MLJ Reviews

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MLJ Review Policy

The *MLJ* reviews books, monographs, computer software, and materials that (a) present results of research in—and methods of—foreign and second language teaching and learning; (b) are devoted to matters of general interest to members of the profession; (c) are intended primarily for use as textbooks or instructional aids in classrooms where foreign and second languages, literatures, and cultures are taught; (d) convey information from other disciplines that relates directly to foreign and second language teaching and learning. Reviews not solicited by the *MLJ* can neither be accepted nor returned. Books and materials that are not reviewed in the *MLJ* cannot be returned to the publisher. **The *MLJ* invites written responses to the reviews published here. Responses should be typed with double spacing, signed by their authors, and submitted in duplicate with a diskette copy (IBM or MAC acceptable, WordPerfect preferred). Address responses to Sally Sieloff Magnan, Editor,** *The Modern Language Journal*, **618 Van Hise Hall, 1220 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706–1558.**

THEORY AND PRACTICE

DOUGHTY, CATHERINE, & JESSICA WILLIAMS. (Eds.). *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. xiv, 301. $64.95, cloth; $22.95, paper.

Over the past generation, communicative approaches have swept the language teaching profession. In the process, the role of grammar has been de-emphasized to the point where some have become concerned that learners are not developing the ability to produce accurate oral and written communication. Consequently, a new call for attention to linguistic elements, that is, a focus on form within communicative instruction, has emerged. This book contains the study of several researchers and practitioners to explore the extent to which focus on form should play a role in classroom instruction.

This volume contains 10 papers drawn from sessions on focus on form (FoF) in second language (L2) instruction that were held at three conferences: the 1994 Second Language Research Forum at Concordia and McGill Universities in Montreal; and the 1995 meetings of the American Association Applied Linguistics (AAAL) and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), both of which were held in Long Beach, CA.

The book is organized into three sections: (a) "Theoretical Foundations of Focus on Form," (b) "Empirical Studies on Focus on Form," and (c) "Pedagogical Implications of Focus on Form." In the first chapter, the editors seek to define FoF and to clarify the terminology and the concepts used in the volume. Because the terminology has been widely adopted and there is considerable variation in how FoF is understood, they offer the following operational definition, taken from the chapter in the volume by Long and Robinson: "Focus on form often consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features—by the teacher and/or one or more students—triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production" (p. 23).

Although there is some degree of variety in their perspectives on FoF, all of the authors explore questions of the efficacy of attention to linguistic form in communicative language teaching. They address the questions and the debate on the role of FoF in L2 learning and teaching in the following four issues: (a) the timing of FoF, (b) forms on which to focus, (c) the classroom context for FoF, and (d) curricular decisions.

The first section of this volume consists of three chapters that explore the theoretical foundations of FoF. In their chapter, Long & Robinson provide some historical context for FoF in L2 theory and pedagogy. They recognize a convergence of interest in FoF and some support for it in both

fields. To support their view of FoF, they emphasize minimal intervention while supplying FoF within a communicative context. They also provide a brief review of research findings derived from experimental and quasi-experimental studies on FoF, focus on forms, and focus on meaning to determine the strength and limitations of those approaches.

Unlike Long and Robinson, DeKeyser and Swain suggest more explicit, metalinguistic components of FoF activities in their respective chapters. DeKeyser argues his position from the basis of the psychological perspectives, asking what forms to focus on and discussing how and when FoF should take place. Swain focuses on the roles of output (talking and writing) in L2 learning through studies of French immersion classes, where students are in many ways very fluent, yet their accuracy lags far behind that of native speakers. She states that verbalization of accuracy problems allowed learners to reflect on them and apparently served as one source of their linguistic knowledge. She describes the usefulness of collaborative work in promoting output and L2 learning and the significant role of teachers who must attend to the accuracy of these activities. The different perspectives in this section capture the diverse views of researchers within the scope of FoF defined in the initial chapter of this volume.

The second section consists of four empirical studies on aspects of FoF. Joanna White investigates the effectiveness of FoF instruction involving different types of input enhancement provided within a communicative context with ESL classes in a French elementary school near Montreal. Doughty and Varela investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of incorporating a FoF into communicative instruction to determine whether and how learners' attention can be drawn to formal features without distracting them from their original communicative intent. Williams and Evans investigate what kind of focus and on which forms. Harley shows that an instructional FoF can have lasting impact on the L2 proficiency of child learners.

The third section consists of two chapters that address pedagogical implications of the findings of research on FoF, inluding some of the practical concerns of classroom teachers. Lightbown focuses on the importance of timing, that is, when FoF techniques should be deployed. Doughty and Williams focus on pedagogical choices in FoF and suggest the following six decisions in implementing FoF: (a) whether or not to undertake FoF, (b) reactive versus proactive FoF, (c) the choice

of linguistic form, (d) explicitness of FoF, (e) sequential versus integrated FoF, and (f) the role of FoF in the curriculum.

This volume draws attention to the issue of connecting grammatical form to meaning during primarily communicative tasks. The issue sweeps across the entire scope of second and foreign language learning and instruction. This work is an important step into a critical topic area, but much more needs to be explored. Longer-term studies will allow for new learning to be assessed. The communicative approaches employed are so critical that they need to be more clearly elucidated and greater participation of classroom teacher-researchers should be encouraged.

The book is well conceived and all of the articles are thoughtfully edited into an integrated study of FoF in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Although all of the writers are within the communicative tradition, they nevertheless advocate a wide spectrum of approaches from minimal incidental grammar instruction to significant planned grammatical components in the curriculum. The work herein has emerged from the SLA field, but it will be of interest to all language teachers. Examination of issues of accuracy is timely, and this volume is indeed a welcome addition to the field of SLA. It will also make a valuable contribution to the field of L2 learning and teaching and be of interest to foreign language teachers.

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LEE, CAROL D., & PETER SMAGORINSKY. (Eds.). *Vygotskian Perspectives on Literacy Research: Constructing Meaning through Collaborative Inquiry.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. xii, 280. $59.95, cloth; $19.95, paper.

Back in 1996 I had the opportunity to attend a conference sponsored by the Assembly for Research of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) that was recommended by some colleagues who are members of NCTE. At that time I was an avid reader of Vygotsky's writings as well as of those using Vygotsky's theory of development to inform their own research, and so I jumped at the chance to attend. Over the 3 days, a group of about 300 of us listened to the invited speakers and participated in break-out sessions and small-group discussions. I came away from

that conference excited about the new theoretical and empirical directions research on learning was taking and with ideas for how I might rethink my own explorations into the learning of other languages. This volume, most of the contributions to which were developed from papers given at that conference, has rekindled and extended that excitement.

According to the editors, the purpose of the volume is to bring together contributions that draw on some of Vygotsky's core tenets as a way to extend theoretical and empirical understandings of literacy and literacy development and, in the process, to transform Vygotsky's theory so that it can better address new social challenges. The text is divided into two sections. The first, "Paradoxes in Vygotsky's Account of Development," is comprised of two chapters whose purpose is to explicate some conceptual incongruities found in Vygotsky's writings. In the first chapter, Wertsch explores the contradictory ways in which Vygotsky treats the nature of meaning in his writings and presents the reader with a useful framework for understanding the unresolved conflict. In the second chapter, John-Steiner and Meehan reveal the complexities embedded in the relationship between the concepts of internationalization and creativity. The second section of the volume, entitled "Studies of Collaborative Inquiry," is comprised of eight chapters whose specific purposes seem more varied. In their introduction, the editors assert that these contributions present the notion of collaborative inquiry as an overarching goal for education. However, at least to this reader, the frame seemed more an artifact created by the editors to tie together a fairly diverse set of papers than a theme explicitly attended to by individual chapter authors. Despite this slight distraction, each chapter is worth reading for the particular perspective it brings to Vygotsky's work. Three in particular may be useful to those interested in second and foreign language learning.

In chapter 11, Moll questions the normative notion of culture that is typically found in the field of education. Drawing on theoretical insights from social and cultural anthropology, Moll argues for a more dynamic view of culture in which both consensus and conflict play a part and where resources are viewed not as products of any one individual but as distributed across human practices. He proposes a research focus based on this perspective of culture that seeks to have classroom teachers document productive activities of community households to uncover what he terms the "funds of knowledge" (p. 258) that underlie

these activities. The purpose of such research, Moll argues, is to help teachers reshape their understanding of the worlds outside of their classrooms so that they see not the limitations but the possibilities represented in these sources and, consequently, use this new understanding to transform their instructional practices.

Those in applied linguistics and language teaching should find this chapter useful for two reasons. First, Moll's perspective on culture can help us reconceptualize the notion of culture as it is currently used in the field and, in so doing, help us transform our own classroom practices. Second, the notion of biliteracy presented in the chapter expands in positive ways current thinking about the learning of other languages, at least as articulated in the new National Standards for Foreign Language Learning. Also, in noting that biliteracy "mediates the intellect not only by providing access to the real world of the community and by offering the expanded possibilities of broader or different experiences of the literate world, but also by creating new worlds that have not existed before" (p. 266), Moll adds conceptual support to recent notions of multicompetence.

Readers may find two additional chapters beneficial in terms of the conceptual frameworks used to examine sets of data. Weaving together Vygotskian and Bakhtinian concepts into an integrated theoretical framework in chapter 6, Dyson takes the reader on an exploration of children's worlds as they are created and contested in their school writings. In doing so, she reveals the complex and contradictory ways that children's social worlds are linked to their textual ones. More generally, she critiques the assumption about treating children as apprentices to adult worlds. Rather, she suggests, given that "children are participating and forming a social and historical childhood that we ourselves have not experienced" (p. 144), we need to examine their worlds as social and ideological spaces in their own right whose particular perspectives can help reshape our adult worlds. Finally, in chapter 7, Gutierrez and Stone lay out a theoretical and methodological orientation to the study of classroom life in which concepts like *official, unofficial,* and *third spaces* are used to make visible the social organization of learning communities. Such a framework allows us to see the multiple discourses through which teachers and students accomplish learning and thus should be of interest to those who study the discursive practices by which students of a second or foreign language are socialized into their learning communities.

Despite the fact that the book is addressed primarily to teachers and scholars of English as a first language, there is much to recommend this book to those in second and foreign language learning who are interested in Vygotsky's ideas and how they are being used both to inform and to transform research on learning. Thanks to the clear, fluent, and engaging writing found in all the chapters, even newcomers to Vygotsky's writings will find it a useful addition to their libraries.

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PHILLIPS, JUNE K., & JAMIE B. DRAPER. *The Five Cs: The Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Video and WorkText*. Boston: Heinle, 1999. Video: 30 minutes. WorkText: pp. ix, 91. $36.95, paper (includes video).

The expressed purpose of this video and accompanying text is to "familiarize administrators, parents, teachers and students with the national standards for foreign language education" (p. vii). The package consists of a 30-minute color video that presents two teachers and their students as they learn French or Spanish and, more pertinently, their opinions of and reactions to the teaching and learning of the languages via lessons based on the national standards (the 5 Cs). Users of the materials are encouraged to watch the video at one sitting if possible, and then to work through the coordinating worksheets that lead the users, whether students or professionals, to reflect upon what they have viewed. The authors maintain that the materials are sufficiently flexible to be used by practicing professionals for inservice school programs or by preservice teachers in postsecondary methodology courses, whether for individual self-study or in group discussions.

