

Reviews

ISSUES AND OPTIONS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING. H.H. Stern, edited by Patrick Allen and Birgit Harley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. 404 pp.

This is the first book of such encyclopaedic scope since Mackey's *Language Teaching Analysis* (1965). Together with its companion volume, *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching* (Stern, 1983), it covers the whole field of language teaching from its underlying principles and concepts to classroom issues. *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching (FCLT)* was designed to deal with essential theoretical and policy levels. *Issues and Options in Language Teaching (IOLT)* moves closer to the level of practical implementation.

Whereas *FCLT* was addressed, perhaps somewhat optimistically, to "anyone who has a serious interest in language teaching," *IOLT* is aimed at "second or foreign language teachers in general." It explicitly includes teachers of languages other than English. It has to be said that anyone in either category of addressee is in for a mammoth reading task—over 500 pages in *FCLT* and close on 400 (excluding the bibliography) in *IOLT*.

Sadly David Stern did not live to complete this, his life work. The present volume has been painstakingly revised and re-organised from his papers by his colleagues Patrick Allen and Birgit Harley. In doing so they have confined themselves to us-

ing existing material in varying states of completion and have not presumed to write the chapters which Stern had planned but not yet embarked upon (such as Vocabulary and Evaluation). To this extent it is a faithful representation of his views, though one is bound to regret the small degree of incompleteness in the overall edifice.

The introduction starts by placing *IOLT* in the context of *FCLT*. This is followed by an historical review of language teaching trends, which is masterly in its concision.

The rest of the book is organised into four parts: Part I Policy and Practice, Part II Defining Objectives, Part III Content Options, and Part IV Teaching Strategies.

In the first section of Part I, Language and Teaching Analysis, Stern lays out the blueprint for the rest of the book. His curriculum model on page 27 includes the categories of "objective" and of "content" which form the basis for Parts II and III respectively. He argues for a broadening of curriculum objectives to include not only proficiency in the language but also knowledge about how the language functions, the development of positive feelings towards the language and towards language learning (affect) and transfer as a way

of generalising beyond a particular language and culture. He also argues the need for a multidimensional syllabus covering not only language but also culture, communicative activities, and general language education. "The expectation is that our multidimensional framework for the analysis of second language teaching will not only provide more choice for the curriculum designer, but will ultimately lead to the enhancement of second language teaching and learning" (p. 38).

The remainder of Part I is concerned with issues in curriculum planning and research. Stern takes this opportunity to lay responsibility for the curriculum squarely with educators:

We believe it is right to take a number of points of view into account, including those of teachers, parents, citizens in general, and above all the reactions of students. Eventually, however, the responsibility for curriculum must lie where it has been placed by society, often upon the teachers themselves, sometimes upon a local authority, examination board or ministry of education. The responsibility cannot be abandoned merely by declaring that we are "negotiating" the curriculum with our students. The refusal to plan in advance is as much a curriculum decision as imposing a rigid pre-ordained curriculum. (p. 43)

And, more succinctly, "an emphasis on learner autonomy does not ab-

solve the curriculum designer of his responsibility to plan the options within which the learner will be encouraged to exercise his judgement" (pp. 45-46).

Not all readers will completely share these views but they are forcefully, unambiguously, and cogently expressed here.

In Part II, Defining Objectives, detailed examination is given to the four sets of objectives listed above. The chapter starts with a comprehensive review of the various taxonomies of educational objectives and one of the criticisms levelled at such narrow specifications of performance objectives. He quotes from Gritner (1977, p. 60), "... behavioural objectives seem to be part of a system for doing more efficiently that which we should not be doing at all. That is, perhaps we should not be imposing pre-made decisions upon students; perhaps we should be helping them to make their own decisions; to learn how to learn for themselves."

In considering the proficiency objective, there is a useful discussion of views of proficiency as competence, as skills, and as language behaviour. The treatment of cognitive goals provocatively re-states the until recently unfashionable case for developing both linguistic and cultural *knowledge* as part of the overall objectives. Affective goals are sensitively and sensibly discussed with the objective of developing positive attitudes towards the target language, its speakers, and

the language learning process as a whole. Finally, under transfer objectives, consideration is given to helping learners to acquire language learning techniques, to gain insight into language and culture, and to develop positive attitudes to language, culture, and language study in general. Stern clearly believed that this should not be left to chance: "[If] we wish transfer to occur we should not take it for granted but should positively 'teach for transfer.'"

The only criticism I would raise here is that there is a good deal of overlap between the affective and the transfer objectives and that the tables between pages 88-99 are somewhat repetitive and not always obviously necessary.

Part III, which constitutes the bulk of the book (170 pages in all) offers a comprehensive treatment of the content options.

The language syllabus is divided into separate chapters on pronunciation, grammar, and functional analysis. (It is unfortunate that the chapter on vocabulary was never written, especially in view of the interesting new work which has gone on in this field in recent years.)

Chapter 4, Pronunciation, offers a valuable historical review of the issues—"natural" acquisition or phonetic training; order of presentation—separate sounds or supra-segmentals first; the balance between perception and production, etc.

One significant issue touches on

unconscious factors in pronunciation:

[We] have tended to treat pronunciation too exclusively as a simple case of voluntary control over the speech apparatus. This is no doubt true up to a point, but beyond that we have to deal with the expression of self-image, ethnolinguistic attitudes and empathy which is not confined to pronunciation, but for which the learner's approach to pronunciation is a sensitive indicator. (pp. 121-122)

This is a point which would, I feel, have merited fuller treatment.

Chapter 5, Grammar, focusses on the tension between the value of conscious learning and unconscious acquisition and associated issues. The conclusions are unremarkable but honest, "we have argued that deliberate study and intuitive acquisition both have a role to play. . . . Empirical research has not yet made it clear whether teaching/learning approaches that include a focus on grammar have a definite advantage over those that do not" (p. 151).

A relatively minor but by no means insignificant omission from this chapter was any mention of the work in the large scale computer analysis of corpora (e.g., Cobuild, Longman, etc.) and its spin-off for the teaching of grammar through concordancing.

Chapter 6, on Functional Analysis, takes the reader through the familiar landmarks of the field including Wilkins and the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project. Interestingly, Stern makes the dis-

inction between analytic approaches to communication (functions, notions, speech acts, discourse rules, etc.) and global, non-analytic approaches through communicative activities. By placing functional analysis squarely within the language syllabus, he makes clear what has often been obscured, namely that grammar-based and function-based syllabuses are fundamentally similar.

In his discussion of the Communicative Activities Syllabus in Chapter 7, Stern is careful to distinguish between real (field) experiences of the language, as in study abroad, and contrived (classroom) activities. He cannily avoids being drawn into the "authenticity" fly-trap but his distinction is a timely reminder that "communicative" is always a relative term.

One of Stern's abiding beliefs, the importance of "culture," is taken up in Chapter 8, The Cultural Syllabus. "All the writers . . . we have reviewed recognise the cultural embeddedness of language and insist that L2 instruction is not possible without placing language items into sociocultural context" (p. 232). He examines the varying concepts of culture and the goals of teaching it in some detail. There is also a useful description of a range of possible techniques for teaching culture. "Besides the unwieldiness of the culture concept, a further problem is the absence of resources, the lack of cultural research, the patchiness of documentation, and

the overall shortage of systematic descriptive accounts of cultural data" (p. 222). All in all, this chapter offers a useful corrective to excessively language or communicative-oriented syllabuses.

The General Language Education Syllabus, Chapter 9, is a similarly salutary reminder of issues often neglected. "Of the four syllabuses, this is the most neglected" (p. 243). The chapter is especially important for the emphasis it gives to independent learning and to the reintegration of language education within education in general.

I found some of the most interesting items in the book here, especially those relating to language awareness training in the mother-tongue and learner training strategies. However, I was again slightly surprised at the omission of references to Ellis and Sinclair (1989) whose book *Learning to Learn English* was a trail-blazer in the field at the time.

