

Reviews

Grammar in Mind and Brain: Explorations in Cognitive Syntax. Paul D. Deane. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992. 355 pp.

Reviewed by
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Grammar is a fascinating subject for most language teachers. Formal grammars, Chomsky's Transformational Grammar or the newer Government-Binding Theory or Halliday's Systemic grammar, for example, claim to present a formal abstraction of the structure of the language. There is, however, a problem here that is seldom mentioned. Logically, language exists in three places: [1] in the brain and mind of the speaker, [2] in the physical modifications of the space between speaker and listener, and [3] in the brain and mind of the listener. The formal grammars are based on a study of the language at [2]. This language is obviously more limited in scope than the language at [1] or [3], simply because it is only a sample of the language that could be produced or understood. Theoretically there could be an almost unlimited number of different grammars [1], each of which could generate the language at [2]. The same sort of relationship applies between the language at [3] and that at [2]. *Grammar in Mind and Brain (GMB)* changes this situation. *GMB* presents the first full-fleshed grammar based on the possibilities at [1] and [2]. The author calls the results Cognitive Syntax.

GMB is written for linguists and assumes a general knowledge of the field, especially Government and Binding. A reader without this knowledge would still find much interesting material but most of the arguments supporting the ideas would have to be taken on faith.

Deane begins by arguing that there are only two basic positions that we can take on the relation of grammar to the mind and brain. One position, that of cognitive and functional linguistics, is that language acquisition is a learning process and differences between linguistic processes and non-linguistic process are assumed to be a matter of degree. The second position, that of transformational linguists, is that there is a discontinuity between linguistic abilities and other domains. Deane calls this second position formalism or Chomskyan rationalism and says that the only way to refute it is to produce a working counter-example, a

grammar that is based on general cognitive principles and directly related to specific aspects of brain function. Deane uses the remainder of the book to produce, explain and justify just such a counter-example.

Deane's discussion is fairly technical but straight forward. He begins by showing that at least some of the problems experienced by the formalist position in dealing with island constraints can be attributed to a need to account for the influence of attentional states and other general cognitive variables. He also develops the idea that syntactic processing is done by cognitive structures and processes that were originally applied to visually understanding physical objects. He then expands this idea into a general theory, *The Spatialization of Form Hypothesis*, which incorporates insights concerning image schemas, conceptual metaphors, natural categorization, cognitive understandings of the processes of memory and recall, and the theory of relevance. Specifically he employs the schemas of link, center-periphery, and part-whole which are used by the mind to characterize objects as integrated wholes.

After a long and finely detailed discussion, Deane uses the schemas to develop the outline of a grammar, a syntax, that uses four types of links between words/phrases. In c-links, or co-occurrence links, the subcategorized element can not appear as a phonological realization unless another grammatical element also appears. P-links, predication links, represent the dependency of the predicate on its arguments and thus show semantic relations. S-links, or identity of sense links, indicate that access to the sense of one lexical item presupposes access to the sense of the other. R-links, or referential links, show that one linguistic unit refers to another. The grammar consists of diagrams in which variables are linked to other variables in one or more of these four ways. He then applies the concept of activation and shows how activation will spread across links, labeling the finished network a schema. Finally the question of interaction between schemas is addressed, producing the outline of the full grammar. The value of the grammar is then demonstrated by a long series of detailed analyses in which the answers to previously unexplainable problems become obvious.

After developing the grammar, Deane returns to his proposal that human linguistic abilities are dependent on processing in brain structures whose primary function is the analysis of spatial structure. An examination of the literature locating the brain's ability to process spatial information provides a basis for the prediction that grammatical structure will be processed in the Inferior Parietal Lobe. Deane then uses aphasia studies to show that Cognitive Syntax conforms to the actual processing that is taking place in the brain.

Although still a hypothesis and not yet a theory, its potential value for language teachers is clear. A fuller specification of the grammar will present us with new, and hopefully more effective, opportunities for organizing our lessons. Detailing this is beyond the scope of this short review, so a single example will have to suffice. The schema which shows the subject relation in a sentence and the schema for possessives are the same, only the morphemes and grammatical categories are different. An enterprising teacher or text writer might be able to find some way of presenting the language to the student so that the once-learned schema could be cognitively reused, reducing the amount the student has to learn.

