The Languages of Nation

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The Languages of Nation

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Edited by
Carol Percy and
Mary Catherine Davidson

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1 Introduction: Multidisciplinary and Multilingual Perspectives on 'Patriotic' Prescriptivism

Carol Percy and
Mary Catherine Davidson

Research in the area of language prescriptivism is often discussed in a monolingual context and 'has generally focused on prescriptions aimed … at native speakers' (McLelland, this volume). *The Languages of Nation: Attitudes and Norms* offers a rich overview of the breadth of approaches currently engaged by established scholars internationally for considering the mechanisms by which language norms more generally emerge, especially in contexts of contact and cross-cultural awareness. Our introduction summarizes the collection's key themes, documenting the historical and geographical persistence of prescriptivisms while revealing their contextual specificity. John Edwards' Foreword further surveys approaches to identity and language norms. By showing that the collective enforcement of norms was as much a key feature of language and belonging in the past as the national maintenance of 'correct' language usage remains today, he (like other authors in this collection) contests scholarly assumptions about nationalism as an exclusively modern phenomenon.

This collection, while contributing to debates over the origins of nationalism and the nature of group identity, introduces readers to approaches from a range of disciplines, periods and languages on the question of what constitute attitudes and norms in many frameworks of collective identity. International in scope and illustratively wide ranging in approach, contributions from scholars both specialist and interdisciplinary explore the roles of