The video presents an overview of the national standards, followed by videotaped class sessions that demonstrate the concepts identified in the five national goals. The teachers featured on the tape comment on their activities, as do some of their students. Also, local school administrators comment on the significance of the activities featured on the video. The *WorkText* (authors' label and spelling) provides follow-up activities organized into several categories. "Reflections" is a page for users to note their reactions to the video and the concepts presented in the *WorkText*.

There are "Preview" activities that cause the user to consider various aspects related to the upcoming theme before doing any of the "Analyze," "Relate," or "Create" activities that follow. As readers may suspect, "Analyze" asks users to react to the video clip and, further, to scenarios from ACTFL's *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*. "Relate" prompts practicing professionals to examine their own classroom practices in light of the concepts presented in the materials, whereas "Create" encourages users to develop their own activities or units based on the concepts examined previously. Throughout the *WorkText*, there are sections labeled "Key Concepts" that are essential for understanding the standards and working with them in foreign language classrooms. The *WorkText* ends with a discussion of the curricular weave in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* and a brief classified bibliography. An appendix consists of translations into English of the scenes on the video in French or Spanish.

The quality of the video is very good, in terms of both production values and content. Viewers see experienced and capable teachers working with students on the objectives of the standards, and the teachers' and administrators' comments provide further insight into the rationale for and success of the standards-based lessons. The students' observations reinforce the success of the units. No dissenting voice is heard on the tape. All of the students comment how much they enjoy being able to understand the target language and use it adequately in a variety of settings.

If used as intended, the *WorkText* will in fact cause practitioners to examine how and what they teach. The "Key Concepts" are clearly and succinctly presented and, subsequently, the activities related to specific video segments (or, in some cases, to the entire tape) prompt both careful examination of the standard(s) under consideration and serious introspection by the user. Professionals who use these materials will understand better the concepts that underlie the national standards and, perhaps more important, will examine how their own teaching practices conform (or fail to conform) to the standards.

The authors assert that the materials can be used with preservice teachers in methodology classes. Certainly the models presented by the two superior and dedicated teachers in the video segments are welcome additions to any methods class, and the overview of the standards is unquestionably helpful to these students. Nonetheless, the use of these materials for the purpose of introducing methods students to the standards without the original *Standards for Foreign Language*

Learning, or without the guidance of a methods teacher thoroughly grounded in the standards, is questionable. The authors write that the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* document is "an important reference tool" but they stop short of recommending, much less requiring, the resource (p. 15). Plus, the "Relate" activities throughout the *WorkText* are clearly designed for practicing teachers, not for methods students. The other activities, however, are appropriate for preservice teachers.

In sum, this package adequately introduces language professionals to the standards and provides excellent models of outstanding teachers working with students and with the standards. The *WorkText* will help users to reflect seriously on their teaching and on their student outcomes, especially when used with an experienced and knowledgeable mentor. That is a good thing.

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SAMUELSSON-BROWN, Geoffrey. *A Practical Guide for Translators*. 3rd rev. ed. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters, 1998. Pp. xii, 202. $19.95, paper.

This book's major strength is that it provides detailed instructions and troubleshooting charts for professional translators working in every imaginable circumstance. Samuelsson-Brown provides freelance translators with a wealth of information, not only about the craft of translation but also, and of equal importance, about the trade, that is, the business aspects of being a professional translator. The amount of information and the depth of analysis about the art and trade could be a bit overwhelming for beginners, but so be it. After all, the trade and the craft are serious issues, requiring the sort of attention to detail that this book requires of a reader.

For experienced translators, his perspectives on troubleshooting problems, educating and negotiating with clients, and managing the editorial process will be familiar, but too few translators have taken the time to map out the problems and thus identify potential pitfalls. Samuelsson-Brown has applied his considerable acumen to the task and with great success. Even the most seasoned professional will benefit from reading many sections of the book, particularly those that deal with issues that arise during the editorial process.

Translators who work solely through translation agencies can gain a wider perspective on the whole process. Whereas they may have had experience only with receiving a document and delivering it to an agency, they may not know the many things that can happen to their work after it is returned to the agency, to say nothing of the work an agency does to seek out business.

In-house translators can benefit as well. If they are in a start-up phase, they can avoid errors in procedure that too often lead to cost and time overruns. If they are already in operation, they can find ways to improve, educate their internal client, and improve their status within the organization by being a model of efficiency and productivity.

The book claims to be written for translators and customers alike. However, it is too detailed and specialized for most individuals or companies that require translations. It presupposes more than a basic understanding and appreciation of the nature of language itself, the thorny issues surrounding bilingualism and the selection of translators, as well as the consequences of there being many languages. Most CEOs have neither the time nor the preparation to read and understand such material.

The least useful and almost superfluous part of the book is the section on the physical arrangement of a translator's work station and work habits, such as posture, rest, work cycles, and other such minutiae. Although his advice is good and, I think, correct, it is mostly common sense and applies to nearly any sedentary profession that requires contemplative, creative, and analytical talents and aptitudes. In fact, its inclusion could exacerbate the prevalent fallacy that translation is akin to secretarial work, a perception that is pernicious in the extreme and stands in the way of the profession gaining the respect and pay it deserves.

Translators outside the European Union may find some of his points about the business side of translation inapplicable but should take note that many of the topics he raises have similar implications for them, regardless of the taxation or other regulatory environments in which they may find themselves. Licensure, certification, and other such matters vary considerably from place to place. In some countries, in fact, they are nonexistent, thus reminding translators and end users, both individually and collectively, of the need to be aware of their legal relationships and clarify them before undertaking a translation project.

In comparison with the first edition (1993), this third is a great improvement. Samuelsson-

Brown has updated it with valuable insights about the implications of newer technologies and has included a valuable glossary of terms that translators who work with standalone computers, networked environments, or through the Internet should know or learn.

Although this book has a few weaknesses, they are minimal. Why, after all, should translators expect clients to educate themselves so thoroughly about the complexities of such an arcane and exacting art? Why should a book about so demanding a business succumb to the trend of simplifying the subject to the point that the inadequately prepared could leap into the business and, through inferior work, hinder the field from gaining the prestige it deserves? Samuelsson-Brown has done a masterful job, precisely what one should expect of a master of his craft and profession. Translators should read it and digest it to educate themselves and, selectively, their clients. Depending on the capacity of their students, educators should use it to prepare capable professionals for the business world.

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CHINESE

CHEN, PING. *Modern Chinese: History and Sociolinguistics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pp. xiv, 229. $59.95, cloth; $21.95, paper.

For both teachers and students of Chinese language and linguistics, the 2-year period between 1987 and 1988 was a watershed. Prior to that time, there was no single comprehensive volume in English suitable for presenting the core of phonological, morphological, syntactic, and historical linguistic information necessary to establish a foundation of knowledge for more advanced language analysis of Chinese. Since the publication of S. Robert Ramsey's *The Languages of China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) and Jerry Norman's *Chinese* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), we have enjoyed the relative luxury of having two outstanding Chinese linguistics reference works that are at once rich in scholarship and extremely readable. Taken together with the more purely orthographically oriented and genuinely enjoyable *The*

Chinese Language: Fact and Fantasy by John DeFrancis (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1984), Chinese linguistics specialists have been able to develop new courses on the structure of the Chinese language at the undergraduate as well as graduate levels, thereby enriching East Asian departmental curricula beyond the traditionally linguistics-exclusive emphases on language, literature, and culture.

As suggested by its title, *Modern Chinese: History and Sociolinguistics* (hereafter abbreviated *MC*) is more broadly historical than linguistically technical. The degree of language analytical detail is less expansive than either the Ramsey or Norman volumes. Nor is there as much of the anecdotal richness with which DeFrancis enhanced his work. But as a companion volume to those previous works, as well as a comprehensive updating of the types of research previously seen in scattered individual articles and treatises, *MC* greatly enriches the field of Chinese language studies.

MC is divided into three parts, each of which can be seen as an updating or an extension of one or more sections of the previously cited volumes. Although Chen briefly touches on the more ancient historical foundation of Chinese language development, he quickly and appropriately narrows his principal focus to the development of the Chinese language since 1840. Part 1, "Modern Spoken Chinese," begins with a description of the promotion of Modern Standard Chinese (MSC, more generally but less precisely referred to as Mandarin Chinese) in all its forms throughout greater China, including Hong Kong and Singapore. Chen also provides a succinct summary of the ongoing developing phonological differences between MSC and its relatives, both on the mainland (including the Beijing dialect) and beyond. Finally, Chen returns to a political perspective to discuss the relationship between standard dialect promotion and nonstandard dialect toleration. In describing the broader sweep of the variant policies on the mainland, Taiwan, and Singapore, Chen's work is as useful for language policy specialists as it is for the student or teacher of Chinese language.

Part 2, "Modern Written Chinese," repeats the three-way textual division of part 1 in focusing in succession on the development and promotion, regional variations, and interdialectal relationships within *baihua*. Although the overall scholarly quality of the work is for the most part high, Chen occasional lapses into an almost propagandistic tone in his praise of the written language reform undertaken on the mainland since 1949, as exemplified by his commentary on the general

shift of nominal modification from postnominal to pronominal position: "This is a welcome development: the pattern certainly enhances the explicitness and precision of the text, making Modern Written Chinese a more effective tool for a modern society" (p. 96).

Part 3, "The Modern Chinese Writing System," diverges from the organizational scheme of the previous two parts, commencing with an explanation of the system's features in areas including typology and morphology, as well as a brief history of Chinese script and the justifications for its reform. The analysis of that reform is then further divided into separate chronologically based discussions of script simplification and phonetization. Two very brief sections on post-1980 developments and concluding remarks complete the volume.

One shortcoming with respect to the scope of Chen's study, which is otherwise impressively comprehensive, is his lack of attention to the emerging complicated patterns of what constitutes "standard Chinese" beyond the western side of the Pacific Rim, due to the constant interactions among speakers from throughout greater China. For example, in his discussion of translation and transliteration approaches to loanwords, Chen asserts the mainland Chinese standard for *microphone* and *vitamin* to be 'huatong' and 'weishengsu,' respectively. But as verified by a half-dozen mainland speakers, both male and female, from throughout the People's Republic now employed in American colleges and universities, the reported preferences are *mikefeng* and *weitaming*, respectively. Similar patterns of divergence from any one of a number of purported standards are beginning to emerge on the syntactic level as well. The richness and complexity of such sociolinguistic development beyond the areas immediately surrounding mainland China would in itself make a sufficient basis for yet another study, one that Ping Chen is clearly well qualified to conduct.

The principal technical criticism of Chen's work is one seen in so many produced by Western presses; namely, the lack or inconsistent inclusion of Chinese characters for the romanized texts. Cambridge clearly has the technical capacity to produce printed characters, as seen on pages 46, 133, and 152, in both simplified and traditional versions, as well as in *zhuyin zimu* (p. 181) and even the long-abandoned *guanhua zimu* (p. 179). As with the works by Norman and Ramsey, the lack of characters does not detract from the overall usefulness of the book, but there seems to be no clear basis for choosing to include or not

include characters. Typographical errors are minimal and exclusively seen in the bibliography; for example, the surnames of Dolezelova-Velingerova (p. 212) and Kubler (p. 214).