In Part IV, Teaching Strategies, Stern is at pains to point out that the strategies it contains "are not simply another term for what used to be called 'methods.'" Instead he examines some macro-level strategies which extend their influence down to the level of method and technique.

It is possible that Chapters 10, 11, and 12 will prove the most interesting and immediately relevant part of the book for many practising teachers.

The discussion of intra-lingual/

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intra-cultural and cross-lingual/cross-cultural strategies in Chapter 10 raises in a timely way the relevance of translation as a teaching device, and redresses the balance which has markedly favoured intra-lingual approaches in recent years. It also draws attention to some interesting comparative and contrastive techniques for the classroom.

In Chapter 11 Stern scrutinizes analytic and experiential strategies. There is a well-balanced discussion of the pros and cons of both, together with some very useful checklists and sets of characteristics of each. His conclusions are typically circumspect. "We would like to view analytic and experiential strategies as equivalent and valid approaches to language learning which are different and which complement each other" (p. 314).

The final chapter examines the explicit/implicit dimension: The extent to which teaching/learning strategies are rational and conscious or intuitive and subconscious. Once again the conclusions are balanced and find virtues in both explicit and implicit approaches.

Stern did not write a conclusion; the editors have therefore drawn on his papers and lecture notes to round off the coverage of items he clearly intended to include. However, I found the treatment both too fragmented and too slight to do these residual, but significant, topics justice. Inevitably one is left with a sensation of anticlimax.

What then are the primary strengths of the book?

- The sheer scope of the work is breathtaking, combined with a conceptual grasp and an ability to synthesize from a wealth of detail which are quite remarkable.
- It is written in a clear and, on the whole, non-technical style which makes it approachable even by the (determined) non-specialist.
- It is refreshingly pragmatic and commonsensical in its judgements.
- It displays dexterity in balancing and reconciling arguments from widely differing viewpoints, and an ability to look beyond the superficial attraction of an argument, theory, or approach to its fundamentals.
- It is meticulously systematic in its organization.
- It seeks to place the issues within an historical context, which helps us to view them from a more objective perspective.
- It carries within it a number of recurrent themes of significance:
 - the plea for a multi-dimensional approach to curriculum
 - the importance of culture as part of language learning

- the need to locate language teaching within an overarching educational context
- the importance of transfer, with its implications for life-long education
- the reminder of how far we still are from achieving an objective knowledge base for the language teaching enterprise, and the consequent need for caution and humility in our judgements
- It does what it sets out to do in presenting the issues with clarity so that we can all evaluate our options and make reasoned and informed choices.

I have alluded to what I regard as some minor shortcomings with respect to the omission of significant references. The only other criticism which some readers might be tempted

to make derives from one of its virtues, listed above. In his scrupulous non-partisan stance and his ability to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable, does Stern occasionally fall into the trap of wishing to be all things to all men, of lacking in personal conviction? I think this is an unwarranted suspicion but one which is made possible by the very blandness of some of the judgements, as in the extract from page 314 quoted above. Perhaps there is a case for toning up some of these statements in a future edition?

The book will clearly become a standard resource for curriculum planners, teacher trainers, M.A. programmes, and all those involved in language teaching for many years to come. It is a monument to the scholarship, wide experience, and humanity of its author. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Patrick Allen and Birgit Harley for their dedication in preparing it for publication.

Reviewed by Alan Maley, Formerly Chairman of IATEFL and Director General of The Bell Educational Trust, Cambridge

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COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TESTING. Cyril J. Weir. London: Prentice Hall International, 1990. 216 pp. ¥3,285.

Communicative Language Testing effectively fills the gap between the communicative curriculum and its neglected counterpart, second language assessment. Much more than simply an adaptation of classroom methodologies applied to evaluative situations, Weir has managed to write a book that could be used as either a text in an introductory course to language testing or as a reference guide for the serious practitioner. For the beginner; there is ample reference made to literature and definitions in the field; for the experienced, Weir has included plenty of practical working tests as examples in the appendices.

In the first chapter, Weir looks at the wide range of current approaches to language testing. In turn, he looks at the history of testing development, the communicative paradigm, and problems attendant on establishing communicative tests. Perhaps the best definition of a communicative test come from Bachman (1991, p. 678), who explains features that distinguish communicative tests as ones that create an "information gap," include task dependency in which one section builds on information presented in an earlier section, and, finally, integrate test tasks in relation to content. For his part, Weir fully examines each of the features listed by Bachman in addition to an identification of perfor-

mance conditions, authenticity (for both texts and tasks), interaction, and purposefulness. At the end of the first chapter, Weir discusses issues of extrapolation, touching on how specific language tasks may be designed to display global properties. Weir warns the reader to be aware of the difficulties of translating communicative test specifications into actual working examinations.

In the second chapter, Weir examines basics of test design, including test validity, reliability, and test efficiency. To address the concept of construct validity, Weir argues it should be seen as "a superordinate concept embracing all other forms of validity" (p. 23). By doing this, the test developer is able to attach greater meaning to statistics generated by test results. Because the primary purpose of communicative examinations is to provide a profile of student proficiencies, content validity is critical in test development. Weir points out the need to establish clear test specifications and suggests that content area experts examine potential test materials. He cautions, however, that the judgment of experts alone may not be sufficient; the use of ethnographic procedures and introspection studies may be needed to truly establish content validity.

Weir briefly discusses two important areas of test validity: face valid-

ity and washback validity. Like others in the field (Bachman, 1990, pp. 285-289), Weir dismisses the importance of face validity, though notes that "what a test looks like" may adversely affect student performance. Washback validity can be powerful: Weir points out that the adoption of a communicative approach to testing would certainly force a curriculum to be more communicative, perhaps even on a national level.

Despite the need for practitioners to judge their tests on external, independent data, Weir questions the applicability of criterion-related validity in communicative language tests. Weir argues that concepts based on an empiricist-operationalist approach may be limited when adopting a communicative outlook to assessment. He is somewhat unclear, unfortunately, in providing alternatives or in giving examples of usable external objectives.

As for test reliability, Weir writes that three conditions must be met to achieve defensible results: rater reliability, internal consistency estimates, and parallel-forms reliability. Unfortunately, Weir glosses over the complexities of the statistics needed here and refers the reader to other studies. To obtain optimal results in rater reliability, test rating demands rigorous training to be sure each marker consistently judges the language sample accurately. Once the assumption of the independence of test items is met, internal consistency statistics are relatively easy to figure. Results would

then need to be applied to item revisions. Integrated "information gap" items, however, may well violate this assumption and lead the practitioner to use test-retest methods of reliability estimates, a critical point Weir fails to mention. Parallel-forms reliability estimates would also require the double testing of a sample group, an administrative nightmare for all but the most dedicated professionals.

It is in the area of test efficiency, a critical aspect of testing from an administrative perspective, that Weir firmly warns potential test developers not to overlook the gritty practicalities of creating a large-scale language exam. He sends a clear signal to those considering creating their own communicative tests, noting that such tests are "difficult and time consuming to construct, require more resources to administer, demand careful training and standardisation of examiners, and are more complex and costly to mark and report results on" (p. 35). Given the demands many educators face in Japan in creating relatively simple entrance examinations, Weir's warning should be heeded closely by the novice developer.

Chapter 3 briefly focuses on aspects of test design, defining key vocabulary for the novice at this crucial stage, and looks into the complexities of test development once test parameters have been set. Again, Weir strongly advocates professionalism and expertise at this stage of communicative test development, noting

that amateur attempts may prove disappointing.

Complexities of communicative test development aside for the moment, much of the appeal of Weir's book lies in his clear discussion of a variety of test methods in Chapter 4. He addresses methods in each of the four skill areas, from the construction of multiple choice items when testing structure, to establishing guidelines in marking extensive writing samples. This catalogue of methods available to language test developers goes far in providing an overview of existing approaches, serving as a handy reference in early discussions of design. Weir follows a standard format throughout this section, first providing a brief overview and then listing advantages and disadvantages of each method.

