the ten essays that make up the book speak to each other and may serve to expand our notions on forging a globalized or national sexual identity (presuming that the construction of such identities may be possible). Nonetheless, its contribution to all the fields related to social studies is immeasurable.