Review: [untitled]
Author(s): Greg Urban
Reviewed work(s):
    Language and Communicative Practices by William F. Hanks
Published by: Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the American Anthropological Association
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/683190
Accessed: 24/07/2010 12:00

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=black.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.
The approach to the language/reality problem through context is one significant new development in linguistic anthropology. A complementary approach, though not one discussed in this book, is through the problem of circulation, in which the abstract aspect of language as shared meaning-bearing system is seen to depend on the replication and circulation of discourse that is simultaneously in the world and about the world. This is, so to speak, a horizontal approach to the problem, in which one looks at the different types of interconversion between language as abstract meaning and language as tangible thing. Along these lines, I was struck by the fact that the Jack and Natalia example, concrete and in this world as it is made to seem through diagrams and a photo of the New York Times cover page, is one that Hanks actually made up! The power of discourse to create worlds and contexts that can then be analyzed is impressive, indeed; and Hanks's book is an impressive synthesis of ways of thinking about such problems.