There are direct applications of *MC* to the Chinese as a foreign language classroom, particularly in enabling the learner and teacher to attend more systematically to the oral and written distinctions between mainland and Taiwan Mandarin in particular. No single previous volume has so succinctly presented the contrasts in phonology (e.g., merging of retroflex and dental sibilant initials) and syntax (e.g., the Southern Min-derived preverbal *you meiyou* structure in perfective interrogatives) as does Chen.

In sum, for Chinese linguists in particular and Chinese language learners and teachers to a lesser extent, *MC* serves to enhance our knowledge base of the complex development, both historical and ongoing, of the language of almost one-quarter of humanity. It is recommended without reservation and with admiration.

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FRENCH

LEVIEUX, ELEANOR, & MICHEL LEVIEUX. *Insiders' French. Beyond the Dictionary.* Chicago: The University Press, 1999. Pp. ix, 259. $12.00, paper.

This unique little book has long been awaited and should be found on the desk of every serious student of French language and culture and in the hand of the traveler who intends to spend time in France. As its title reveals, *Insiders' French* is about French as one might read or hear it in today's France. Although at first glance it may appear to be a specialized dictionary, the reader soon discovers that it is a reference for *le français de la France d'aujourd'hui* and, more specifically, the France from the mid- to late-1990s. The preface and brief acknowledgments are followed by the content, which is organized alphabetically. A short bibliography and a complete index conclude the book.

Entries represent individual lexical items, phrases, expressions or slogans, labels, phrases coined by public servants, and acronyms or neologisms that one might find in daily newspapers or hear on the radio or TV or in conversations.

The authors sense the confusion often created by the vicissitudes of language in modern times. They are also well aware of the frustrations that foreigners feel when they cannot decipher acronyms and the context offers little help. Entries deal with language connected to such timely topics as immigration, political parties, the Internet, society and family, health care, women's rights, and even special dates observed by the French. To put items into the proper perspective and to facilitate understanding of how this parlance was developed, the authors often give the background for various laws and the circumstances around their promulgation. They also explain the mechanisms of French politics, social and health care benefits, the tax system, and such satirical jokes as *Galligraseuil* and *goncourable.* Although one may take a good guess at *famille éclatée* and *covoiturage*, terms such as *une transplantée, un tagueur*, and *travaux d'intérêt général* may not be so obvious. How much reading time or living in France would it take finally to understand what *université d'été* is? Or *une usine tourne-vis*? Or *un vide jurididique*? The answer is obvious. The authors give at least one original context in which the phrase, word, or expression was used, followed by an English rendering of the context and an explanation in English of other ways it may also be used. About a dozen political cartoons illustrate the message and exhibit France's mood. Entries are extensively cross referenced to allow the user to find other related and frequently used French words.

Insiders' French is a pathfinder to understanding the language of a people whose culture has had to succumb to the pressure of high-tech industries, of the growing power of media, of the ambivalent foreign and economic policies, and of political intricacies. As the authors state in their preface, although France is still the country of "*Ooh, la la!* and the *Beaujolais nouveau* still exists—*Dieu merci!*" (p. vii), in today's interdependent world and international trade relations, France has become multifaceted and its language has had to adapt to social, scientific, technological, and political changes. Unemployment is high, the presence of immigrant populations has caused ambivalent and often controversial feelings, and French politics have not been spared by world developments. A weakened Communist party and the rise of a provocative extreme Right have changed the chemistry of French thought. Fast food, drugs, new technologies, and new discoveries in healthcare have created a massive need for appropriate terms. *Insiders' French* offers a good view of the imminently changing culture of a people whose "Frenchness" once seemed impregnable.

The authors, a Franco-American couple, have been living and teaching in France for quite some time; their understanding is broad and their selection apropos. They succeeded in making *Insiders' French* compact, yet complete, while also opening France to outsiders. Because *Insiders' French* covers a short time span, one single negative aspect may be that updating and revising will be needed rather quickly. Buzz words come and go, even more so in a country that so long retained its traditions, customs, and strict language rules. Nonetheless, *Insiders' French* is a welcome addition to the library of both students and travelers.

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IRISH

HARRIS, JOHN, & LEILA MURTAGH. *Teaching and Learning Irish in Primary School: A Review of Research and Development.* Dublin, Ireland: Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann, 1999. Pp. 515. $10.00, paper.

The teaching of Irish in Irish schools has historically had a bad press for a number of reasons. Although it is favourably greeted by a large section of the population, there remains an element of the politically enforced about the language, in contrast to the more market-driven nature of, for example, French and Spanish. In the experience of many Irish men and women, the learning of Irish is bound up with memories of school; in Northern Ireland, it is still a marked political statement. These factors are not wholly negative; in some respects the language and its teaching have enjoyed a powerful dynamism in the last century. The Republicans of the 1916 rising used their language as a political tool, as well as a means of communication that was inaccessible to their adversaries. In recent years, too, the language has been used in acts of defence and defiance; an Irish language training program was introduced by prisoners in the Maze prison in the 1970s.

The status of Irish as a minority second language affords the teaching of Irish a number of significant strengths. It is in evidence on street signs, official documents, and television and ra-

dio programmes. In schools, the language is taught through the medium of Irish. Indeed, many schools use Irish for real communication, and even teach other subjects through Irish; immersion programmes operate successfully, with a small proportion of primary-aged children in Ireland attending all-Irish schools, or schools in Gaeltacht areas. It is in this context that the Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann has published this review of research conducted over the last 10 years, that aims to inform and guide the revision of the curriculum.

The report reviews three major studies, all of which use information from inside the classroom and from the external environment to determine significant influences on the teaching and learning of Irish. The framework of the most comprehensive of these reports, the Twenty Classes Study, is then used to present the findings of the studies, categorising them in terms of pupils' attitudes to the language and lessons, parental opinions and participation, and comments derived from teaching observation.

The Twenty Classes Study is presented as a thorough piece of research that uses data gathered from 20 year-six classes to provide an information base for work on a new curriculum. The authors take pains to demonstrate that these classes can be seen as broadly representative of the national picture, by looking both at obvious variables like pupil achievement in Irish and at general aptitude and external social and demographic factors. Data were gathered by means of questionnaires, teachers' rankings of pupils, two standard Irish language tests and one general aptitude test, and three observation instruments that focused on class activities, pupil behaviour, and general class rating.

The "Communicative Materials Project," established partly in response to the findings of the Twenty Classes Study, was designed to develop communicative teaching materials for use with pupils of all abilities. The project had a hands-on, practical approach, with teachers from a variety of schools participating in workshops to create and revise materials.

The "Teaching through Irish Project" explored the possibilities of content-based teaching in ordinary (i.e., not all-Irish) schools. Again, the aim of the project was materials development, in this case materials for teaching art and science through Irish.

A number of research findings are presented and discussed at length. Current teaching methods are described by many pupils as "boring" and "old-fashioned," with too little emphasis on spo-

ken communication. This finding is corroborated by data from class observations, which indicate that speech is rarely produced in a meaningful context, and that there is a correlation between levels of achievement and opportunities to speak in class. Both pupils and observers call for more emphasis on conversations, games, and other activities to bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world. Lower achievement is essentially associated with lack of parental encouragement, demotivation caused by not understanding the teacher or the lesson, lessons that devote time to reading (aloud and silently), and traditional audiovisual teaching approaches in general. Where communicative language teaching materials were piloted in class, pupils' responses were positive, and this was especially noticeable in pupils hitherto classed as low achievers or as having little interest in the language.

Although the aim of the Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann is clearly to pull Irish teaching into the 21st century, the research reported here indicates a sensitivity to issues beyond material development and methodology revision. The authors relate the studies to current work in SLA research; for example, evidence from inside and outside the classroom is used to address the complex issue of learner motivation. The report concludes (p. 306) that pupils are "reasonably well disposed towards the Irish language itself and towards the idea of integrating with the Irish-language-speaking 'group'" (integrative motivation). However, the research implies that integrative attitudes are less strongly related to success in learning Irish than other motivational factors. Parental encouragement is shown to have a positive effect on motivation and achievement (instrumental motivation). The report suggests that generally, pupils estimate their ability in Irish very negatively in comparison with other subjects (resultative motivation). Finally, all three studies reveal a lack of interest and engagement with tasks and activities, resulting in loss of attention and poor standards of achievement (motivation as intrinsic interest). One aspect of instrumental motivation not fully explored in the report relates to the subject's potential professional usefulness. Presumably, parental encouragement and, indirectly, pupil motivation, are connected to career expectations. If Irish language competence is not perceived as a determining factor in the quest for a good job, there will surely be a detrimental effect on motivation.

Although most of the above observations and comments seem to be straightforward motivational indicators, the connection between motiva-

tion and achievement is not a simple linear one. The relationship is complex, and the authors of the report are careful not to suggest otherwise.

Teaching and Learning Irish in Primary School is intended as a practical information resource. The projects at the centre of the research are comprehensive and wide-ranging in design, but retain a focus and clarity of aim. The projects are sensitive to the teaching context, and the authors recognise that the new teaching approaches they introduce will have to be adapted to environmental needs. Although the report cites many instances of Irish teaching that fail to meet pupils' motivational and educational needs, the fact that such a vast and long-term project has been supported by the Irish government bodes well for curriculum review and implementation. It is both important and refreshing that the research has been conducted from a language-teaching perspective, rather than a political one; the research design, as well as its conclusions and recommendations, are underpinned by the application of Second Language Acquisition research theory.

For me, the report raises the puzzling issue of the classroom contrast between politically loaded second language teaching and increasingly attractive foreign language teaching. The extrinsic dynamism of Irish has not been matched from within. The methodologies used in schools are in many cases outdated and demotivating, based on traditional grammar-translation and audiolingual approaches that focus on structure rather than function, and on analysis rather than communication. This is not true only in Ireland: A recent visit to a secondary school in Wales revealed a French/Spanish classroom full of colourful posters and cultural paraphernalia, with teachers who insisted on encouraging their year-seven pupils to speak for 80% of class time. In contrast, the Welsh language classroom had on display textbooks and pupil essays, and the teacher explained to visiting parents that "when the children get tired of listening to me, I let them watch a video in Welsh." When the communicative techniques pioneered by English as a Foreign Language teaching are so eagerly adopted in most modern language teaching, why are they so much less evident in second language teaching?

It is certainly encouraging to see such high-quality work as *Teaching and Learning Irish in Primary School* being conducted in the context of minority-language teaching, and it will be even more encouraging to see a communicative language-teaching curriculum emerge from such solid groundwork. If an appropriate and proven modern methodology can be applied to the teaching of Irish, with all the historical baggage it carries, we surely have the potential to revolutionise all minority second language teaching.

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JAPANESE

MAYNARD, SENKO K. *Japanese Communication: Language and Thought in Context.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997. Pp. xiii, 253. $46.00, cloth; $23.95, paper.