Following an excellent bibliography, virtually the entire second half of Weir's book consists of appendices. Four tests are published here, providing templates for creating a viable communicative test. Too often language testers neglect publication of their actual work. Weir's inclusion of four tests which have adopted a communicative approach, including the UCLES/RSA Certificates in

Communicative Skills in English, is commendable. Much can be gleaned from study of these successful examinations, including clear wording and succinct objectives in the writing of test specifications.

Communicative Language Testing contributes admirably to issues of student assessment in a communicative approach to language for both the novice and serious test developer. Many of its strengths lie in a format that allows for quick reference to specific testing methods while also providing easy access to detailed descriptors of actual working examinations. The book falls short, however, in discussion of problems in establishing a communicative testing program, most notably in the lack of discussions of statistics or the training of raters. Such deficiencies, however, can be overcome by consulting other books in the field, such as Henning (1987) or Heaton (1988). Overall, Weir has written a book that establishes a starting point in the investigation of communicative approaches to language assessment, advancing an area of testing and second language acquisition research that desperately needs further attention.

Reviewed by Paul Gruba, Kanda University of International Studies
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RESEARCH METHODS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING. David Nunan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 249 pp.

There isn't a lot of room on the desk where I write—space for two or three books, as well as a heap of papers and various writer's accoutrements. The books that I can fit on the desk tend to be high priority ones: there's a *Chambers English Dictionary*; the *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*; and of late, while I am researching aspects of second language teacher education, David Nunan's *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Of all the books I have recently consulted on research method, it is to Nunan's that I constantly return. There surely can be no better basis for a recommendation.

Research Methods in Language Learning is intended as a practical introduction for those new to research in applied linguistics and as such, does not assume specialist knowledge. It is designed to familiarise the reader with a wide range of research methods. This is not the first time David Nunan has promoted the marriage of teacher and researcher. In this work, though, he sets out to equip the teacher with the researcher's knowledge and skills.

The motivations behind the book are two-fold. The first is to strengthen the critical skills of teacher-readers so as to make them more resilient to "the swings and roundabouts of pedagogic fashion" (xi), a worthy objective in itself. Nunan cites the

tendency in the field of language teaching for logico-deductive arguments and calls for more balance through "empirical approaches to inquiry" (xi). Thanks to books like this one, today's teachers are more likely to seek data in response to pedagogical issues, either through their own research or through that of others.

As well as equipping teachers with the researcher's skills, the book aims to facilitate the processing (reading and understanding) of research writing: to allow teachers to read critically others' research so as to be able to evaluate what they read. To do this, they must be informed and knowledgeable about research methods, and be able to assess a project's validity and reliability.

The book's overwhelming strength, aside from its balanced and accessible presentation of material, is its practical thrust, the fact that it seeks to "en-skill" the reader. Each chapter calls on a wealth of examples from research in language learning, and ends with a list of questions and exercises that review and reinforce learning. Nunan's approach is to present a synthesis of specialist writing on research and to apply it to real research issues. He repeatedly brings together others' insights into research methodology; and succinctly and cogently addresses the issues and assesses their contributions. The topic

issues (case examples) are interesting in their own right; as is the discussion of the research issues for which they are cited. Chapters end with annotated recommendations for further reading. There is a glossary of common research terms at the end of the book which helps with unfamiliar specialised terminology.

The book impresses with its logic and balance. It begins with an introduction to the tensions that characterise the research tradition, the distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches, the philosophical underpinnings of each, and an understanding of vital principles, such as reliability and validity. Nunan declares himself near the outset, urging the reader "to exercise caution in applying research outcomes derived from one context to other contexts removed in time and space" (xii). Chapter 2 addresses issues in experimental design such as variables, sampling, and statistics. Chapter 3 looks at the principles of ethnographic research design and relevant issues, especially those relating to the vexatious notions of reliability and validity. Successive chapters follow a similar format and deal with case study research, classroom-based research, introspective and elicitation methods, interaction analysis, and program evaluation. Each of these chapters is characterised by a lucid

and accessible style and a balanced presentation.

Importantly, the book ends with a skills-oriented chapter, "doing research," well named for its emphasis on process. Here, the author gently leads the user through the logical steps from developing a research question, through conducting a research review, to implementing the project and presenting findings. Its strength derives from its feet-on-the-ground realism and sound practical and logical advice. For example, a table outlines typical problems encountered by graduate students, and solutions recommended. There is a neat, "step-by-step-ness" here that the beginning researcher will welcome, especially given the notorious ease with which one can drown in the research process, as evidenced in the dreadful attrition rate among research students.

If one is to judge a book by the success with which it achieves its stated aims, then this book is a winner. The user will indeed emerge a more critical reader of others' research and a more skilled and confident researcher.

If, as Nunan states in the Preface, there is evidence that "the teacher-researcher movement is alive and well and gathering strength," then I have no doubt that it will derive on-going nourishment from *Research Methods in Language Learning*.

Reviewed by Ruth Wajnryb, Macquarie University, Australia

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLINGUISTICS. Janet Holmes. New York: Longman, 1992. 412 pp.

Sixth in Longman's *Learning about Language* series, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* is an introductory text aimed at first-year university undergraduates and senior school (sixth form) students. It covers a wide range of topics, generally moving from the easily perceptible to the less obvious in a constant effort to achieve maximum clarity. With examples drawn from cartoons, Monty Python, and advertising slogans, as well as from daily life, Holmes's book should appeal to students more than the average sociolinguistics text, and the author's New Zealand background may prove interesting to American and English students. The material is divided into three sections, yet remains highly cohesive throughout, bound together by a number of themes. The author's attention to cohesion, however, sometimes results in organizational problems, but instructors may be willing to sacrifice some extra time to syllabus preparation in order to maintain their students' interest in the subject matter.

In the Preface, the author indicates that she has two primary goals for the book: first, to share her enthusiasm for sociolinguistics while familiarizing students with the subject; and secondly, to pave the way for further study. By presenting anecdotal information in addition to classic research, humorous asides along with compet-

ing terminologies, she accomplishes both of these ends.

Assuming that her readers "have never heard of sociolinguistics, but . . . would like to know what it is" (p. x), Holmes opens her text at the bedrock of the field with an introduction to the concept of language variation. A variety of utterances, she explains, can be used to communicate the same idea, and the language which is ultimately selected will reflect social and emotional factors as well as carry literal meaning. To clarify her discussion, the author draws examples from within English, from across dialects, and from across distinct languages, offering a glimpse of the diverse material which will follow in later chapters. She then presents four "social dimensions" (p. 12), which are referred to repeatedly throughout the book: a social distance scale, a status scale, a formality scale, and two functional scales (referential and affective), and concludes with an outline of the text. This introductory chapter is an excellent one, succeeding not only in orienting the readers to the subject matter, but also in providing them with a conceptual framework by which to more easily digest unfamiliar ideas.

Section I, Multilingual Speech Communities, consists of Chapters 2 through 5, the first of which deals with choosing a code or variety from

one's linguistic repertoire. Holmes shows how different "domains" of language use (e.g., home/family; church/religion), as well as the social dimensions presented in the Introduction, are relevant to this selection, focusing on the speaker as an individual. She discusses diglossia and polyglossia, then turns to reasons for code-switching within a single social context. The rhetorical skill of rapid "metaphorical switching," through which a speaker draws on the symbolic associations of different languages, is distinguished from the rapid code-switching of second-language speakers, which is driven by lexical necessity. Holmes chooses to close the chapter with the observation that although code-switching requires a great deal of linguistic proficiency, it is generally frowned upon where multilingualism is not the norm. She attributes this attitude to the negative bias of the majority monolingual group, in a gentle appeal for linguistic tolerance which will often reappear in the text.