In conclusion, Deane's *Grammar in Mind and Brain* contains a ground breaking study that has the potential to become a classic. Anyone with a deep interest in linguistics, cognitive psychology or cognitive approaches to language learning will find this book, although extremely technical, well-worth the time needed to understand it.

Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy in Development, Ethnography and Education. Brian V. Street. Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1995. 184 pp.

Reviewed by
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For anyone interested in questions of literacy, both from a theoretical perspective and when applied in research and education, Brian Street's work over the past fifteen years or so has been instrumental in pushing debate on important issues such as the relation of oral and written language and how school practices mold consensus on what exactly it means to be literate in a particular society.

An earlier book, *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (1984), introduced Street's distinction between autonomous and ideological models of literacy, which is central in this book as well. The autonomous model, one that has been prevalent in many approaches to literacy, promotes a firm distinction between non-literate communities and societies where communication is achieved primarily through oral means and modern literate societies. In contrast, Street proposes an ideological model, one which places literacy (along with language and education) in the context of the social relations of a given community. He argues for the

practice(s) of literacy being defined singularly with regard to features by written and originally published between 1987 and 1990, Street covers a lot of the same territory as his earlier work. While Street is an anthropologist, this work is also important for sociolinguists and those interested in issues in education.

The book is organized into four sections, each containing two chapters. The four sections are: 1) Literacy, Politics, and Social Change, 2) The Ethnography of Literacy, 3) Literacy in Education, and 4) Towards a Critical Framework. While each chapter is a self-contained paper, there are brief linking introductions to each of the four sections, as well as a general introduction which guides the reader to understanding these developments in literacy studies or "New Literacy Studies," as Street has called certain strands of work, including his own as well as writers James Gee, Shirley Brice Heath, and Allan Luke among others.

Street's main theoretical argument stands in contrast to writers such as Ong (1982) and Olson, Hildyard, and Torrance (1985) who have advanced claims about the cognitive effects of literacy. These are referred to by Street as theories of the "great divide." Simply put, they consist of a set of associated claims that focuses on the effects of reading and writing on the cognitive structures and processes and which rewards literacy and literate people(s). Literacy is seen as following "a single direction [and its] development can be traced, and associate[d] with 'progress', 'civilization', individual liberty, and social mobility" (p. 29). Street acknowledges that earlier sweeping claims have been superseded by those that "now recognize that what is often attributed to literacy per se is more often a consequence of the social conditions in which literacy is taught" (p. 22). Nonetheless, he argues, there is still a strong tendency for illiterate and semi-literate individuals and communities to be associated with deficits of higher level cognitive abilities and powers of abstract conceptualization.

To begin to see the complications of this distinction, one can look at the pockets of illiterate communities that exist within many modern societies. They often go about their daily lives without, as Street shows using multiple examples from other studies, facing any major debilitation as great as that of the stigma which is placed on them by being categorized as "illiterate." Ironically, in some ways, this is the partially the result of campaigns to improve literacy skills and help the downtrodden.

Lack of Literacy (with a capital "L" as opposed to the plural conception of literacies promoted by Street and others) is often assumed, moreover, to be the unidimensional cause of economic backwardness. Such approaches are apparent in policy statements, exemplified in UNESCO during the 1990 International Literacy Year and by other development-

oriented organizations. But they are so much part of the commonsense notions, according to Street, that even a radical educational theorist such as Paolo Freire is taken to task for work that is based on "similar assumptions about the ignorance and lack of self-awareness or critical consciousness of 'non-literate' people" (p. 20).

In contrast to these points of view, Street marshals an impressive amount of empirical evidence to argue that literacy is first and foremost embedded in complex social contexts. This is no less true of highly educated people in 'modern' societies than it is for those living in 'traditional' ones. Street emphasizes that, similar to the findings in Heath's (1983) research on three rural North Carolina communities, oral and written language are often inextricably bound together.