In *Japanese Communication: Language and Thought in Context*, a prominent Japanese linguist characterizes ways of communicating in Japanese society. Based on the belief that language is inseparable from society, the key concept used in this book is relationality. Maynard argues that Japanese language and thought can be understood most effectively when examined in terms of the mutual influence they share with the sociocultural context. Using this underlying theme, the book discusses diverse aspects of Japanese communication including masculine and feminine speech, politeness, and rhetorical structure. At various parts in the book, U.S. communication strategies are discussed as points of comparison.

The view that Japanese language and thought have the tendency to be "society-relational" (p. 18) is not new. However, Maynard makes invaluable contributions by using her expertise in pragmatics and discourse analysis, supporting her thesis with rich empirical linguistic analyses. For example, when she says (p. 115) that the rhetoric of Japanese communication may be characterized as a "rhetoric of commentation," a mode of communication in which personal commentary is emphasized over propositional information (who-does-what-to-whom), the assertion is based on the analyses of naturally occurring data (such as taped conversations) in which the prominence of topic-comment structure is noted. Therefore, it is more convincing than claims made solely on researchers' self-generated data and intuition.

Traditional scholars have asserted for more than 2 centuries that in Japanese ways of communication, personal commentary that expresses the speaker's attitudes and emotions is just as

important as, if not more important than, transmission of facts. Literature on this issue tends to be overlooked by contemporary Japanese linguists and, because it is written in Japanese, by Western linguists as well. Maynard's reintroduction of this tradition helps bring the issue to a wider audience. Further, as Maynard suggests (pp. 194–195), observing the prominence of such a trait may lead us toward a reevaluation of dominant Western linguistic theories in which language is analyzed strictly in terms of forms.

Another strength of this book is that it provides a good overview of extralinguistic elements that are often neglected in the descriptions of Japanese ways of communication, such as the significance of silence and head movement. As Maynard observes, "Japanese speakers have a strong inclination toward mutual monitoring and cooperation" (p. 144) when conversing with each other. Such interactional cues are extremely important in the discussions of communication strategies.

If the reader is interested in an in-depth study of Japanese language and society, however, this book may not be sufficient. As Maynard herself says, it only touches upon various research areas and does not offer detailed analyses. Readers who want such analyses should look at her numerous academic books and articles listed in the reference section. She also cites and discusses representative works done on Japanese society and communication.

One minor complaint about this book is that it does not place the actual language data at center stage. Maynard says that she has "tried to keep Japanese-language samples to a minimum" (p. 47), perhaps because she intends the book for the general reader, rather than for specialists in Japanese language and society. However, when she compares different genre-specific styles in Japan (e.g., scientific writings, newspaper language, comic book colloquialism), gives only English translations in the main text (pp. 50–51), and provides the original Japanese transcripts in the appendix, it seems excessive. Because the book is meant for "those who have a basic knowledge of Japanese language and culture" (p. ix), logically the reader would like to see the authentic data incorporated in the main text and discussed along with the English translations.

I would highly recommend this book to those who are interested and curious about Japanese ways of thinking and communicating. Individuals may read for enjoyment or self-reflection and be enticed to read further on diverse issues. If used, for example, in a class on cross-cultural communication, it would work well as introductory reading and could serve as an excellent base for analytical discussions.

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LINGUISTICS

TRASK, ROBERT L. *Key Concepts in Language and Linguistics.* New York: Routledge, 1999. Pp. xviii, 378. $75.00, cloth; $18.99, paper.

This A–Z guide covers language varieties, the different subareas of linguistics, the main approaches to the study of each subarea, various linguistic concepts and phenomena in each area, and the terms used to describe them. It is geared towards undergraduate and graduate students who are beginning their study of linguistics. Each of the nearly 300 entries starts with a short definition followed by a more detailed description, cross-references to related terms, and one or more suggestions for further reading. When appropriate, the origin of a term is traced and the key individuals or schools associated with it are identified. The book starts with a list of all the entries in alphabetical order. It ends with a 14-page bibliography of all works indicated throughout for further reading, followed by a 15-page index that includes all the entries and numerous additional terms and individuals introduced in bold letters within the various entries.

The layout and presentation could have been improved by the addition of page numbers in the list of entries at the beginning of the book. The author's style is clear and easy to follow. The orientation of the text is open-minded and practical. The suggested readings are mostly general books published in Great Britain.

As far as substance is concerned, the book covers traditional terms as well as contemporary ones. It does achieve its goal for concepts whose scope is narrow enough to be done justice to in a few paragraphs without extensive cross-referencing. Fortunately, most selected entries are of that type. Although, generally speaking, quite complete in its coverage, there are a few surprising missing entries, like that of *category*, and a few surprising definitions, like that of *complement* as a "grammatical unit which contains a verb and which forms part of a larger unit" (p. 47). Some

entries are quite long and informative, whereas others are too short to be of much use (e.g., the entry for *government and binding theory* is about four times as long as the one for *lexical-functional grammar*). As is also to be expected, at times, arguably less important facts or uses of a term are included, whereas more important ones are left out, and some concepts are not clearly distinguished from each other (e.g., international or global language and *lingua franca*; fronting and topicalization; determiner and specifier; argument and modifier as, for instance, in French *je marche le soir* versus *je mange le pain*). Other concepts are left out (e.g., second or foreign language acquisition in the entry on *language acquisition* or elsewhere in the book).

The language variety used to exemplify most concepts is English, in particular British English. At times, this leads to incorrect statements as far as the use of a concept in other languages is concerned; for example, "An adjective cannot be marked for number (singular versus plural) . . . " (p. 4) or "a non-finite [verb] form . . . shows no agreement" (p. 94). At other times, it leads to lack of coverage of important alternatives. For instance, under the entry *stress*, French and Japanese are mentioned as examples of many languages lacking word-stress, without mentioning what these languages have instead, namely word or phrasal pitch accents, and defining that concept also.

The entry *focus* could have included the information that languages lacking word-stress use other means (syntactic, lexical, etc.) to focus particular elements in a sentence. Similarly, the suggested readings for some entries mention exclusively British publications, ignoring important work done in the United States (e.g., the entry for *intonation*).

A number of entries for syntactic concepts could have gained in clarity through the use of structural diagrams. For other syntactic and morphological concepts, the distributional approach used is very appropriate. Extensive cross-listing does not avoid a number of unexplained terms that are unknown to beginning students (e.g., *code*, introduced as one of the properties of auxiliary verbs merely as: "Code: *Susie is coming, but Janet isn't*," p. 26). Some entries could have gained from a nonexclusively synchronic treatment; for example, the virtual absence of case distinctions in English, whose historical disappearance could profitably have been linked to the increased use of prepositions. Other entries could have gained from going beyond mere observation of facts towards more explanation.

In spite of these shortcomings, however, the author is to be commended for undertaking a project of this scope and nature, and for making available and accessible to undergraduate and beginning graduate students a number of terms they might not find in the textbooks used in the classes they are taking.

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RUSSIAN

RYAZANOVA-CLARKE, LARISSA, & TERENCE WADE. *The Russian Language Today*. New York: Routledge, 1999. Pp. xi, 369. $ 90.00, cloth; $29.99, paper.

How often does one alternate between laughter, tears, and frissons of delight and recognition when reading a linguistics text? Yet this is precisely the experience I had when reading the new excellent book by Ryazanova-Clarke and Wade entitled *Russian Language Today* (*RLT*) with their Orwellian description of the Stalinist version of Newspeak as the totalitarian language "where love was equated with terror, fear and hatred, and some words lost part of their meaning . . . Thus, 'free' was paired down to mean 'unoccupied,' 'equal' to 'physically equal,' and the authorities used familiar but distorted words to suppress personal will and creative thought" (p. 320).

This volume is unique in a variety of ways. To begin with, it is the first major study in English that combines an in-depth historical analysis of lexical development in Soviet times with a comprehensive discussion of the current state of the Russian language. It is also the most up-to-date guide to contemporary Russian language, compelling in its authenticity. The text is abundant in data that come from a number of sources, including popular fiction, poetry, and media, especially newspapers and journals, as well as transcripts of parliamentary debates. The authors do an outstanding job in presenting this rich variety of data within a contemporary sociolinguistic framework while drawing substantially on Russian linguistic scholarship. Their rigorous scholarly analysis does not prevent the volume from being a highly readable text, appealing to a wide audience of academic and nonacademic readers, for whom it

will recreate various joys, miseries, and ironies of life and talk in the Soviet and post-Soviet times.

The issue at the heart of the book is the relationship between language and social change. The authors persuasively demonstrate that the reconceptualization of reality that took place in Russia after the October revolution of 1917 resulted in numerous lexical, morphological, syntactic, and stylistic changes. An equally drastic change occurred after 1985, when the advent of *glasnost* and *perestroika* led to questioning and renunciation of previously constructed social worlds and subsequent changes in vocabulary and grammar.

The book is divided into two parts, the first devoted exclusively to vocabulary changes and the second to setting these changes within the wider context of social, political, and economic transformations. Chapter 1 provides an insightful analysis of lexical development in the Soviet period, from 1917 to 1985, discussing numerous neologisms, loan words, and semantic shifts that took place in various periods of Soviet history. The authors demonstrate that in Soviet times the lexical map of the world was divided along ideological lines: Russian words "referring to the Communist world possessed positive connotations, while those relating to the capitalist West carried predominantly negative overtones" (p. 61). Chapter 2 examines radical changes in Russian vocabulary since 1985, whereby the language became inundated with new words, mainly from American English, and most of these from the fields of business, technology, and economics, but also the mass media, fashion, sport, and lifestyle. Of particular interest is the discussion of loan words like "voucher" or "presentation," which did not retain any of their source-language meanings. Special attention is also given to the ideological reorientation of certain areas of vocabulary, the rehabilitation of religious terminology, and reactivation of pre-Soviet economic lexis. Chapter 3 is devoted to processes of word formation, which have made the most significant contribution to the creation of new vocabulary in recent times. Chapter 4 shifts the focus to grammatical processes, such as changes in prepositional and case usages, an increased tendency toward indeclinability of nouns and adjectives in the media, the growth in noun coordinates, in which the qualifier precedes the item qualified, and an increase in abstract nouns that can appear in the plural. Chapter 5 explores postrevolutionary and post-Soviet trends in geographical renaming. In the country that has pursued the policy of name-changing for over 7 decades, it was possible for people who were born in St. Petersburg, to grow up in Petrograd (1914–1924), get married and have children and grandchildren in Leningrad (1924–1991), and see their great-grandchildren play on the streets of St. Petersburg (1991–present). Of particular importance and interest is chapter 6, which examines various debates on language policy, linguistic purity, and the current state of the Russian language, as well as the role of the Russian Language Council, established in 1995.

In comparison with the book's multiple accomplishments, its shortcomings are relatively few and minor. A few translations are rather unfortunate—for instance, *yashmak* (p. 5) could have been easily rendered as 'veil.' Also, the precise order and numbering of sections and subsections resulted in a rather complicated and somewhat confusing system, whereby information on a particular issue or period may be found in more than one place. This should not be a problem, however, for the reader who takes time to examine the organization of the volume. To sum up, this book is a timely, welcome, and highly recommended addition to the library of all teachers and students of Russian interested in keeping themselves up-to-date on New Russian and in analyzing trends and patterns of change in Russian vocabulary and grammar. The volume is equally valuable to researchers in a variety of fields that deal with language and society, including sociolinguistics, sociology, linguistic anthropology, history, and Russian and post-Soviet studies. As a reference, the book is well suited for a variety of graduate and upper-division undergraduate classes.