In the third chapter, interaction between majority and minority language communities is pursued further, with the introduction of language shift. The reader learns that over time, as the result of economic and social pressures, the members of a minority language group generally become less and less proficient in their own language. If active defensive measures are not taken, it will most likely fall

victim to invasion by the majority language, ceding first one domain, then another. Minority language survival, however, is possible with institutional support, and in describing the establishment of bilingual schooling in Wales, Holmes offers an example of language revival in progress.

Continuing along the path away from the individual, Chapter 4 moves from minority language groups to multilingual nations and their communities. The terms "standard" and "vernacular" are examined, and Holmes emphasizes that a standard dialect gains prestige merely through the socioeconomic and political status of its speakers, rather than through any linguistic superiority. Via an examination of lingua francas, the author arrives at the topic of pidgins and creoles. Although often considered to be but amusing perversions of European languages, pidgins and creoles are shown to possess definite linguistic structures, and to be used just as seriously as is any other language.

Section I concludes with a macro-level analysis of multilingual nations. A distinction is made between the symbolic and utilitarian natures of "national" and "official" languages, respectively, and Holmes discusses at length the political turmoil often involved in selecting the language or dialect of one particular group as the official national language of a multilingual country. The remaining two-

thirds of the chapter is devoted to "language planning," and seeks primarily to acquaint the reader with some of the real-life applications of sociolinguistics. But although this goal is an admirable one, the amount of new material which is presented does not seem to justify the length of the chapter, which might have been collapsed into one significantly shorter. The abundance of examples, however, does make for interesting reading.

In a characteristically smooth transition, Holmes points out that while she has used multilingualism to aid perception of linguistic diversity, ample diversity may be found within a single language as well. This intra-language diversity provides the focus of Sections II and III, the former concerned with the users of language and the latter with its uses.

Part II begins with an analysis of the linguistic variation which exists between different geographic areas and social classes, revealing that one's speech usually indicates one's regional and socioeconomic background. As Holmes "know[s] from experience that some points will . . . be understood more quickly and thoroughly using an English example—at least for the initial encounter with a new concept" (x), she uses English illustrations here almost exclusively. Her discussion of cross-continental variation, or dialect chains, ultimately leads to a definition of

"language" which reflects the social as well as the linguistic: "a collection of dialects that are usually linguistically similar . . . [whose speakers] *choose* to say that they are speakers of one language. . ." (italics in original, p. 142).

Chapter 7 examines two additional characteristics of language-users: sex and age. The author contrasts sex-exclusive speech, such as women's use of "*atashi*" versus men's use of "*boku*" to mean "I" in Japanese, with sex-preferential speech, in which men's and women's language differ, but overlap significantly. Holmes suggests that a speech community's use of sex-exclusive or sex-preferential speech will indicate the degree of contrast between the sex roles of its members. She next turns to women's more frequent use of standard forms, criticizing the explanations which she finds inherently sexist in favor of those which credit such factors as women's greater sensitivity to context and supportive conversational aptitude. But while her motives are easily understandable, she unfortunately fails either to attack the former explanations in their entirety or to offer sufficient evidence for the latter. Nevertheless, this section does provide a valuable introduction to the significance of careful methodology and to the subjectivity of data interpretation. The end of the chapter addresses age-graded features and their relation to patterns of language change, and again

she communicates the importance of careful data analysis.

Chapter 8 is devoted to the final language-user features of Section II. Ethnic groups are shown to manipulate the majority language in ways which reveal their distinctive identity, and the importance of a speaker's social network, or regular pattern of informal contacts, is also demonstrated. Finally, in explaining her choice of the term "vernacular" rather than "sub-standard," the author urges awareness of the implications which may underlie superficially neutral sociolinguistic terms.

Holmes closes Section II with a shift from the static to the dynamic, highlighting the variation over time which inevitably arises from regional and social variation. "[I]t is not so much that language itself changes," she writes, "as that speakers and writers change the way they use the language" (p. 211), thus justifying the location of this chapter in the central section of the book. The reader learns that language-users will tend to adopt a form endowed with either overt prestige, which expresses social status, or covert prestige, indicating solidarity. Almost all of the social factors introduced previously are drawn together in this chapter as elements which affect the wave-like progression of language change, in addition to the new concept of "speech style," which dovetails into Section III.

The final section of the book clarifies the relationship between the uses of language and its variation in monolingual speech communities, and opens with a chapter examining how addressee and social context influence style selection. The author shows that recognition of an addressee's age and social background often elicits speech convergence, in which speakers subconsciously adapt their language to that of their listeners in order to communicate solidarity or respect. Speech divergence and its ability to make a political statement is also explored, followed by formal contexts and the social roles which they prescribe. Holmes next moves on to the interaction between contextual style and social class, highlighting the hypercorrection shown by lower middle class speakers in very careful speech. Registers, the jargon of those with the same profession or interests, provide the final topic of Chapter 10.

JALT Journal readers may find Chapter 11 particularly interesting, as it deals with both the functions of speech and their manifestation across different cultures. Speech function compartmentalization is presented as a complicated, rather subjective matter, and Holmes settles on a classification system which, although not wholly explained, generally proves itself useful for the purposes of this chapter. She first concentrates on directives in English, then on polite

address forms. The author subsequently examines cross-cultural linguistic politeness and greetings, and emphasizes that a culture's distinctive manner of expressing the same speech function will mirror its characteristic social values. In a passing reference to second language learning, she remarks that as a result of this social quality of language use, there is much more to learning a foreign language than grammar and vocabulary.

Chapter 12 offers another look at the use of language by and about women, examining Western English-speaking society almost exclusively. The hypothesis that the hedging and boosting features of "women's language" (e.g., tag questions; emphatic stress) express a lack of confidence is presented, and Holmes delivers a scathing critique of the early research conducted in this area. She then develops the theory that while men may use hedging and boosting techniques primarily to express a lack of power, these features are more often used by women to soften directives and negative comments or to facilitate conversation. As part of her analysis of interaction, Holmes contrasts women's emotionally supportive gossip with men's highly critical and often insulting banter, concluding that both serve the identical goal of promoting solidarity. The chapter ends with the issue of sexist language. Chapter 12, if assigned in isolation,

would provide students with a helpful introduction to the topic of sex and language. Within the context of the entire book, however, the distinction between how *women* use language, addressed in Chapter 7, and how women *use* language, addressed here, is a bit unclear, thus resulting in a redundant feel to the chapter, even if much of the material has not been previously presented.

In Chapter 13, Holmes looks at attitudes toward language in general and standard and vernacular English in particular, before turning to applied sociolinguistics and its relation to the field of education. She describes how sociolinguists have worked to correct the notion of "linguistic deprivation," arguing that children who use vernacular forms are not linguistically deficient, but rather the victims of a school system which institutionally places them at a disadvantage. The main aim of this chapter is to reiterate explicitly the consistent background hum of the entire text: first, that people's attitudes toward a language variety reflect their attitudes toward its users and uses more than toward the code itself; and secondly, that since all codes are linguistically equal, we must learn to accept linguistic variation rather than stereotype people according to the language variety which they use. Holmes's message is a valuable one, yet this chapter seems to lack the coherence of the others, even growing a bit repetitive at times.

It does add a feeling of unity to the book thus far, as most of the earlier chapters are mentioned here, but perhaps this function might more appropriately have been left for the Conclusion.

