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KIERAN FILE, *How language shapes relationships in professional sports teams: Power and solidarity dynamics in a New Zealand rugby team*. London: Bloomsbury, 2023. Pp. 239. Hb. £67.

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This timely study—appearing at a moment when scandals over bullying and identity-based prejudice in elite sport are mushrooming—is grounded in the taken-for-granted, everyday interactional practices of a professional New Zealand rugby team. Kieran File’s empirically informed discourse analysis aims to establish a set of hypotheses or principles on which linguists can build a body of research about the culture of high-performance sport.

The description of the conceptual structure of the investigation in chapters 1 and 2 is easily accessible to a broader audience, for whom discussions of power and ideology can be opaque. Sports practitioners, for instance, begin the book with a useful model of how the macro (in this case, interpersonal ideologies rooted in cultural knowledge) interacts with the micro (interactional dynamics, giving to relational ones) in practices they will find familiar. A core conceptual lens offered is the existence of three key roles—that of coach, captain, and players—which are treated with appropriate nuance in the content chapters, yet are easily transferrable to future studies of team dynamics.

In chapters 3–6, File reveals the processes by which predictable asymmetrical power relations are maintained: how, for instance, coaches dominate interactional spaces to perform their agendas via mechanisms of control. While File does not make judgments, the reader is pointed to wider debates about the utility and ethics of power hierarchies in team sport. Some practices are obvious and overt, such as the initiating and closing of team talks, and these are co-constructed via the players’ silence or body language. Other finer-grained practices, such as the various methods of questioning used to exert ‘expert power’, elicit active participation from the players in order to perform different functions, from holding players accountable to motivating them at half-time. Power-sharing between the coaches and captain is an unequal and complex process sanctioned by the head coach, who, in essence, retains overarching authority. In the culture of high-performance sport, perhaps rugby in particular, the evidence suggests that shared power is an unpopular concept. Nevertheless, player-player relations were relatively more open and interactional, albeit within a separate informal and subtle hierarchy of rugby-playing experience.

Chapters 7 and 8 turn to solidarity. Among players, File found that a language of solidarity—for example, chants or terms of address—was used in attempts to bridge

potential divisions, including ethnic ones. But rather than assuming solidarity, the team ritually performed it within physically intimate pre-match huddles, in which the captain remained salient, but could draw on the player role to foster togetherness. These strategies are not available to coaches, for whom the tension between closeness with players and authority over them was more marked. While the coaching staff used humour or informality to bond with players, they did so while preserving social and professional distance.

File brings together the findings to theorise tentatively about ideology in team sport, proposing six cultural principles regarding power and solidarity that paint a picture of relationships as transactional and goal-oriented, always falling into leader-follower patterns with the coach at the top.

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TYLER BARRETT, *A sociolinguistic view of a Japanese ethnic church community*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2020. Pp. 127. Pb. £39.

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In this book, Tyler Barrett foregrounds the complexities surrounding a Japanese ethnic church community in the context of Canada. The rationale for conducting this research was to get a deeper understanding with respect to the views of its members, whose decisions often result in the formation of organizations known as Japanese ethnic churches. According to the author, while previous studies explored Japanese ethnic churches, they did not address its complexities.

Barrett calls for a more relevant description of Japanese ethnic church communities by referring to them as ‘transcultural communities’. The proposed research highlights the fact that Japanese ethnic church communities, while representing cultural and linguistic hybridity, also reveal that its members ‘experience and embody hybridity because of mixing, meshing, take-up and exchange’ (4).

From the outset of the book, the reader is introduced to ‘sacred epistemology’ and ‘secular epistemology’ approaches applied in this study, as well as their differences. Indeed, the author underscores that the ‘secular’ and ‘sacred’ should be distinguished due to their ‘religious and non-religious epistemological perspectives that may vary and may not reflect the infinite amount of potential perspectives that individuals may have’ (9). The author demonstrates that ‘epistemological hybridity’, that is, where ethnic and nationalistic characters are based on knowledge