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SOCIOLINGUISTICS

ADGER, CAROLYN TEMPLE, DONNA CHRISTIAN, & ORLANDO TAYLOR. (Eds.). *Making the Connection: Language and Academic Achievement among African American Students.* McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems, 1999. Pp. xii, 178. $20.95, paper.

This volume of proceedings from the January 1998 conference of the Coalition on Language Diversity brings together nine presentations by professors of education and linguistics scholars

on the language-related issues of African American academic achievement. Springing in part from the 1996 controversy in which the Oakland (CA) School Board recognized Ebonics as the "primary language of African American students" (p. 1) and resolved to take it into account in the teaching of Standard English (SE), this book attempts to address the issue from a scholarly perspective now that the political and media circus has decamped and has moved its grandstanding to other issues. The controversy surrounding Ebonics, often called African American Vernacular English (AAVE) by academics, finds an organized, scholarly discussion in this volume that addresses classroom discourse, curriculum, teacher education, language policy, and testing.

John Rickford's essay, the first in the volume, gives a preview of the issues presented in the other essays and highlights the fundamental concern underpinning this entire discussion: that "schools are failing massive numbers of African American students with existing methods" (p. 3). He also presents a number of possible solutions and avenues of investigation, such as dialect readers, immersion versus contrastive analysis, and "Black artful" (p. 105) teaching styles, and directs the reader to a large body of research.

Walt Wolfram's chapter on the critical role of dialect awareness programs is one of the highlights of the book. His argument, that dialects are as natural, rule based, and as rich as any so-called standard language form, is shared by the other contributors. Yet Wolfram is short on rhetorical flourishes and long on evidence and example. He provides useful exercises in Ebonics and other U.S. vernaculars, suggests informative connections with other academic fields, and showcases a community-based project designed to move dialect education beyond the classroom.

All the essays address, in some form, the thoughtlessness and presumption in a student teacher's statement that her Haitian immigrant students "don't have much language" (p. 98), despite their animated Creole conversations with their mother. This compilation fosters a broader appreciation of language, realizing that its many forms can be used to enhance the richness of the classroom and improve educational outcomes. Terry Meier's thoughtful essay, "The Case for Ebonics as Part of Exemplary Teacher Preparation," helps light the path for those wise teachers who wish to tap into their Ebonics-speaking students' existing cultural and linguistics resources: "sophisticated story-telling abilities; skillful use of word play, rhyme, and rhythm; use of vivid metaphors and analogies; skill in indirection; the abil-

ity to think quickly on their feet; and facility in adjusting to different audiences" (p. 107).

Most of us remember that the national Ebonics debate generated far more heat than light. *Making the Connection* illuminates the fundamental issues in a cogent way and urges the issue forward to the classroom and away from the forum of mass media, although several of the essays still tend to look backward in their rhetoric and justification, rather than forward with new research and classroom strategies. For new teachers and those unfamiliar with the debate, this volume will both contextualize the issues and present strategies for utilizing the AAVE skills that their students bring as a tool for furthering the acquisition of SE. As such, it is an important contribution to teacher education and preparation. For those of us who know the languid, penetrating power of Zora Neale Hurston's words, for those who know that Maya Angelou speaks to America as surely as does Robert Frost, this volume will hold fewer epiphanies. Even so, it is an important reminder of the power of the teacher either to include or exclude, dignify or denigrate, teach or turn off.

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MILROY, JAMES, & LESLEY MILROY. *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard English.* 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 1999. Pp. xi, 160. $85.00 cloth; $23.99, paper.

Authority in Language reveals the flawed logic behind prescriptivist attitudes toward standardization in speech and the positive effects of sociolinguistic theory and research on language arts education. The authors' discussions of speech variation illustrated with features of many dialects in England (Estuary, Jamaican Creole, Northern England, Northern Irish, Lowland Scot, Brummie, Cockney, and Received Pronunciation, or RP) are enriched by the perspective and data from their fieldwork in inner-city Belfast, work that is parallel to William Labov's research on speakers of Black English Vernacular in inner-city Philadelphia. This book will enable U.S. students, teachers, and researchers immersed in American English and its dialects and politics to overcome their ethnocentricity (dialeccentricity?), especially when they learn, for example, that in Northern English *when* can mean *until* and in Northern Irish English *whenever* can mean

when. U.S. readers can compare our race-based language and culture wars, especially the English-Only and Anti-Ebonics battles, to the class-based wars in England, in which conservative politicians have likened nonstandard varieties of English to moral decay, crime, and the lack of cleanliness. The Milroys point out that the British Standard, RP/BBC/Oxford English, is an elitist dialect from Southern England, whereas the U.S. Standard, CBS English, is a Midwestern mainstream dialect.

The Milroys discuss the complaint tradition, in which guardians of English have bemoaned the lack of standard, fixed pronunciations, grammar structures, and word meanings, and have tried to prescribe and standardize them. The authors trace this tradition to Jonathan Swift's treatise "Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue" in 1712. Such prescriptivism both denies the natural processes of language change and variation and exaggerates the power of institutional authority to suppress optional variability. Because of peer and social pressure and the need for solidarity and identity, many groups choose not to use more bookish prestige forms such as *It is I.*

The authors stress the arbitrariness of linguistic forms, which are assigned social values of high or low status, and of dialects, which are evaluated as either beautiful and logical or ugly and sloppy. For example, there is nothing linguistically better about saying to a group of people, *I want you to come with me* instead of *I want yous to come with me.* In fact, the second option might be better because it distinguishes between a singular form (you) and a plural one (yous), a distinction that Standard English does not possess. However, because *yous* is associated with the working class, it inspires prejudice. Throughout history, language forms that were once favored have become stigmatized (and vice versa). For example, until the early 17th century, multiple negation was a feature of literary English. In the 17th and 18th centuries, *you was* was considered fashionable in polite society. The Milroys refute the decline narrative that is part of the complaint tradition; that is, that there was once a Golden Age with higher standards of literacy than there are now. Citing the high percentage of brides and grooms in 1850 who signed the marriage registers with an X, they remind us that never has society made so many literacy demands of so many citizens; they do not even mention the demands of technological literacy. Nor should nonstandard usage or mistakes be correlated with lack of intelligence; both Jane Austen and Charles Darwin made mis-

takes in spelling of the *accomodate* and *occured* variety, and Shakespeare spelled his name three different ways.

In the second, and more pedagogically oriented, half of the book, the authors argue for the assessment of the communicative competence of school children—their full range of styles in their linguistic repertoires (public and informal, planned and unplanned, elicited in both spontaneous and interview situations). Otherwise, teachers may be generalizing negatively about students' overall language capabilities based on their assessment of one style (usually public and planned) in one situation.

The authors review important distinctions that must be made in order to avoid linguistic prejudice that replicates the class-based social power structure: the distinction between speech and writing (writing's necessary standardization unfortunately has transferred to speech which is inherently more variable), between grammaticality and acceptability, and between performance and competence. However, because of this review of distinctions and because of the book's textbook-like format (decimal-numbered chapter sections, chapter conclusions, numerous explicit transition statements between chapter sections), and the repetition of many points and examples, it is unclear whom the Milroys consider as their primary audience and what they consider as the book's principal purpose. Is the book to be used as a text in sociolinguistics courses for current and future language arts teachers? It is too basic for sociolinguists or for teachers who have already studied linguistics.

If current or future teachers are the audience, then the book needs to be brought up-to-date even more than it has been for this third edition to be useful to them. As previously stated, technology is not even mentioned. For example, the existence of Email problematizes the Milroys' traditional distinction between contextualized speech and acontextualized writing. The Ebonics controversy, so important to language arts teaching in the United States, is glossed over, and only two bibliographic references that total seven pages are provided. Only about 10% of the book's bibliography consists of sources published in the last decade. The rest of the sources are pre-1990, suggesting that the third edition is too similar to the second, often resulting in incomplete treatment of issues and confusion. For practical recommendations for teaching Standard English, we are referred to two sources published in 1982 (p. 84). This is also the date of the citation for the fact that only 3% to 5% of the popu-

lation speaks RP (p. 24). Is this still true 17 years later? Chapter 9, "Two Nations Divided by the Same Language? The Standard Language Ideology in Britain and the U.S.," the only entirely new chapter, but the most promising because of the contrast of race-based and class-based language ideologies in the United States and Britain, is only 10 pages—a mere introduction. The conclusion just summarizes the chapter, whereas the book as a whole needs a conclusion. Because of these problems, common in subsequent editions of previous publications, sociolinguistics teachers in Britain, but especially in the United States, will need up-to-date and culturally specific materials to supplement this text.

However, with numerous rich and enlightening examples of dialect features, the Milroys have provided an excellent explanation of the nature of prescriptivism, standardization, language variation, and communicative competence, concepts necessary for informed language research, assessment, and teaching.

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SILVERMAN, DAVID. *Harvey Sacks: Social Science and Conversation Analysis.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. Pp. 222. $39.95, cloth.

At the time of his tragic death in 1975, Harvey Sacks was a full professor at the University of California, Irvine. His publication record listed fewer than ten articles, hardly a considerable amount by today's crassly quantitative standards of academic prowess. His approach, furthermore, tended at the time to attract "incomprehension and rage" (p. 23) on the part of the sociological establishment. However, Sacks's transcribed and mimeographed lectures were widely circulated, eventually becoming the basis upon which his outstanding international reputation was constructed. Sacks is widely recognized today as one of the most original scholars in the social sciences, a founder of ethnomethodology alongside Garfinkel, and the originator of conversation analysis as it is practiced in a wide range of contemporary fields. The influence of Sacks's approach and the productive uses of his methodological toolkit now extend beyond sociology, into anthropology, psychology, linguistics, and sociocultural theory. Within the field of language education, the influence of conversation analysis

has extended into several domains, such as materials development, the design and assessment of learning environments and, above all, the widespread and significant rethinking of desired developmental end points within approaches to oral proficiency.

The 1992 publication of his *Lectures on Conversation*, edited by Gail Jefferson, marked a new level of general access to the whole of Sacks's contribution. Now, David Silverman has provided us with a clear and accessible introductory text to assist scholars in approaching this work. Functioning essentially as a defense and illustration of Sacks's opus, the text situates, distills, and interprets the entire body of Sacks's work, including both the pieces published during his lifetime and his voluminous lectures. Silverman expertly leads the novice through the complexities of the material, aiming throughout to preserve some sense of Sacks's own voice, both in the organization of the text itself and in actual excerpts from lectures, where the reader may enjoy a taste of Sacks's plainspoken, yet incisive style.

The opening chapter consists of a series of teasers, or discrete analyzable bits of social interaction that Sacks used to highlight the appeal of his approach. For example, in "Reading People's Minds," Sacks invokes the problem of topics forgotten when speakers fail to get the floor, thus suggesting that memory may not be a private, inside-the-head affair, but rather an "utterance by utterance phenomenon . . . at the service of conversation" (p. 11). There follows an intellectual biography, where Sacks's work is contextualized with respect to the mainstream sociology of his time, and a chapter in which Silverman relates Sacks's views on a range of disciplinary avenues within the social sciences. Taken together, the introductory chapters portray the character and development of Sacks's aesthetic of social life, his rejection of any a priori categorical explanations, such as appeal to social structure or to culture, and his drive to focus relentlessly and exclusively on what people do and how they do it.