The concluding chapter gives a well-organized, lucid synthesis of the information which has been presented. Reviewing the knowledge needed for appropriate language use, each chapter is considered in terms of its contribution to sociolinguistic competence. The four social dimensions which have appeared regularly are discussed here more thoroughly, and the suggestion that they are universally useful analytical tools leads to a short discussion of sociolinguistic universals. Discovering generalizations which link language and sociology, the author explains, is the ultimate object of the sociolinguist, perhaps leading the reader to wonder whether more than a few pages should have been devoted to the topic. The text finishes on an apologetic note, acknowledging that discourse analysis, language and thought, and the ethnography of communication all had to be neglected, and that bilingual education and second language learning were only lightly touched upon. Referring to the topics which she has had to omit, however, may serve Holmes's goal of arousing her readers' interest in the subject, and encourage a number of them to pursue additional study.

In addition, at the end of each

chapter, the author lists new concepts introduced, references, and suggestions for further reading. The book also includes an appendix of phonetic symbols with key words selected for their stability across different varieties of English, and a glossary containing terms which are used in the book but not defined.

One of the most pleasant aspects of *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* is the self-awareness of the author, who seems intent on communicating information rather than expounding it. Smooth transitions are the rule, and the logical progression underlying the structure of the book is evident. Holmes binds the text tightly together, linking later chapters to earlier ones and re-considering old examples from new angles. There is a negative side to the text's cohesiveness, however. At times, instead of simply referring back to material, the author appears to present it again in a slightly altered format, sacrificing space which might have been used to address another facet of sociolinguistics. And while the distinction between multilingual and monolingual, or language-user and language-use, may be difficult to maintain, it seems that a bit too much diffusion occurs between the sections of the book, given that their clear-cut divisions were set up by the author herself. On the other hand, because no part of sociolinguistics acts in isolation, some intermingling is inevitable, and dividing the book into sections does help focus the reader's

attention.

An interesting feature of the book is Holmes's versatile use of "exercises," which serve as more than mere tools for gauging comprehension. Often they are employed as illustrations in order to make the text more interesting, appearing almost in the form of a puzzle. At other times they provide an alternative means of presenting new information, and in these cases, after actively involving her readers in the material, Holmes gradually brings them out in such a way that it is sometimes difficult to realize where the exercise ends and the regular text begins. Other exercises require still more reader involvement, and even suggest research projects which are applicable to life.

The connection to reality is further enhanced by the many examples which punctuate the text. When introducing an idea, Holmes generally offers an example first, then unravels it in terms of the new concept, immediately anchoring the concept to the language which it describes. Those more familiar with sociolinguistics may even notice a tendency to provide examples beyond what is needed for clarity (as in Chapter 5), and may feel slightly unforgiving regarding topic omissions by the author. The newcomer, however, is more likely to experience the high degree of illustration simply as a much more read-

able text.

As well as familiarizing readers with the subject matter itself, the text also introduces the critical thinking required of sociolinguists. Instead of expressing her own point of view exclusively, Holmes also analyzes the work of others (as in Chapters 7 and 12); and when clarifying a term, the implications of different definitions are often contrasted before a selection is made (as in Chapter 8). Charts, graphs, tables, and soft statistics all appear, and exercises calling for data interpretation further promote the development of scientific thought.

What Janet Holmes has contributed to the field, then, is a conscientious introductory text which clearly communicates both the indissoluble link between language and sociology and the importance of linguistic tolerance. She uses a variety of techniques to make the assimilation of new ideas as easy and enjoyable as possible, emphasizing their relevance to the reader's own life. And while some topics remain unaddressed, Holmes's intention is to give a broad introduction to sociolinguistics rather than offer an exhaustive summary of the field. She accomplishes this goal admirably, producing a work which will appeal to the lay reader and will also provide a useful cornerstone to first-year sociolinguistics classes which adopt it.

Reviewed by Lauren Shapiro, Nagasaki Junior College



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LANGUAGE IN USE: A PRE-INTERMEDIATE COURSE. Adrian Doff and Christopher Jones. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 144 pp.

An initial leafing or cursory glimpse through *Language In Use (LIU)* while browsing through your local book store would bring to mind such comments as "colorful," "nice layout," and "attractive." Unfortunately, very little pedagogical value can be gleaned from such a brief inspection and fleeting comments. Upon closer inspection, one finds a great deal of value and a high degree of functional language being presented here, at least in the hands of a well-trained or experienced teacher. The closer I looked, and as I taught some of the units in this text, the more I began to think that, in the hands of an inexperienced or untrained ESL/EFL teacher, *LIU* would lose an immense amount of its pedagogical value. Of course, this is not unique to *LIU*. Several texts come to mind, including the popular *Interchange* series (Richards, Hull, & Proctor, 1990-91). However, it is most important to note that a conscientious and well-prepared teacher can help students achieve their own goals as well as the course goals of *LIU*.

In this review, I intend to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of this text with regard to the students for whom it is designed. After identifying the level for which *LIU* is intended, I will deal with the key fea-

tures of the texts. These include the dual syllabus which is built into the design, the speaking, reading, listening, and writing aspects, along with the Teacher's Book and the Self-Study Workbook.

Level

LIU is designed to meet the needs of students who have completed a beginner's course in English, or who are coming back to English after studying it at some time in the past. This covers a pretty broad range, especially considering that here in Japan virtually every high school graduate (more than 90% of the Japanese population) has completed six years of English study. Six years is certainly enough to qualify as a beginner's course. Add to this the business people and housewives who study English at some point in their careers and Doff and Jones's target market comprises most of the Japanese adult population. The same would apply to the adult populations of most (West) European and (Southeast) Asian countries. Doff and Jones refer to this text as aimed at a "pre-intermediate level." *LIU* is most appropriate—or would be most beneficial—for students who have a reasonable foundation (TOEIC 420+) in English, especially in the receptive skills, but who have had very little opportunity, or need, to use English

for oral communicative purposes. For, while *LIU* does provide more than enough grammar exercises, especially in written form, it succeeds at promoting oral proficiency more than any other skill. Clearly, the students at this level are adults—university level students and above—and this is where most of the materials and topics are directed. It is also where most of the materials were piloted before *LIU* was published. These are the students who will benefit most from using *LIU*.

Key Features

LIU consists of 24 four-page units, intended to last approximately three classroom hours each. There are also revision and extension units every six units. The classroom book is accompanied by a Teacher's Book, a Self-Study Workbook, and two cassette tapes, one for the Classroom Book and one for the Self-Study Workbook.

One of the unique features of *LIU* is the dual syllabus design, consisting of a grammatical syllabus and a topical syllabus. The odd-numbered units are grammar-based and the even-numbered units are topical. The grammar, as well as the vocabulary (which is the main focus of the topic units), appear to become progressively more difficult throughout the text. Grammar-based units begin with simple description language (e.g., This is..., There are..., It has..., etc.) and

finish off covering narration, prediction, and duration. The topical syllabus is heavily weighted towards vocabulary development and oral fluency practice. These are clearly targeted towards adult learners and would prove inappropriate for other learners. Fortunately, Doff and Jones attempt to provide numerous opportunities for the structure of the grammar-based units to be recycled through the topical units, as well as recycling the vocabulary from the topical units through the grammar-based units. This design may prove a boon to the prepared teacher making a serious and conscientious effort to do this recycling. However, there must be substantial teacher effort to get the most out of *LIU*. Because of the effort required, *LIU* is, in my opinion, quite unsuited for many of the free-access conversation schools of Japan. It will produce the most substantial results when studied sequentially from unit one through unit 24, constantly and conscientiously recycling.

The Classroom Book

The Classroom Book is meant to provide for the presentation and practice of particular grammatical points and structures as well as to introduce topics for discussion, while the Self-Study Workbook is designed for reinforcement or review outside of normal class time. Many teachers, however, are sure to find particular exercises from the Self-Study Workbook

quite useful as teaching and learning aids when used in the classroom. The Classroom Book contains exercises in pair work, group work, as well as listening activities, reading activities, and writing activities. As stated above, these activities begin by presenting the grammatical structures to be practiced. The presentation techniques and strategies offered in the Teacher's Book, however, are rather bare and straight-forward. There is little in the way of lead-in activities or warm-ups. Nevertheless, there are often three or four presentations in a typical grammatical unit, which is far superior to many of the texts out on the market that are limited to one particular focus.