Street critiques the work of Deborah Tannen as an example of the way that more recent work has rejected simple dichotomies in oral and written language but "tend[s] to reintroduce the notion, albeit in a 'softer' guise" (p. 167). He follows this with specific examples of the kind of discourse analysis done by Tannen (1982) which associates speech with "involvement" and writing with "detachment." Similarly, Michael Halliday's distinction between spoken and written language on the basis of functional differentiation is questioned (p. 4). These are examples of how Street's work, while focused specifically on literacy, has broader implications for linguistics and education.

In the first chapter, "Putting literacies on the agenda," Street links some of the campaigns for greater literacy in industrialized countries to the problems of underemployment that exist in many of these societies. In the second chapter, several examples of case studies of literacy in changing societies are introduced and Street contrasts the unproblematized assumptions about the spread of literacy with attempts to understand how participants themselves see the meaning of literacy for their own lives. This section is followed by more detailed accounts in chapters three and four, beginning with his own studies in Iran in the 1970s and then addressing problems in cross-cultural studies. What is suggested in this chapter and throughout is that such a cross-cultural perspective is inevitably fraught with consequences that anthropology and cultural studies have been addressing for at least the past three decades. Richard Hoggart (1957), who later founded the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Britain, is cited here as part of another tradition which has studied how popular culture has been the site of a continuing struggle to control values through mass communications. Street, using his research in Iran, suggests that "not only does modern literacy foster uncritical belief in specific 'modern' renderings of

the world, it also contributes to a weakening of the kinds of sensibility and skepticism that have been fostered in the oral tradition" (p. 66).

Street argues that anthropology, and cultural studies as a later hybrid development, have come to see notions of "a" culture, "the" culture and so forth as extremely problematic. They are the source of questions as to how power comes to be invested in their meanings as opposed to being evidence for defining societies unambiguously. Such a view is outlined by Street (1993) in detail elsewhere, however he implies that applied linguistics and second language education, while having assimilated the lesson that culture is attached to language (i.e. language can not be taught without referencing notions of culture), still retains much of the functional and essentialist logic in notions of a unitary culture which anthropologists have largely moved away from.

In chapter five, "The schooling of literacy," Street begins to address a more important area of concern for many who are involved in education, especially of language. How is it that single varieties of literacy become dominant and reproduced? How is it that language is often treated as a thing? Street suggests that the autonomous model of literacy is at work when writing and reading is privileged over speaking, rules for using language are handed down to students in forms of competencies to be mastered and language is disguised as neutral (p. 114).

In chapter six, Street addresses problems of a critical approach to literacy practices, referring to work by Fairclough (1992) as a similar attempt at locating language practices. In this chapter, he does address the problem of how educators can teach critical literacy, arguing against a "skills first" approach. It is probably significant that this is the last chapter written (based perhaps on an article with a similar name published in 1993 but for which there is no acknowledgment). Street raises this issue in a particularly blunt question, "when exactly will most students revise and criticize their school learning if not during the process of experiencing it?" (p. 140) On the other hand, those looking for specific advice may be disappointed that the chapter stays at the relatively theoretical level.

Chapters seven and eight basically recapitulate much of the argument that has been put forward in previous chapters. I would have preferred to read a broader attempt at a synthesis, especially since this section is described as a "critical framework." It is an overall strength of Street's work that he combines a robust theory with detailed examples from his own and others' work. It is slightly less convincing that he concludes this book with a framework which is less framework than critique. That is partially the result of assembling a set of separately published papers into a collected edition.

Another quibble, but it does seem redundant to have separate bibliographies at the end of each chapter, especially since many of the references are the same. Similarly in the acknowledgment section, two of the papers are referenced without their year of publication, information which is available in the other citation sections. Even Street's own work is cited with multiple publication dates. This edition could have profited from a little more editorial overview.

I found myself thinking of the relevance to teaching in Japan at many stages in this book. First, the assumptions of language tests, particularly those drawn on in making university English entrance exams, are well critiqued using the model of literacy that Street outlines here. In fact, Hill and Parry (1992) have done exactly this in proposing a different model of testing for TESOL.