Among Sacks's major accomplishments was the definition of a new scholarly domain, the study of talk in interaction. His method involved recording and transcription of particular interactions followed by painstakingly detailed analysis of the ways in which these interactions may reveal "methods persons use in doing social life" (p. 63). By way of this procedure, Sacks was able to demonstrate that conversation is organized locally and independently of traditional social science or commonsense variables such as gender or class. He was also able to avoid what he considered to

be the trap of uncritically applying the analyst's own unexamined "member's knowledge" (p. 63).

As described in this volume, this relentless focus on what people do yielded findings roughly divisible into two intertwined domains: membership categorization analysis (MCA) and conversation analysis (CA). MCA, perhaps the less known of the two in applied linguistics circles, deals with the systematicity within which the meanings of activities and identities are actively and locally formulated and reformulated in interaction. CA strives to characterize the observable economy of sequential organization in talk through turn-taking, along with repair mechanisms and the organization of preferences for particular conversational sequences. Silverman devotes one chapter each to Sacks's own development of these two domains of analysis, followed by two chapters that review the subsequent uses of Sacks's toolkits for MCA and CA by other analysts. For example, in the chapter on "Using Membership Categorization Analysis," Silverman reviews Moerman's "intellectual journey" (p. 141) through an attempt at ethnographic research on tribal identity among the Lue. Initially, Moerman's attempt at achieving an emic perspective on the Lue's identity failed, because his own a priori member's categorization system (that of the anthropologist) led him to ask, "Who are the Lue?" This in turn meant that he failed to observe the local uses of the category "Lue" by the Lue themselves. It was only when he began to observe the local uses of that category that Moerman understood the importance, for a truer emic perspective, of knowing "When are the Lue?" The chapter on "Using Conversation Analysis" offers similarly compelling examples, among them a study by Drew and Heritage on how institutionality is constructed through the reduction of options and opportunities for action available in conversation.

The volume's final chapter summarizes the author's views on Sacks's legacy, including an account of "destructive internal fights in the early years of ethnomethodology" (p. 184). These conflicts have apparently continued to rage on into the present time, although the categories they employ, and the preference for their sequential organization, are perhaps fully appreciated only by members and those who closely observe their talk in interaction, as Sacks himself might have argued. Nevertheless, language educators and others interested in applied conversation analysis will doubtless consider the book to end on a high note, with the assertion that "CA is able to make a basic contribution to the study of fundamental social processes and problems" (p. 195). The appendices are notably useful, including a clear guide to Sacks's transcription system, a list of key references, and concise summaries of Sacks's major published papers.

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SPANISH

BROWN, JOAN, & CARMEN MARTÍN GAITE. *Conversaciones creadoras.* 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999. Pp. IE 3, 280. $32.37, paper.

Pedagogically speaking, *Conversaciones creadoras* is a conversational reader that has been carefully designed for mid- to high-intermediate courses. It consists of 12 thematic chapters. Each chapter begins with a reading selection on a Hispanic cultural topic and includes vocabulary lists and mechanical, personalized, and communicative exercises. The readings and associated exercises are followed by an unfinished dialogue that students complete by creating a conclusion. Then come small-group and pair activities. Just as important, current magazine illustrations with relevant conversational exercises, as well as picture cues and situation cards for role plays, make this textbook a valuable tool in the Spanish classroom.

This textbook uses both a thematic and a functional-notional approach. It is organized thematically, with each lesson introducing a different topic of conversation. The functional-notional approach is evident in role-play scenarios that facilitate the development and achievement of different language functions. The appropriate and detailed vocabulary lists and relevant exercises establish solid foundations for the students' ongoing linguistic development. The reading selections presented at the beginning of each chapter are a good point of departure for the instructor's own lesson plan. Comprehension questions appear after each dialogue, but not after each reading. It would be preferable to have questions after the readings to verify the students' comprehension of the selections. Fortunately, the instructor's edition contains a helpful and flexible syllabus guide and specific teaching suggestions for each chapter.

Even though some instructors and students will find the vocabulary somewhat challenging, the high interest level that the themes evoke will counterbalance any student frustration. Use of the text will strengthen students' communicative abilities through the diverse range of activities provided.

Conversaciones creadoras can be an asset for Spanish programs because of its interesting, up-to-date, and informative topics. In addition to their focus on building students' language proficiency, the authors carefully present Hispanic cultural features in an understandable sequence to promote cultural awareness and its implications. The appearance of common idiomatic expressions throughout the textbook is practical for student use outside of class. The most appealing aspect of this text lies in the scenario work and group activities in each chapter. All of these features provide students with enough varied material for each conversation class. Furthermore, the activities are complete lessons in themselves, which will spark additional ideas for class discussion.

Other commendable features include the authentic materials, such as magazine and newspaper clips. Although this reader includes current, interesting, and culturally significant realia and photos throughout, they are in black and white. It is unfortunate that color photos were not used in the second edition. The section *Más actividades creadoras* uses picture cues so that students can create their own story around the lesson theme. This is an outstanding idea for the mapping concept, which aims at narrating in extended discourse, one of the main objectives of the book.

The book is not without its shortcomings. With regard to evaluation and grading, the instructor's edition provides helpful guidelines. Nonetheless, the oral interview form needs improvement on several points. First, each evaluation item should be based on a 1–5 scale rather than on a 1–6 scale, so that the total value of the interview can be a more intuitively satisfying 100 points. The authors assert that the students are not likely to reach level 6, which prompts this reader to ask why that level is included. Second, the interview is set up according to the following criteria: comprehensibility, fluency, accuracy, amount and cultural appropriateness of communicated content, and effort to communicate. The criteria of *fluency* and *amount and cultural appropriateness of communicated content* overlap; I suggest that a new criterion, *use of appropriate vocabulary and pronunciation*, be used instead of *fluency*. Finally, a 15-minute interview would be more appropriate than a 10-minute interview for students at the level suggested by the authors of the book.

Another shortcoming of the text is that some terms are borrowed from English, such as *tópico* (p. 103), used in lieu of the more appropriate term *tema*. Also, the phrase *"el que metiste de penalty"* (p. 130) should appear as *el penal que metiste*. Another fault I observed was that some of the cultural information is inaccurate. To give an example, the authors assert that Hispanics usually discuss soap operas during *la sobremesa (after dinner)* (p. 103). This is a faulty generalization. What Hispanics usually talk about at that time is either family problems or politics. All together, there is enough material for one semester of college work in this book, but not for the one-year course claimed in the introduction.

In summary, the strength of this textbook clearly lies in its thematic coherence within a broadly defined communicative framework. It offers well-documented reading selections that include the various Hispanic regional differences with their own linguistic features. The conversations include modern topics with valuable idioms not easily found in other texts. Its focus on both linguistic and culture proficiency is clearly in line with new foreign language trends.

LUISA C. PÉREZ
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Harrap's Concise Spanish Dictionary: Spanish-English/English-Spanish. Edinburgh, Scotland: Harrap, 1998. Pp. xv, 510. $22.50, cloth.

The Harrap's bilingual dictionary is an attractive size, with easy-to-read print and handy alphabet markings on the edges of the pages. The dust cover tells you that it is a Spanish dictionary (which usually means Spanish-Spanish), and it is not until you see the small print on the front that you know that it is, indeed, a bilingual dictionary. For those of us accustomed to using bilingual dictionaries, this one is backwards; it has the Spanish-to-English section first.

Explanations of abbreviations in the entries are all in the front, rather than having half of them between the two sections of the dictionary. That is a handy arrangement, especially in the three-column format used: The abbreviation is in the center column, its English meaning is on left and its Spanish meaning is on the right.

Between the two sections is a supplement that gives irregular English verbs and Spanish verb conjugations. After three representative regular Spanish verbs, the list of irregular verbs begins with *haber* and *ser*, the two auxiliary verbs, followed by an alphabetical listing of 72 other irregular verbs. The use of first-person singular forms here is reminiscent of Latin texts, where verbs are regularly presented beginning with that form.

Irregular verb #7 is *agorar*, but that word does not appear in the Spanish-to-English section of the dictionary. It is surprising to notice items such as irregular verb #56, *raer,* which, according to the list, has a choice of *rao, raigo,* and *rayo* for first-person-singular present. Is *raer* used enough to warrant its inclusion? If so, why not point out the fact that *rayo* as first-person singular may also come from the verb *rayar*? Why is *adecuar* (#5) included in this list? It doesn't seem to have any morphological irregularities, unless it is simply there to contrast with *actuar* (#4) as concerns accent marks and stress. If that is the case, it should be so noted. If the format of the list does not allow for such notations, perhaps another column should be added. Sometimes a little information is worse than no information at all.

Regarding the individual entries, it is nice to see the gender of Spanish nouns indicated in both halves of the dictionary. But the entries often begin with a long series of preliminary material in italics. That is confusing at first; it is necessary to learn how to use this dictionary.

Harrap's is a British dictionary that has made an effort to add American vocabulary, but this is more apparent in the English-to-Spanish section than in the other half. In going from Spanish to English there are many British words and expressions to be discovered, but they are not always useful to the American reader.

Ad nauseum is included on the English-to-Spanish side, defined as *hasta la saciedad*, but there is no indication that the expression is actually Latin rather than English. Other non-English expressions in regular use, which could also be expected in the listing, such as *carpe diem, esprit de corps, modus operandi*, and *quid pro quo* are not included. Yet the contemporary buzz word *paparazzi* is there, defined, unfortunately, as *paparazzi* in Spanish. It does not appear in the Spanish-to-English side of the dictionary.

Other problems include Spanish *standing* defined as English *standing*, but in the English-to-Spanish half of the dictionary, the word *standing* has the entry "(position, status) = posición." The entry for *standstill* gives the expression *to be at a*

standstill, but defines it as *estar detenido*, which is incorrect. That expression in Spanish implies an outside agent, which is not the case with the English. *Desvirtuar*, too, is only partially defined. The dictionary gives *to spoil* and *to distort*, but does not give *to discredit*.

Consistency needs to be improved, so that the two halves of the dictionary reflect each other in the words defined. For those Americans who are orthographically challenged, definitions such as that of *vecino*, which comes through as British *neighbour*, are a problem. In the English-to-Spanish section, however, both British and American spellings are given. One would expect the same for *civilisation/civilization* and *organise/organize*, but in those cases only the American spelling appears (although we find both *defence* and *defense*).

In short, it is an attractive dictionary, but it is inadequate. It is not an appropriate dictionary to recommend to students for translation purposes. An experienced dictionary user may find the Harrap's dictionary helpful, but it will frustrate, and perhaps misguide, the neophyte.

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VÉLEZ ROMÁN, LYDIA, & JACQUELINE M. CÓRDOVA. *Sigamos: Lengua y cultura.* New York: McGraw Hill, 1998. Pp. I-32, xxix, 337, A-45. $51.00, paper (includes student audio tape).
VÉLEZ ROMÁN, LYDIA. *Sigamos: Lecturas literarias y culturales.* New York: McGraw Hill, 1998. Pp. xviii, 182, A-39. $40.00, paper.