The listening activities in the Classroom Book are used "as a basis for presentation or as a stimulus for a speaking or writing activity." While this is certainly a valuable and appropriate teaching technique, it doesn't teach aural comprehension skills. Of course, there is likely to be incidental improvement from listening to the tapes, as there would be from listening to the teacher or other students. However, the development of listening comprehension skills is one of the weaknesses of *LIU*, in my opinion. Most of the tapescripts are used to present and model correct grammatical structures. Therefore, they teach grammar and not listening comprehension. In order to improve this situation and teach listening compre-

hension, the teacher must step in and become more involved. While the modeling of particular grammatical points seems appropriate for the students' Self-Study Workbook, it hardly warrants use as the major listening component inside the classroom with a native speaker teaching. Teachers who manipulate these tapes and/or bring in their own supplementary listening activities will be doing their students a service.

In a manner similar to listening, *LIU* deals with writing mostly as a tool for teaching grammar. Most of the writing exercises consist of producing simple sentences and/or paragraphs as a means of practicing a specific grammatical structure or as a way to discuss the topic of the unit. While this may certainly have a role in any comprehensive language course, it does not teach the process of writing per se. *LIU*, at most, provides a few cursory note-taking exercises. This is, however, perhaps appropriate in a course where oral proficiency is given so much focus. It is not entirely reasonable to expect the writing process to be emphasized in such a course.

Reading as a separate skill, on the other hand, is given more substantive and systematic attention than either listening or writing. Doff and Jones have included both scanning and skimming exercises to go along with the more traditional types of reading exercises which are typically found

in general English texts. These exercises include guessing vocabulary through context and answering general comprehension questions.

Information gleaned from the reading passages is used in follow-up speaking and writing activities. This adds a sense of purpose and usefulness to the reading for both the students and the teacher. Most of the reading passages are no longer than a few short paragraphs and can be dealt with in an acceptable amount of class time. Adult learners will generally find them interesting. They also lend themselves extremely well to extension activities. It should be noted that most of the more significant reading passages are strategically placed in the topical units, which, as previously mentioned, are designed for vocabulary development.

The Focus on Form section appears on the fourth and last page of each grammar unit. Focus on Form clearly lays out the basic patterns that were practiced during the unit. This is usually done through model sentence patterns and often includes pair work activity for students. While this is intended to be used as a review or summary, many teachers will find it of value during the presentation stages of a lesson. Focus on Form also includes activities to provide students with practice in pronunciation.

The Self-Study Workbook

Since much has already been mentioned about the Self-Study Work-

book, it will only be dealt with briefly here. This book is useful not only for students studying on their own time, but in the classroom as well. The grammar and vocabulary exercises, in the grammar and topical units, respectively, can be used as additional practice activities during class time, if needed.

The Teacher's Book

The Teacher's Book is laid out extremely well and is designed to be user-friendly. Each unit begins with a brief identification of what the unit intends to cover linguistically or topically. The grammar is explained clearly but only in a skeletal fashion. Language notes pointing out particular rules and necessary exceptions are included here. Enough optional extra ideas are included, with short practice activities provided in most cases. Role-play cards and information for students to complete the pairwork and group activities are well organized here. Perhaps the most convenient feature here is that each page of the student's text lies opposite of the corresponding page of the Teacher's Book.

Conclusion

LIU provides both teacher and student with plenty of useful material and activities. It will certainly help adult learners develop their speaking proficiency. Reading skills should also show improvement. The topical units are targeted towards adult learners and so should prove to be popular

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when exploited properly. Listening skills and writing skills may not fare as well. The recycling of grammatical structures and vocabulary is a new and innovatory idea that will undoubtedly assist those learners who only study English a few hours a week.

The small caveats above notwithstanding, *LIU* should prove itself a

valuable text in helping students return to English studies successfully and in helping them to get over the "pre-intermediate" plateau. Speaking skills in particular will benefit, although the teacher may have to provide additional practice and activities at times. In general, *LIU* should fill an important void in the textbook market for adult learners.

Reviewed by Patrick Colabucci, IPEC, Inc.

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Richards, J., with Hull, J., & Proctor, S. (1990-91). *Interchange 1-3*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

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VISIONS: AN ACADEMIC WRITING TEXT. Emily Lites and Jean Lehman. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1989. pp. xvi + 191 ¥2,210.

Japan's English education has long neglected the productive side of English proficiency, whereas productive competence has been recently acquiring importance because Japanese people need to speak out in many fields in an age of global communication. They admit they are poor at speaking, but they are not fully aware of their lack of competence in writing as well. At high school, writing is limited to the sentence level, and discourse and rhetorical organization are totally ignored. Furthermore, most composition exercises consist of translation from Japanese to English. The result is that even advanced students who can spell correctly and have a good knowledge of grammar cannot write more than a sentence or two. This situation continues until these students are suddenly required to write for academic or professional purposes.

In such an educational environment, *Visions: An Academic Writing Text* can be used as a practical measure to help undergraduate or adult students develop writing skills so that they may be successful in their academic or professional goals. The book, designed for college, university, or adult ESL students, is intended for use in the writing component of intensive English programs. It is coordinated with *Visions: A Pre-*

Intermediate Grammar, but can be used independently. The focus is on the integration of writing skills for academic purposes; in other words, for the expectation of academic readers. The book guides students step-by-step through the process of carefully sequenced features of writing—vocabulary, reading, grammar, topic development, and rhetorical organization—towards eventual production of writing. Each task is controlled and designed to build new skills and strategies on those already learned, thus leading students to integrate all skills and strategies into writing. This approach to writing serves to encourage unprepared Japanese student writers, rather than having them stall in frustration as often occurs in free composition. The use of some methods involving the process approach are also helpful. Brainstorming for ideas, peer discussion, and peer collaboration in draft revision involved in the reading and writing sections serve to integrate listening and speaking with writing.

The focus of the book, the integration of writing skills, is well-reflected in its organization. Each of the twelve chapters begins with a section called "Vocabulary in Context," which is followed by "Reading," "Understanding Through Writing," "Getting Ready to Write Paragraphs," and

"Writing Paragraphs." Some chapters have additional sections on lexical topics. Each section consists of several subsections which include explanations and exercises. This organization seems too elaborate and repetitious at first glance, and Japanese students may find it difficult to understand directions for exercises and grammatical and rhetorical explanations given in English. Comprehending directions and explanations might be an additional task for these students. However, it is a necessary one, and the repetitious nature of the book's organization and abundant examples will help them as they proceed from one chapter to another, and will finally become an effective means for unprepared students to develop reading skills as well as writing skills.

"Vocabulary in Context" includes subtechnical and content vocabulary exercises. Subtechnical vocabulary consists of terms common across fields of study. These terms reenter in later chapters. Content vocabulary is based on the topic of the "Reading" section. The benefit of this section is that students work on exercises without dictionaries so that they may develop the skill of guessing word meanings from context. Japanese students tend to memorize word meanings in Japanese translation found in the dictionary; they are not encouraged to guess meaning from context as a learning strategy.

The "Reading" section begins with

warm-up activities which include peer discussion on several questions relevant to the topic. This serves to provide schema to facilitate reading. Such skills as predicting, skimming, and scanning are also introduced here.

"Understanding Through Writing" is the section which analyzes the reading and works as a bridge connecting reading and writing. Students first obtain general understanding by means of indentifying true and false statements, answering questions, finding main ideas, making inferences, and identifying implications. Then they analyze the reading in terms of vocabulary, sentences, and discourse. The means employed for analysis are giving general and specific information, identifying synonymous sentences, making sentence fragments into complete sentences, paraphrasing, recognizing paragraph organization, indentifying noun phrases, using synonyms, recognizing the organization of a longer piece of writing, and so on.