Second, the way that reading is generally taught as a way of decoding text with little attention paid to alternative constructions of meaning is brought under scrutiny by Street's work. Many other perspectives, some associated with neo-Vygotskyian or constructivist models, others with whole language, have utilized oral communication in learning processes as a way of deepening understanding. Street's contribution is to show that dichotomies of oral and written language are lacking in many ways when compared to empirical evidence gathered across a broad range of societies. Finally, the arguments here leave little doubt that educators need to probe more deeply to uncover assumptions about how learning is constructed in school and the ends towards which it is directed. It should not be surprising to anyone who is familiar with using computers in classrooms that traditional models of literacy as, for instance, acquiring skills of decoding are being challenged by new forms of communication such as e-mail and the Internet, to give familiar examples.

I think this book will be of great value in helping those interested in framing the practices of teaching and learning languages in larger contexts. It is time, I think Street would say, that we look more closely, not only at literacy practice across the school system here in Japan, but also as it is constructed in the contexts of our teaching, and how it hinders many of our students from seeing their own acquisition of that language as more than simply the building of skills and grammatical competence, no matter how important one considers those to be.

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Translating by Factors. Christoph Gutknecht and Lutz J. Rölle. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996, xvi + 346 pp.

Reviewed by
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Translation is one of the world's oldest professions, and one of the most abused—misused by those who do it and scorned by those who rely on it. Abuse directed at translators and their products frequently stems from translation clients not knowing what they have actually requested or failed to request. Clients may assume a “communicative” (free) translation and be bewildered when they get a “semantic” (literal) one, and then blame the translator for not elucidating the full meaning of the text. Abuse by translators comes in any number of forms, but often derives from the infirm foundation of translation studies—including not learning to ask clients what they expect and believing the often taught notion that grammatical analysis alone can be used when transferring the meaning, style, and feeling of one language into another. Many translation courses, in other words, continue to set up the would-be translator for more abuse.

The book under review offers some practical solutions to these problems. “Translating by factors” means approaching the translation process with a method that can be applied both in rendering source language (SL) into target language (TL) and understanding the relation between translator and client. Although their reference model is German and English modals (auxiliary verbs), the authors provide tools that can be used for

translating between any languages and any form of language. Factors are indicators of interlingual similarities and differences, and 21 are covered in the book, including “blocking factors,” which make specific TL renditions impossible, “disambiguation factors,” which signal ambiguity in SL items, “divergence factors,” which indicate where the TL has more forms than a corresponding SL item, and “change factors,” which force translators to make changes because of variances between languages.

The authors show how to apply factors in terms of classical semiotics (Chapters 2–4), differences between spoken and written language (Chapter 5), translation units (Chapter 6), the translation situation (Chapter 7), and translation theory (Chapter 8). Because Gutknecht and Rölle progress systematically through these major problem areas confronting the translator or translologist, the book is relevant for work and courses involving Japanese and other languages besides English and German. Furthermore, by covering a full range of techniques required in translation, the text provides a rich assortment of tools for research on factors, and so is an excellent resource to develop a “factor approach” for translation projects or training courses.

In addition to detailing factors in various situations, the work provides other important devices such as ingenious flowcharts, diagrams, and tables. In most translation books, the most one can hope for are matrices and scalar diagrams for componential analyses (CA), which are used to identify the components of SL word senses for “redistribution” in the TL (Newmark, 1988, p. 27). However crucial they may be to translation, CA only enlighten about individual words, not what to do with them. By explicating steps in the overall process—including how to create and apply CA—the authors have shown a way of making translation systematic. Diagrams 3.9–3.14 and 8.1 are of particular value since they present translation flowcharts showing how to apply factors in the areas of syntax, meaning, SL context, SL styles, TL styles, and TL lexemes, and the differences that can result when emphasis on these points is changed.

The book is also an antidote for the continued presence of grammar-translation and its manifestation in so many “writing” texts in Japan. When a sentence or larger text unit is analyzed using factors, it is hard to stop at grammar since many factors can only be fully exploited if the actual intent of the SL creator is seriously approached with pragmatic and other features in mind (p. 254). Take as an example the spoken sentence “He can hear her.” This is quite clear grammatically, but considering the context (previously the speaker, a female, did not believe the man could hear her comatose daughter, and thus stressed the word “can”), the full intention conveyed

by “can” and the cultural factors of the sex of the speaker, the relationship of the speaker to the hearer, and so on, would not be adequately conveyed if some compensation factors were not included.

