

The Cambridge Handbook of

Sociolinguistics

edited by Rajend Mesthrie

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The Cambridge Handbook of Sociolinguistics

The most comprehensive overview available, this handbook is an essential guide to sociolinguistics today. Reflecting the breadth of research in the field, it surveys a wide range of topics and approaches in the study of language variation and use in society. As well as linguistic perspectives, the handbook includes insights from anthropology, social psychology, the study of discourse and power, conversation analysis, theories of style and styling, language contact, and applied sociolinguistics. Language practices seem to have reached new levels since the communications revolution of the late twentieth century. At the same time, spoken communication is still the main force of language identity, even if social and peer networks of the traditional face-to-face nature are facing stiff competition of the facebook-to-facebook sort. The most authoritative guide to the state of the field, this handbook shows that sociolinguistics provides us – in tandem with other branches of linguistics and the social and natural sciences – with the best tools for understanding our unfolding evolution as social beings.

RAJEND MESTHRIE is Professor of Linguistics in the Department of English at the University of Cape Town, holding an NRF research chair in the area of Language, Migration, and Social Change. He served two terms as President of the Linguistics Society of Southern Africa. He has published widely in the fields of sociolinguistics, with special reference to language contact in South Africa. Among his publications are *Introducing Sociolinguistics* (2nd edn. 2009, with Joan Swann, Ana Deumert, and William Leap), *Language in South Africa* (Cambridge, 2002, ed.), and *World Englishes* (Cambridge, 2008, with Rakesh M. Bhatt).