Second-year language study at the university level has always been a challenge because of the variety of language learners who enter into this level, as well as the uneven quality of textbooks available. *Sigamos* is a textbook that addresses these issues through an eclectic approach. The package includes several components. *Sigamos: Lengua y cultura*, the main text, focuses on the development of the four skills and integrates culture throughout. A student tape for extended listening activities accompanies this text. The *Cuaderno de ejercicios* ($28.00, paper) is a combination workbook and laboratory manual, in which the laboratory component is integrated within each chapter of the workbook. The workbook also contains activities for the video that are coordinated with each chapter's cultural theme and main grammatical

structures. The final student component is *Sigamos*: *Lecturas literarias y culturales*. Each chapter provides a wealth of authentic readings that are related to the main text's themes and grammatical structures. Each textbook contains a preliminary chapter followed by 12 units, with each unit divided into two chapters.

The introduction of *Sigamos* professes to meet the needs of the diverse group of students who merge at the intermediate level. These students come from different backgrounds and levels of Spanish study, and have varied learning styles. The themes were selected after receiving input from university students. The topics are relevant and contemporary, and the content is not overly challenging for the intermediate level student, yet should stimulate interest and conversation. Too often at this level, the topics are issues that require more advanced language skills and vocabulary than the students have developed.

The texts are impressive. Each provides an abundance of activities to enable students to develop communicative skills. The reader is well organized, with prereading strategies provided in every unit. These strategies are critical for developing reading skills needed for future literature classes. The new vocabulary in each unit is presented semantically and by parts of speech. In both books, the new vocabulary in the readings is presented, in bold-faced type, enabling the student to refer quickly to the definitions. The activities provide ample opportunities to engage in both oral and written reinforcement of the vocabulary. The contextual applications allow for an increased retention of the vocabulary. Individual, pair, and small- and large-group work is encouraged through the activities, which facilitate the diverse learning styles of the students as well as the varied teaching styles of the instructors.

All too often intermediate Spanish students are frustrated by the quantum leap from first-year language study. *Sigamos* provides an excellent bridge. The interesting input encourages more output, in both written and oral form. Ample time is allowed for each unit and its concepts. Adequate recycling of the grammar structures presented in the first year enables the students to understand these concepts fully.

Some may criticize the text for not introducing more advanced grammatical structures. They may find in it too much review or recycling of first-year grammar concepts. *Sigamos* certainly provides an intense look at all the grammar points that are typically taught in a second-year course and also addresses such ambiguous issues such as *ser* and *estar*, *por* and *para*, *saber* and *conocer*,

and direct and indirect object pronouns, just to name a few. Possibly too much material is dedicated to simple present tense; and yet, this is the tense forgotten by the end of the first year after the inundation of preterit and imperfect and the subjunctive.

To do adequate justice to the *Sigamos* program, one would need to use it for 2 full semesters. This may cause problems for those institutions where the second year is not considered a full-year course, but rather third- and fourth-semester courses with independent curricula and outcomes. Should instructors opt to complete the *Sigamos: Lengua y cultura* text in 1 semester, they would most likely not include the literary reader as a component in the program, and this would indeed be a great loss. The literary reader is critical to develop the necessary reading skills to proceed to the next level of language study. The two texts are completely interrelated and coordinated.

Overall, it is refreshing to look at a text that promotes reading and vocabulary acquisition early in language study. *Sigamos* also keeps the material at an appropriate level so that it should not frustrate students, and yet it is challenging enough to encourage growth in the language. If an institution is contemplating a text for second-year Spanish, *Sigamos* is certainly worthy of consideration.

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TECHNOLOGY

BOSWOOD, TIM. (Ed.). *New Ways of Using Computers in Language Teaching*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL, 1997.

New Ways of Using Computers in Language Teaching is comprised of 85 language-learning activities grouped into six chapters. Topics include word processing, synchronous and Email discussion, online publishing, Web surfing, CD-ROM edutainment, and concordancing. Most contributors are Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) specialists or EFL/ESL educators from Hong Kong or the United States. Each activity is formatted to delineate clearly proficiency level, activity aims, preparation time, process time, and resources needed.

In general, the activities, which are designed for ESL students, fit well with a communicative

approach and do not depend on high-end technology. One of the editor's stated goals is to focus on pedagogy, not on technology. He intends to compile timeless teaching plans that can be adapted to newer technologies. However, this seems to be a curious goal for activities where pedagogy, technology, and language acquisition are inextricably tied.

His other aim is to help newcomers know how and when to incorporate technology into their classroom. Unfortunately, given the wide range in quality and type of activities, there is no single criterion on which a newcomer can determine appropriate usage. Although it is admirable to include a broad range of activities based on the wide array of technical resources available to the average teacher, a smaller set of exemplary activities would have better accomplished this aim. Two criteria that could have been employed to good effect are (a) appropriate use of technology, and (b) exploitation of authentic tasks and contexts.

For the former, one of the requirements of communicative CALL is that it not merely replace hard copy exercises; that is, there should be a reason that the medium of an activity be digital. One example of an aptly digital exercise from the book has ESL students gather and organize data into graphs and then interpret and summarize the graphs of their peers. They use English receptively and productively in an activity that cannot be done as easily or as well with pencil and paper. In contrast, another activity in the book features an inappropriate use of technology: online close reading. Many online magazines can be found in print form in a library, and reading print will not strain students' eyes as will reading via the computer. Further, a hard copy of an article can be highlighted and written upon, a significant advantage of print over digital text for tasks that involve close reading.

With respect to the criterion of task authenticity, this book includes many activities that ask students to use language in nonrealistic ways, such as to make texts ungrammatical or to learn complex online jargon that would be useful only for MOO chats. The most blatant example of an inauthentic activity focuses on teaching the use of a digital thesaurus without discussing the obvious problem of differentiating semantic nuances to choose the best synonym.

In addition to honing a theoretical framework for the book, the editor could also have presented practical guidelines to clarify when teachers should use computer assistance. For instance, he neglects to account for end-users' increased general computer knowledge. Although many

schools across the country still do not have computers, the PC boom in the past decade and the resulting widespread culture of technology has changed the definition of newcomers to the field. Most students and teachers already have basic computer and word processing skills, such as inserting clip art and altering a text's style. It is no longer necessary to include activities at this novice level.

It is not the intent of this review to dismiss this book altogether; there are two particularly informative sections on concordancing and speech and pronunciation software that are definitely worth reading. The overviews of these newer technologies are helpful for newcomers, particularly as they relate to the interconnectedness of pedagogy, language acquisition, and technology. Concordancing gives learners direct access to multiple examples of a target word used in authentic contexts, from which they can infer their own meanings, a great asset for vocabulary building and impossible to replicate easily on paper. The detailed section on speech and pronunciation software elaborates how computers can analyze pronunciation errors, read printed words, interpret sounds made by a speaker, and respond appropriately. Even those who are well versed in CALL will benefit from a careful examination of these subtopics. As with any publication on classroom methods, teachers can modify activities to match their students' specific needs. There are several worthy ideas in this book that can be strengthened and adapted to suit a variety of readers.

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EGBERT, JOY, & ELIZABETH HANSON-SMITH. (Eds.). *CALL Environments: Research, Practice and Critical Issues.* Alexandria, VA: TESOL, 1999. Pp. 523. $39.95, paper.

Job descriptions in language teaching are increasingly mentioning the desirability that a potential candidate be familiar with CALL and with technology generally. The major universities are responding to this changing employment environment by offering new technology-related courses for their M.A. and Ph.D. candidates. Expertise among faculty offering these courses is uneven, at best, and broad introductory texts are few. *CALL Environments* is an effort to fill the need for a text

usable in teacher training and is broadly successful in doing so.

This is a carefully structured volume, rather than a collection of loosely focused essays. After an introduction, there are eight parts: (a) "Interaction"; (b) "Authentic Audience"; (c) "Authentic Task"; (d) "Opportunities for Exposure and Production"; (e) "Time/Feedback"; (f) "Intentional Cognition, Learning Styles, and Motivation"; (g) "Atmosphere"; and (h) "Control." Each part is constructed according to the volume subheading; that is, a theoretical, research-oriented chapter is followed by one or more chapters on application and practice and then by a concluding chapter that addresses CALL issues. At the end of each part is a section entitled "Explorations," divided into "Projects," "Guided Research," and "Questions for Further Investigation," all of which are oriented toward current or future teachers. The authors are an impressive group of international practitioners. Six authors contribute more than one chapter, including editors Egbert and Hanson-Smith, as well as Ana Bishop, Chin-Chi Chao, Deborah Healey, and Bill Johnston.

The "Research" chapters together comprise an immensely valuable survey of SLA issues and their pedagogical implications. Johnston's discussion of "Audience, Language Use, and Language Learning," for example, covers the background in audience theory, its meanings in linguistics, sociolinguistics, and cultural studies, as well as common usages in language instruction. He then addresses the notion of authenticity and how it transfers into the domain of computer-mediated communication. These are issues vital to current teaching and learning practice and daily become more so. The chapters dedicated to assessment in part 5 by Chao and Egbert, which blend research and continuing classroom issues with CALL-specific recommendations, are another successful sequence.

The "Practice" chapters are wide ranging and cover the necessary ground, albeit with a bias toward repurposing first language software for ESL uses. This approach is certainly valid, especially for those instructors working in anglophone areas. It furnishes a painless initiation into technology-enhanced instruction, using a task- or project-oriented approach based on first language content. A secondary overriding emphasis is on computer-mediated communication, which includes Email, bulletin boards, listservs, collaborative writing environments, Web publishing and other Internet-based activities.

It is curious that there is relatively little discussion of courseware created specifically for ESL instruction. Even major initiatives like the ELLIS system are mentioned only in passing, which may well be a reflection of the minimal impact of such systems in actual instruction. The possibilities for instructor authoring are likewise accorded a secondary place, not appearing substantially until chapters 25–27.

The chapters that deal with CALL issues are primarily useful in preparing teachers to judge courseware, technology-based teaching initiatives, and computer classroom design from a sound pedagogical base. This is, of course, not a negligible service, in that many teachers of long service are asked to make decisions about technology for which they have had no preparation.

Technical aspects of the volume are perhaps least satisfying. Part of the problem is that such a volume is almost by definition outdated by publication, given the slow pace of the writing and preparation process for a print publication compared to what has become known as "Internet speed" in the high-technology industry. For example, the CALL environments that are most likely to affect learning of all kinds, including language learning, in the intermediate future are those like WebCT and Blackboard CourseInfo, which are Web-based course management and delivery toolkits that integrate many of the components discussed separately in this volume. The fact that their impact has only been felt in the last 2 years explains their absence from consideration here but also is an indication of the limitations of print publications in this domain.

The strength of this volume is its global discussion of issues in second language teaching and learning and its recommendations for an intelligent blending of elements from our increasingly technology-saturated social environment into instructional contexts. The excellence of the broader discussion more than compensates for the occasional irrelevance of detail related to specific technologies and trends.