In rendering “He can hear her” into Japanese, for example, translators would have to be aware that the simple “potential non-past” form of the relevant verb (*kikoeru*) does not convey the communicative force of a stressed “can” nor indeed does it indicate the factuality of hearing, and they would have to know (or infer) whether the sentence were spoken or written, the sex of the speaker, and who knows whom in the situation. All of these factors must be identified and compensated for, and this usually plays no part in a grammar-centered translation. Based on these and other factors, something like *Hontoni kikoerunda wa* might result for our example since it conveys all the information necessary for the Japanese. The translation works because of the use of a feminine emphatic particle (*wa*) and because it allows the speaker to sound refined by saying *hontoni* (“Really”) rather than putting a more literal male-ish stress on the verb, and since all participants in the scene know of the existence of the others (as does the audience), the translation does not need the pronouns “he” or “she.” On the other hand, if these factors are ignored and the grammar alone is carried across, the result would probably be an unidiomatic but “faithful” **Kare wa kanojo ga kikoeru* (* “She he hears”) or the misleading *Kare wa kanojo no yutteiru-koto ga kikoetteiru* (“He can hear what she is saying”). The former non-idiomatic version sounds as though there were a question of who could hear whom and leaves vague whether he has been, is, or will be able to hear her, and the latter misleading rendition incorrectly assumes she is speaking words—since she is in a coma it is not known that she is “speaking” in any conventional sense.

Although the techniques discussed can be applied to languages that have many differences, there seem to be areas in German-English translation that are less important than when translating languages that do not share many communication traditions. In case of such “foreign” languages, more research is necessary to use the methods properly. One important area is ambiguity, which is obviously present in any interpretation situation, but apparently not as significantly in German or English as in Japanese, where ambiguity can be a signal of a request for further contemplation, a compliment to the intelligence of the receiver, and so on. Furthermore, in their discussion of translation units (Chapter 6), the authors stress that it is “sentence by sentence that the translator translates” (p. 233), and thus do not delve very deeply into the issue of what happens in paragraphs that do not follow any order to which the TL reader is accustomed. Discussing translation units larger

than the sentence, the authors concentrate instead on why redundancy should be maintained (p. 235ff), seemingly unaware of the extraordinary degree and implication of repeating the same word in Japanese. On the other hand, their general advice that translators can make changes to enable understanding but not to facilitate it (p. 266) is universally sound because, among other reasons, the facilitation can easily go against intentions of the SL author to be vague, diplomatic, or simply difficult.

Finally, one of the best sections is Chapter 7, in which the authors show the factors involved in the translation situation, especially the power of the client. In most cases the translator works at the behest of some client (including teachers), and the client tends to rule. Thus, if a client wants a certain kind of result, the translator will usually work toward that end. Such requests act as a control on the range of factors that can be applied, in other words, the decisions the translator makes in rendering the text. For example, disambiguation factors must be considered if the client has demanded a communicative translation to get ideas in the SL across clearly to TL readers. This dependency on the client is one of the primary reasons for adaptations rather than translations—for reasons of survival if nothing else, translators tend to be more faithful to the client than the text (p. 267), and clients usually at least demand error-free, idiomatic, and stylistically superior renditions even when the SL is far from those ideals.

The authors suggest that the book is a “voyage of discovery in the human mind” (p. 10), and although *Translating by Factors* does function as a working guide to translating, one would have to say that discovery is more complex than knowing and applying factors to sentences, which is almost exclusively the area covered. The authors also propose (p. 10) that the study of modals involves the study of worldviews. This subject, which they never develop, is even more tempting in terms of the discoveries involved in the translation process, where views of life can and should be fully explored and brought over in the rendition. This type of study would be particularly relevant in Japan, where people are commonly taught negative consequences of such discoveries (loss of identity, for example) and thus often rest content with group tours through the boring but innocuous grammar byways of the language world. A focus on worldviews in the translation process could be a chance to see how one learns to appreciate and be adaptive to different cultures. Although the authors did not pursue these topics, they did provide excellent navigation tools to begin the voyage.