"Getting Ready to Write Paragraphs" deals with discourse grammar selected from the reading on the basis of frequency in written discourse. Exercises subsequent to general explanations of selected elements of discourse grammar begin with a recognition exercise which helps students identify those elements in the reading. Grammar is treated practically as one of the several features of writing.

In the final section, "Writing Para-

graphs," students apply what they have learned to writing a paragraph or short composition of several paragraphs. Students are first provided with preliminary explanations on the rhetorical organization of paragraphs. The book then adopts some methods used in the process approach. Students brainstorm for ideas, organize them, write drafts, revise two or more times, and collaborate both in generating ideas and revising drafts. They are encouraged to bring their own ideas into academic discourse, and also given opportunities for selecting topics. The authors stress brainstorming activities because they have creative potential and alleviate the anxiety intrinsic to the first phase of writing. Various techniques for brainstorming are explored since different strategies are effective for different writers and different stages of students' progress in writing. Throughout the writing process, the authors also emphasize cooperative learning, which invites students to exchange ideas and information, and also serves to integrate listening and speaking with writing. In order to facilitate peer discussion, the book provides ample suggestions about topics and techniques for discussion. A revision checklist helps students check their own and peers' work for revision. However, Japanese students and teachers are not familiar with brainstorming and cooperative learning, so teachers would be well

advised to prepare carefully and get used to these techniques in order to gain the maximum result. With regard to teacher feedback and correction, the authors recommend in their message at the opening of the book that the focus be on content and organization the first time a paper is submitted and then on grammar and mechanics in revised papers. They also recommend attention to the emphasized points of the current chapter concerning content and grammar. The "Writing Paragraphs" section is of course the culmination of the book and thus cleverly induces students to produce writing suitable for their academic purposes.

There are, however, some drawbacks to the book. Content vocabulary is sometimes identical to non-technical vocabulary, and sometimes to technical vocabulary. The distinction between subtechnical and content vocabulary is also unclear and unnecessary to students. It is enough perhaps to say simply "vocabulary." Another drawback concerns the selection of topics in the reading sections of the twelve chapters. They concern technologies, natural science, social science, and education. No topic is chosen from humanities. This selection could be more suitable for undergraduate students from various fields of study. Moreover, topics concerning social science and education deal with American situations such as "Post-Secondary Education in the

United States," "American Telephone and Telegraph: A Regulated Monopoly?" "Fast Food Industry in the United States," "Banking in the United States," and "Taking Standardized Tests." This is quite natural for a textbook designed for college, university, or adult ESL students, but it is doubtful if these topics stimulate Japanese students' interest when used as an EFL textbook. Another minor flaw is perhaps the lack of relevant, interesting photographs and pictures. The tight organization and careful guidelines can sometimes be oppressive even though they are helpful

on the whole for unprepared students and teachers inexperienced in the approach of the book.

In conclusion, *Visions: An Academic Writing Text* offers an innovating and challenging approach to writing for Japanese students and teachers alike. The authors successfully combine form-dominated (i.e., rhetorical rather than grammatical) controlled composition with the process approach. Despite some drawbacks, this book will help Japanese students acquire writing skills that are integrated with the other three skill areas.

Reviewed by Kazuko Yamada, Temple University, Osaka

ESL IN AMERICA: MYTHS AND POSSIBILITIES. Sarah Benesch (Ed.). Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Boyton/Cook Publishers, a subsidiary of Heinemann Educational Books, 1991. 133 pp. \$16.50.

Working from a belief that understanding "students' histories and cultures as well as their current social and economic problems" is essential for effective ESL teaching and administration, the editor of this brief volume has collected an impressive set of essays exploring the social and political context of ESL. *ESL in America: Myths and Possibilities* focuses upon historical and socio-political, rather than pedagogical factors in ESL. Contributors include a civil-rights attorney, a professor of law, a sociologist, and a school principal. One is an ESL student.

The nine articles in *ESL in America* (seven of which were written especially for this collection) are divided into three sections. Part I, "Myths," explores popular myths about immigrants to the U.S. such as: earlier immigrants were more willing to learn English than today's immigrants; laws declaring English the official language are adopted to help immigrants; most immigrants come to the U.S. seeking political freedom and economic opportunity; most immigrants are welcomed to America. In exploding these and other myths, the articles in this section offer valuable historical and legal analyses of twentieth century immigration.

Part II, "Educational Policy," focuses on community college ESL and

bilingual education, in particular, it discusses reforms needed to make English language education more responsive to the real-life needs of students. By exploring the impact of policies upon real students, the articles in Part II argue persuasively that current policies do not serve many immigrants and refugees in America.

Part III, "Possibilities," includes descriptions and analyses of three innovative programs that share the assumption that effective English language education must be linked to a broader analysis of the social and economic conditions affecting students' lives. The most practical, classroom-oriented articles in the collection, Part III explores important innovations that will interest both teachers and program administrators.

Individual contributions to *ESL in America* reflect the editor's stated concern for social and political forces affecting ESL. In the first article in Part I, "Myths," Juan Cartagena argues that the movement to declare English the official language is another example of language restrictionist movements that can be traced to the early twentieth century. Cartagena examines the literature of U.S. English, the main organization supporting official English. Like other critics of U.S. English (e.g., Crawford, 1992; Donahue, 1985), Cartagena concludes

that the official English movement is based primarily upon powerful myths about immigrants and America.

The slight "Who Are the Americans?" was written by an ESL student, Samuel Hernandez, Jr. Its inclusion reflects an important theme of the volume, that teachers and program administrators must learn to listen to the voices of the students they serve.

More substantially, in "Living in Exile," Georges Fouron examines the Haitian community in America. Drawing upon the dependency theory of migration, Fouron's historical analysis of U.S.-Haitian relations shows the crucial role U.S. policy played in creating the conditions for large-scale Haitian immigration to the United States, as well as for the difficulties experienced by Haitians in the U.S. Fouron discusses the alienation of most Haitian parents from U.S. schools, but otherwise his article does not spell out the implications of his analysis for ESL instruction.

In "ESL and the Myth of the Model Minority," Philip Tajitsu Nash traces the shift in the myth of Asian immigrants from "yellow peril" to "model minority." Nash argues that the new myth of the model minority disguises the fact that racism continues to limit the upward mobility of many Asian Americans, who are channeled into limited white-collar jobs having little authority and lower wages than those paid to white workers with similar levels of education. In a concluding

section, Nash suggests ways that ESL programs may move beyond the myth of the model minority to better serve Asian students. (A similar concluding section would also have strengthened Fouron's otherwise excellent article.)

Section II, "Educational Policy," consists of two of the best articles in this collection. Sarah Benesch's "ESL on Campus: Questioning Testing and Tracking Policies," critically examines the widespread practice of using ESL placement scores to track students into remedial programs (many of which require students to pay additional fees). Although focused specifically on ESL tracking, Benesch's analysis of decontextualized skills testing will also interest administrators and teachers who are responsible for designing and implementing ESL tests. Benesch's provocative critique of ESL testing should be required reading for all ESL professionals. In the second article in Part II, "Contextual Complexities: Written Language Policies for Bilingual Programs," Edelsky and Hudelson argue that no single policy for writing and reading instruction will satisfy the needs of all ESL students. Their argument for local policy making is an eloquent plea for granting teachers and students the autonomy they need to create effective language programs.

Part III, "Possibilities," opens with an informal description of "How We Welcome Newcomers and Celebrate

Diversity at the Garfield School," by a school principal, William Waxman. Waxman's contribution is followed by Elsa Auerbach's and Loren McGrail's "Rosa's Challenge: Connecting Classroom and Community Contexts," an outstanding practical analysis of specific ways to adapt ESL programs to the social and political conditions affecting students. Auerbach and McGrail describe the problem-posing approach to curriculum development and suggest a wide range of tools for teachers, including student-written materials, oral histories, photo-stories, and action projects. Teachers who are looking for a concise and useful description of the participatory approach to ESL would be well served by reading this article.