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FELIX, USCHI. *Virtual Language Learning: Finding the Gems amongst the Pebbles.* Melbourne: Language Australia Ltd., 1998. Pp. 182. $20.00, paper.

As suggested by the title, this book is a timely tool for teachers, learners, and researchers to help them sort the large amount of foreign language material available through the Internet into man-

ageable categories. It comes with a companion CD-ROM that not only includes the complete text, but also serves as a shell to connect online to the different sites included in the guide.

It is divided into four parts. Part 1, "Introduction," orients readers to what to expect from online instruction. Part 2, "Annotated List of Examples Sites," is a comprehensive list of foreign language sites organized by type (e.g., integrated versus independent units, activities and exercises, MOOs), content (grammar, teaching plans, etc.), and commonly and less-commonly taught languages, including Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, Swedish, Turkish, Hungarian, and Greek. In Part 3, "Making Sense of the Technology," the author offers technical information about the intricacies of the technology involved in the design of online materials. She makes a complete account of possibilities, potential problems, and limitations, posed by the available technology. Constant reference to sources should put seekers of further information on the right track. Part 4, "Getting the Language Right: Text Input and Output," deals with the thorny issue of multilingual characters in cyberspace. The author refers to multiple ways to represent diacritics, bidirectional languages (e.g., Arabic, Hebrew), and double-byte characters (Chinese, Japanese, Korean). The fact that this book deals with an entity that is in constant development and change explains the inclusion of four appendixes, which provide last-minute information. ESL is included only in a couple of categories in part 2, but appendix 1 is devoted to a list of useful ESL, EFL, and TESOL sites.

In the "About This Book" section, the author outlines four types of readers who comprise the anticipated audience: (a) teachers looking for materials to integrate in their existing curriculum, (b) learners who want either to review or to learn another language, (c) teachers who might be interested in developing their courses entirely on the Web, and (d) individuals who are interested in learning about approaches to teaching foreign languages on the Web (p. 9).

As a foreign language methods instructor, I found in this book various applications to the work of pre- and inservice teachers of foreign languages. Teachers at all stages of experience are constantly pushed to find authentic, real-life materials as an alternative to the relatively limited context of the classroom and the textbook. In a situation in which the target culture is not available beyond the walls of the classroom or the pages of the book, the Web offers the possibility to open a window to that authentic, real-life world

of the target culture. Furthermore, with the development of national standards, including the goal to connect to the community beyond the classroom, the Web allows for the establishment of virtual communities. This book offers teachers an array of possibilities to choose from.

With the advent of the electronic era, researchers have the responsibility of testing and analyzing the electronic resources for foreign language teaching and learning to establish the advantages and benefits over more traditional approaches. More theses and dissertations deal with electronic resources and tools that enable students to interact with real-life situations in the target culture. The information in this book and, most important, its organization, will be useful to these researchers.

The limited number of documents in the section on designing foreign language courses on the Web and learning a new language on line is a sign of how underdeveloped this area is. Until the technology develops an appropriate level of interactivity, including voice recognition to allow oral communication and feedback, the learning of a language can benefit from online instruction only to certain extent, and depends, as it always will, on complementary face-to-face instruction to give students opportunities to communicate orally and to test hypotheses by negotiating meaning. The majority of the materials listed are integrated in a larger instructional frame and are intended as an extension, complement, or follow-up to face-to-face classroom interaction. Needless to say, this complementation may significantly enrich learning possibilities and, therefore, should not be disregarded. The technical information offered in the third part ("Making Sense of the Technology") may be useful for online foreign language material developers.

The author's effort to address a wide variety of languages and audiences is commendable, as are the useful and extensive technical information and references for further discussion. Her view of the Web is realistic: "Despite the attractions of the Web, it would be foolish to ignore the drawbacks" (p. 16). She tempers caution with a positive attitude: "The user needs to accept that this is a different way of learning and learn to deal with the differences. . . . What is needed . . . is to exploit the advantages offered by this medium and to reduce the disadvantages" (p. 17). I was particularly drawn to the author's summary of her pedagogical views: "Teachers and learners will have to make their own choices about how to use the Web, but my own ideal would be to incorporate all the following elements into a single

program: a good text-book; face-to-face teaching; interactive tasks using the Web; contextualised practice of structures on the Web and/or on CD-ROM; meaningful activities based on video and sound on CD-ROM; and Web-based interchange with authentic speech communities" (p. 21).

Because the author writes from Australia, some of the commercial references are area specific (particularly to Indonesia and Asia), but these references should not be a problem for the Western reader, given the universal availability of Internet connections and resources in the United States and Europe. The author recognizes that the sites she gives may already be outdated, given the speed of development of this new medium, and she includes information on how to update site information, providing the readers with the addresses of the specific developers.

I hope that this guide is soon updated and complemented with periodic new editions, to make it an essential reference in the new generations of foreign language resource libraries and labs.

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YIDDISH

KERLER, DOV-BER. (Ed.) *The Politics of Yiddish: Studies in Language, Literature, and Society.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 1998. Pp. 212. $24.95, paper.

This collection of essays is drawn from three Winter Symposia held at the Oxford Programme in Yiddish between 1988 and 1990. Despite an editorial disclaimer, the title should be understood as both descriptive and prescriptive, for during its heyday, the Oxford Programme was the last of the ideologically driven schools of Yiddish Studies. Three were its articles of faith: (a) Yiddish scholarship is the privileged domain of Yiddishists, those who actively promote Yiddish as a living language; (b) ideally, therefore, Yiddish scholarship should be conducted in Yiddish proper; and (c) with the end of the Cold War, the time has come for a positive reevaluation of Soviet-Yiddish culture. From Kerler's extremely brief introduction, we learn that the essays languished in manuscript for a decade because "Oxford Yiddishists

turned to publishing academic and new literary work in Yiddish" (p. 4).

The unfortunate result of putting politics first is this tired volume of essays. Included herein are the senior scholars Emanuel S. Goldsmith, Avraham Greenbaum, and Milton Doroshkin, who go over ground they have covered many times before, while some of the younger scholars (e.g., Rakhmiel Peltz and Hannah Kliger) have, in the interim, published full-length books that supersede the papers they gave at Oxford many winters ago. Most troubling is the inclusion of two memoiristic pieces by Kerler's father, the Soviet-Yiddish poet Josef Kerler. The senior Kerler writes of Soviet-Yiddish culture with a hagiographic style, which further tips the balance toward "hype" and advocacy. In short, a volume that was meant to showcase the newest trends in Yiddish Studies reads like a throwback to a time when the dispassionate pursuit of scholarship was sacrificed to utopian ideals.

That time is the subject of the first cluster of essays, which examine three important institutional settings in the annals of Yiddish secular culture: the Czernowitz Language Conference of 1908, the Institute for Jewish Proletarian Culture in Kiev, and the 1935 conference of the Yivo Institute in Vilna, Poland. The most interesting aspect of these essays is reading them back to back, which underscores the radically different Yiddish spoken in each setting. At the Czernowitz conference, there is a studied, artificial quality to the proceedings, because Yiddish was just then coming into its own as a universal, secular tongue. In Kiev, the campaign to divest Yiddish of its petty bourgeois and clerical baggage was expressed in a Soviet-style, deracinated language. Against this monological backdrop, one is struck by the superidiomatic, heavily Hebraicized Yiddish that was spoken and written in Vilna; it is almost too rich, too conscious of being both analytic and folksy. Rounding out the first section is a succint overview by Rakhmiel Peltz on "The Politics of Research on Spoken Yiddish." Peltz argues that "the obsession with normativization and predetermined standards of what constituted the refined *kulturshprakh* led the linguists [in the United States and the Soviet Union] to intentionally overlook the ways of speaking of most Yiddish speakers" (p. 69). How does Peltz propose to rectify this imbalance, now that Yiddish is one of the least spoken vernaculars among world Jewry? By staging performances of Yiddish in his native Philadelphia in order to study how it is actually spoken! Peltz, to his credit, is aware of the problem, but coming on the scene so late in the day,

he sees no other way of doing ethnography among living informants.

In the next cluster of essays, on "Communities, Centres, and Cities," Miriam Isaacs offers the only possible alternative: to study the Yiddish spoken by ultra-Orthodox Jews, especially in Israel. First comes the good news, that official census data on the downward spiral of Yiddish in Israel are belied by the facts on the ground. This is because the ultra-Orthodox (called *haredim*) typically do not allow themselves to be counted, even while they maintain a very high birthrate. In their closed communities and independent schools, Yiddish remains the lingua franca. The bad news is saved for the end: the level of Yiddish literacy among the *haredim* is low; there is little reading material available in Yiddish; even here, Hebrew is gaining ground. Drawing on the positive side of the ledger, the continued viability of Yiddish among the ultra-Orthodox in Jerusalem, Brooklyn, and elsewhere, has become an article of faith among secular Yiddishists. Isaacs, too, is forced into a defensive posture, when she protests that "many *haredi* informants speak a rich, colourful and expressive Yiddish sprinkled with humour, proverbs and, of course, talmudic references" (p. 94). Many more, she fails to mention, speak a pidgin Yiddish, a creole, generously sprinkled with either modern Hebrew or English.

The last cluster of essays appears under the catchall of "Language, Folklore, and Literature." These have traditionally been the areas of strength in Yiddish scholarship, the very wording hearkening back to the pioneering volumes of *The Field of Yiddish*, founded by Uriel Weinreich in 1954. Unfortunately, with the exception of Dafna Clifford's fine essay, "Dovid Bergelson's *Bam Dnieper*: A Passport to Moscow," the six essays contained herein are either hermetic to the point of self-parody, or, in the case of Kerler senior, general to the point of platitude.

Judging from these published proceedings, what went on in Oxford were symposia in name only. There is no evidence of internal dialogue. Kerler could have cross referenced the deliberations in his introduction or, more important, could have provided an index, but he failed to do so. He also might have proofread the volume more carefully. Now that the Oxford Programme in Yiddish exists in name only, there is no central address for Yiddish studies, and every scholar labors in isolation. Although Yiddishists may not be able to rebuild a living culture, they can—and should—construct an interdisciplinary field of study. Kerler's volume points in one possible direction.

Clifford's essay exposes the ideological and aesthetic fault lines in Bergelson's two-volume autobiographical novel, *Bam Dnieper* (1932). Among contemporary critics, Clifford quotes generously from a harsh review by the young Isaac Bashevis (Singer). As we now know, the young Bashevis experienced an acute "anxiety of influence" vis-à-vis the great impressionist master, and his 1932 review of *Bam Dnieper* was in many ways his declaration of independence. The same skepticism that Bashevis displayed toward the Marxist orthodoxies of the 1930s he demonstrated yet again upon arriving in the United States. In his manifesto of 1943, "Concerning Yiddish Prose in America" (trans. in *Prooftexts*, 9, 1989, pp. 5–12), Bashevis pointed, sadly, to the growing obsolescence and jargonization of Yiddish in the New World. At a time when, according to Peltz, the Yiddish secular establishment paid no attention to Yiddish as it was actually spoken, Bashevis was experiencing the consequences. He proclaimed that henceforth, Yiddish prose writers would have to draw not from the present, but from the past, not from life, but from books. It is a lesson that our born-again Yiddishists would do well to heed.

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