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New Ways in Teacher Education. Donald Freeman, with Steve Cornwell, Editors. Alexandria, Virginia: TESOL, 1993. xxvii + 206 pp.

Reviewed by

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New Ways in Teacher Education, one volume in the New Ways in Teaching series, presents teacher educators in academic environments with practical workshop suggestions which encourage trainees to "develop their own independent, reflective practice as classroom teachers" (p. xi). This useful addition to any reference library contains 46 tried-and-trusted activities for teacher education workshops, authored by professionals from North America, South America, Asia, and Europe. The insightful introduction, penned by Donald Freeman, articulates the philosophy as well as the rationale of the text, and recounts how this mosaic of teacher education activities came to be. Both beginning and experienced teacher educators will find readable, innovative workshop suggestions applicable in many academic contexts.

New Ways in Teacher Education joins two editors and more than 40 contributors in the creation of a book that embraces the current, holistic trends of English language education: experiential learning, cooperative groupwork, learner-centered education, and reflective teaching. The purpose of the book is to help teachers "come to make sense of what they do" (p. xiii), and through activities that encourage learners-of-teaching to discover their own teaching belief system, the goal of the text is artfully realized.

The two main strengths of the book are in its variety and format. Since the book concentrates on workshop activities and not on theory, the editors have selected ideas to fit nearly every training possibility in university-style settings. The table of contents outlines training suggestions for single session, multi-session, preservice, inservice, and graduate school contexts. Furthermore, workshop activities listed in the table of contents are grouped under such engaging topics as: encouraging teacher as researcher, observation of teaching, developing awareness, addressing cultural issues, and structuring discussions. Other practical topics include: drawing upon a shared experience, using collaborative work, and interpersonal dynamics. By providing such innovative springboards, the text assures teacher educators of finding a suitable idea or framework for many training sessions.

New Ways in Teacher Education presents each activity in a logical, readable four-step layout: Narrative, Procedure, Rationale, and Caveats and Options. Beginning with the Narrative, the author gives readers a personalized summary of how the activity unfolds in the training ses-

sion. This is followed by the Procedure, which articulates each step of the exercise in detail. Next, the Rationale gives the contributor the opportunity to briefly state his or her reasons for conducting the activity in that particular way. Lastly, Caveats and Options supplies the teacher educator with hints and adaptations to round out the experience, plus warnings to circumvent potential problems. In addition to this four-step pattern, most activities also include a bibliography of suggested readings and copies of necessary handouts.

The only criticisms of this text are that there isn't more of it—a double volume or Part II perhaps—and that it lacks the global perspective needed in a TESOL publication. More diverse sections would be advantageous: creating a chapter exclusively on training non-Western teachers, including a segment for use in public schools, or incorporating training suggestions from more non-native English trainers would truly make this text a staple for any backpack. Although the introduction states that the editors have “chosen not to focus on differences in context, experience or background,” and claim that “the majority [of the activities] can be used in or adapted to different settings and groups of learners-of-teaching” (p. xii), the truth is that most of the workshop suggestions are geared towards teacher educators who have training contexts mirroring the book's Western-style logic, thought patterns, educational styles, and personality assumptions.

For example, the majority of the activities ask the workshop participants to delve deeper within themselves and reflect on their teaching. One activity in particular asks a group of teaching assistants to self-evaluate their mini-lectures, answering questions like: “What did I do well?” “Where could I have improved?” and “How could this improvement be implemented?” If the trainees' cultural background and academic knowledge prepare them to handle such tasks, this activity would successfully serve to activate awareness. However, if certain skills such as giving feedback and reflecting on one's abilities is unnatural or goes against cultural and social norms, the trainer will have to adapt this activity to ensure a comfortable environment for all involved.

In conclusion, in my present position as an instructor of English and teacher educator for Western teachers, I find this book to be an innovative, incredibly readable text which serves me well in my current teaching context. I often use it as a source of inspiration when I am in need of practical workshop suggestions which aim to stir awareness and build skill. Despite the reservations I raised above, if I ever have the opportunity to train those whose first language is not English, I will certainly take *New Ways* along, for the expertise contained in its pages and the possibilities it creates will only heighten the experience of all involved.