

FIGHTERS, GIRLS AND OTHER IDENTITIES  
Sociolinguistics in a Martial Arts Club  
Lian Malai Madsen (University of Copenhagen)

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Fighters, Girls and Other Identities

Sociolinguistics in a Martial Arts Club

Lian Malai Madsen

Malai Madsen provides a compelling sociolinguistic account of the identity politics youth enact as they participate in an extracurricular sports club. She argues against popular accounts of social difference, showing how diversity is more heterogeneous than we typically think. The book describes vividly in the details of local semiotic practices how difference is constructed and contested. Stanton E.F. Wortham, University of Pennsylvania, USA

Malai Madsen presents us with a dynamic, erudite and engaging rendition of young people doing a leisure activity of their own choice in contemporary Copenhagen. She invites us into the world of a martial arts club where we come face to face with the local and lived realities of youth negotiating their relationships, describing their successes and failures, relating their hopes and aspirations, and revealing their cultural values and orientations. This fascinating, cutting-edge piece of research sets important new interdisciplinary research agendas in the contemporary sociolinguistics of globalization. Angela Creese, University of Birmingham, UK

In this highly original and compelling study of contemporary urban youth language in a Copenhagen taekwondo club, Lian Malai Madsen looks beyond ethnic difference to focus on interaction and integration practices within the informal domain of a martial arts club. Malai Madsen shows the importance of understanding community labels themselves – girls and fighters – rather than externally imposed or assumed categories. A very important book that delivers a spinning kick to sociolinguistic studies of language and identity. Alastair Pennycook, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia

This book examines how young people at a martial arts club in an urban setting participate and interact in a recreational social community. The author relates analyses of their interactions to discussions of relevance to the sociology of sports, anthropology and education, ultimately providing an analytically nuanced contribution to the study of contemporary sociolinguistic processes and identity practices.

Lian Malai Madsen is Associate Professor of Psychology of Language at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Her research interests include linguistic ethnography, interactional sociolinguistics, language and diversity, youth language, leisure communities and education, popular culture, and identities, style and stylisation.

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