The final article in the collection, "A Collaborative Model for Empowering Nontraditional Students," by Teri Haas, Trudy Smoke, and Jose Hernandez, describes a collaboration between teachers in two writing courses and an instructor in a social science course called "Conquered Peoples in America." With the growing interest in linking ESL classes to regular subject-area courses, this article should interest many teachers in colleges and universities. Unfortunately, the unusual format of the article—a transcription of a discussion among the collaborating teachers—makes it difficult for readers to derive general principles or specific ideas for designing their own

collaborative programs.

The editor of *ESL in America* is to be commended for centering our attention on questions like "Why did our ESL students leave their countries to come to the U.S.? How have U.S. government policies affected their home countries? What are the myths about past generations of immigrants? How do those myths affect today's immigrants?" ESL professionals have often heard that they must understand the world outside the classroom if they are to make informed pedagogical choices. Rarely, however, are they *shown* how such an understanding can dramatically affect program design and teaching practice. This edition achieves that aim.

Despite its strengths, *ESL in America* will not be for everyone. Most of the articles are obviously written for a U.S. audience. Cartagena's discussion of the official English movement, for instance, is not an introduction to this issue, but instead a critical analysis of one side of the debate. Some of the pedagogical practices, such as linking ESL to content-oriented courses, would work only at an English-speaking institution. The discussion of immigration is limited to the U.S. context. The critical analysis of ESL testing and placement practices applies to U.S. colleges and universities. Researchers interested in detailed studies of alternative testing practices, partici-

patory methods, immigration education, or other topics will be disappointed. Indeed, other books have covered some of the same ground as *ESL in America* (e.g., Cooper, 1989; Corson, 1990; Fairclough, 1989; McKay & Wong, 1988). Within limits, then, *ESL in America* is to be recommended.

In perhaps the best statement of

the purpose of this volume, the editor asks: "How can we change the ways we teach to help these students see the myths exposed, the obstacles eliminated, and the possibilities expanded?" *ESL in America* is a solid contribution toward answering this crucial question, which should concern all ESL practitioners.

Reviewed by James W. Tollefson, University of Washington

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TEACHING ENGLISH OVERSEAS: AN INTRODUCTION.

Sandra Lee McKay. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. 155 pp.

This book is, as its title suggests, intended for those who plan to teach or are currently teaching in countries where English is not spoken as a native language, but the breadth of its content may come as a surprise to those seeking an "introduction." Hapless jobseekers looking for practical information on overseas employment will not satisfy their interests here. Instead, the book focuses on the professional concerns of teaching English in both developing and technological societies, and offers a broader and deeper perspective than its title discloses.

The book is divided into two parts: Part I, "The Larger Context," deals with the sociopolitical, economic, and cultural considerations which affect the teaching of languages in a given country; while Part II, "The Educational Context," focuses on the implementation of national policies by educational institutions. Each chapter begins with a theoretical basis and provides the basic terminology needed for an informed discussion of economic and sociopolitical factors. A selection of case studies then serves to exemplify the theoretical concepts put forth in the chapter and to reflect a diversity of experiences and reactions of individual teachers to the problems of their particular teaching assignments. A section on "Explor-

ing the Ideas" accompanying each chapter suggests topics for thought and discussion, enabling readers to articulate the concepts put forth in the chapter and apply them to the specific political, economic, and cultural conditions of a specific geographical area of interest. They can then examine and evaluate them through their own personal experience in the manner that the case studies have illustrated. "Researching the Ideas" outlines practical research tasks for further exploration of the issues; research questions, sample project plans, lists of core sources, and even sample interview questions help to provide a basis for the tasks. A bibliography of related sources concludes each chapter.

Part I: The Larger Context

Part I is divided into three chapters, the first of which views language teaching within the sociopolitical context. It begins by defining language planning, and shows how the language planning process may be used to fulfill governmental and societal objectives. McKay relates language planning to the necessity of balancing the interests of nationalism with the realities of efficient policy implementation. Fishman's (1969) scheme for categorizing nations in terms of language planning needs facilitates a discussion of the reasons

for various language planning decisions on the national level.

In Chapter 2 we see how economic incentives bear on motivation for language learning and ultimately on the teaching of language, first by explaining the relationship between economic factors and language spread, followed by an explanation of how diglossia, the use of two languages or varieties with differing prestige levels used in separate societal domains, relates to economic factors.

Chapter 3 addresses the larger cultural context as it relates directly to education; and, closer to home, as it affects the role of school and classroom. It then relates the basic principles of ethnography, or the cultural study of how people interact within a particular setting, to language teaching by defining the etic and emic perspectives of a culture with an end toward advocating the adoption by teachers of an emic perspective, in order to deal more effectively with cross-cultural misunderstandings in the classroom. This is followed by a discussion of what cultural content, if any, should be included in a specific curriculum.

Part II: The Educational Context

The two chapters of Part II are concerned with the Educational Context and deal respectively with the effects of language education policies and institutional structures on teaching. Chapter 4 examines ways in which decisions made by Ministries of Education affect teaching and

teachers. Under this topic are subsumed such issues as the choice of a language as the medium of instruction, how vernaculars may be regarded, implementation of curriculum guidelines, and which varieties of English are promoted.

Chapter 5, addressing the institutional context, describes the many ways in which educational funding can affect student populations, hiring, materials, course offerings, and language objectives. The chapter also suggests points one should investigate before accepting an overseas position. As in other chapters, the case studies here of contrasting institutions in various countries offer readers clear examples of a range of situations and suggest short research projects as encouragement to explore the ideas further.

Teachers who began their overseas careers through such organizations as the U.S. Peace Corps or British Volunteer Service Overseas may have had a similar opportunity in their training programs to view their jobs within the larger context this book affords. In recent decades, however, increased international mobility has made it easier for teachers to find employment worldwide on their own volition, with the result that many teachers go abroad with little or no idea of the larger implications of their job within the cultural and sociopolitical framework of their host country. As a result, most expatriate teachers can probably recall instances

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in their experience when naiveté on their own part or that of a fellow employee resulted in ramifications which caused damage to institutions, students, teaching careers, and cultural understanding. In light of this, the book serves the important purpose of filling a crucial information gap in preparing teachers for what to expect, and for examining their own beliefs about education, teaching, and culture. In addition, it is timely in providing information directly applicable to the quandaries and tasks facing the many new nations which are springing into being almost overnight, with their attendant language planning dilemmas: the part that nationalism and nationism play in language planning decisions; the choice of official languages; decisions about what variety of a language to promote in government and education; issues of corpus planning, such as the expansion of vocabulary to update the use of a language; or the development of a writing system.

McKay takes a strong stance in her assumptions that English teachers who accept employment in a host country need to be informed of the specific social and political consequences involved in the teaching of English in the host country. The book warns that they need to be aware of their own deepest cultural biases. The role of

the expatriate English specialist, McKay insists, should be only to produce greater language proficiency within the given structure, rather than to try to effect political or social change.

While she acknowledges that this awareness is perhaps not wholly possible due to the fact that our cultural view is deeply ingrained, McKay suggests that as teachers we are in a better position than most to inform ourselves, view our own cultural biases with some degree of objectivity and compensate for them; and that as professionals we are obliged—unquestioningly, from the author's viewpoint—to do so. For readers in accord with her assumptions, the book offers practical assistance in fulfilling such an obligation.

While the obscurity of its title may result in its being overlooked by those who need it most, the book's thoughtful organization makes it useful as a course text for training programs of either new or experienced educators, as a reference volume for individual teachers in overseas settings, and as a starting point for those who wish to pursue individual research. It will be a useful addition to all who take their professional responsibilities as guests in an overseas education system seriously.

Reviewed by Elizabeth King, International Christian University
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