Reviews

Second Language Learning: Theoretical foundations. Michael Sharwood
  Smith. Essex, UK: Longman, 1994. 265 pp.

Reviewed by
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Sharwood Smith suggests developing your own understanding of sec-
ond language acquisition (SLA) theory based on its history. However, the
author is not interested in all SLA theory. The primary focus of this book is
on grammar theory, especially Chomskyan linguistics and Universal Gram-
mar. Thus all other areas, "for practical purposes . . . are not accorded
attention due to them in this book" (p. 137). Once you accept this stricture,
regardless of your own views as to whether or not factors outside of
grammar play a role in assisting or hindering SLA in general or grammati-
cal development in particular, you can appreciate this book as an introduc-
tory text to the history and foundations of second language linguistic theory.

Sharwood Smith's analysis of SLA theory covers the late 1960s through
1992. Chapter 1 defines the text's important concepts. Much later the reader
discovers that the book is organized around four dominant themes, (1)
knowledge; (2) control; (3) learnability; and (4) modularity (p. 172). It
would have made the book more understandable if these concepts were
given their own sections in Chapter 1. Another seven chapters historically
analyze SLA theory, emphasizing grammar. Finally, in Chapter 9, implica-
tions for future research and practical conclusions are developed.

The historical overview begins in 1967 with Corder, Selinker, and Nemser's
studies of the learner's internal linguistic system, "Interlanguage" (IL), as it
exists apart from fluency. Much of the book's later sections treat the learner's
system as a relatively durable internal state rather than a temporary and
changing condition judged from the viewpoint of fluency.

Chapters 2, 3, and 5 trace and compare various IL hypotheses preva-
lent during the 1970s. Chapter 4 offers guidance for new SLA research-
ers, using grammar-related examples. Chapters 5 and 6 primarily
emphasize the emergence of four issues which, for the author, represent
the most important concerns of SLA research: (1) variability of acquisi-
tion and performance; (2) conscious and unconscious learning; (3) func-
tions of various grammatical forms; and (4) the characteristics of the

learner's IL knowledge. It would have been helpful if the relationship of these four issues to the four general themes of control, modularity, learnability, and knowledge had been clarified. Chapter 6 also begins to correct what Sharwood Smith calls the misunderstanding of Chomsky, a task he undertakes in the remainder of the text.

Chapter 7 introduces the basic ideas of Chomskyan grammar. Children, it is argued, must be predisposed to look for various features in the input data—the language they are exposed to. These predispositions lie behind what Chomsky has called Universal Grammar (UG). Grammatical parameters, then, allow for one or more variant. To make things easier, it is claimed that, in certain cases at least, particular options are assumed by the child (p. 134). Most of the chapter is a discussion of "markedness" as a way of explaining the advantages of adapting L1 linguistic theoretical definitions for describing second language development. The remaining three pages before the summary are devoted to lexis, phonology, pragmatics, and discourse analysis.

Chapter 8, the longest chapter, is titled, "The Role of UG in Second Language Learning." The fundamental question which UG must address is "where do successful second language acquirers, who clearly create novel utterances, get the necessary information for them to bridge the information gap and acquire those principles [of L2]" (p. 145)? It appears that UG represents the most important role of the subconscious.

Turning to cognitive psychology, the author explains its relationship to SLA research in the following words: "Learning theorists need linguistic theory to be able to define the linguistic aspects of the learning problem" (p. 5). Linguistic theory, it appears, means primarily Chomskyan linguistics. However, in devoting so much of the text to the Chomskyan model, other cognitive models have been unnecessarily sacrificed. For after all, "in a broader sense, it [interlanguage studies] is part of cognitive science" (p. 5). Thus Sharwood Smith uses only McLaughlin's information processing model (p. 113), which he criticizes for denying language learning as a separate form of knowledge distinct from other forms. Summarizing such models, Sharwood Smith notes, "It would seem, then, that the information-processing model would be more helpful in understanding the development of control rather than the development of grammar-as-competence" (p. 115). However, the excellent review by Schmidt (1990) of a range of learning models offers one that would satisfy many of Sharwood Smith's concerns. This is Baars' model, which is readily adaptable to Sharwood Smith's "modularity hypothesis" suggesting that the mind is composed of a number of semi-autonomous systems and subsystems.

Sharwood Smith introduces the final chapter, "Implications and Applications," with reference to the often "contentious relationship" between class-

room teachers and theorists that introduced Chapter 1: "Ideally, second language researchers should, first and foremost, pursue their investigations without paying attention to the concerns of teachers" (p. 5). Most of the chapter is devoted to developing and examining whether the acquisition of performance skill takes place in a manner which is open to external manipulation. Here external manipulation is considered to be the intervention of grammar-correcting structures and evaluation considerations.

This would have been an appropriate time to consider other alternatives such as task-based learning. Task-based programs are more than grammar to the extent that the syntax facilitates the performance of the task. However, since Sharwood Smith has defined the boundaries for this discussion and the conditions for applying cognitive models of learning, this alternative is excluded.

Task-based curriculum describes objectives such as practice in communicative structures to ensure accurate exchange of information. But this is not "nice-to know" information. Grammar structure is included in the learning goals of the task only if it is necessary for task achievement. Apparently Sharwood Smith avoids this discussion because it is classified as curriculum design, not acquisition theory. If this is the case, however, then it is a mistake to separate curriculum design from its generative theory.

As the final chapter consists of broadly generalized hypotheses, almost anything can be included for discussion, even the areas such as sociolinguistics which were described as lying outside the focus of the book. Yet the implications of two hypotheses cycle us back to the beginning of his text. From the reader's and teacher's point of view, while realizing the new territory that is being explored in SLA linguistics, we expect some definite achievements and landmarks after finishing the text. The author summarizes the journey this way:

> What, then, does learner language research have to say to language teachers? . . . It would simply be dishonest to make a neat set of confident claims about what it can "offer" the practitioner apart from confirming the fact that SLA is complex and not fully controllable by either teacher or (conscious) learner (p. 172).

This kind of statement is appropriate at the beginning of the text but surely we have learned more than this by the end of the text.

A nice addition to the glossary and index, making this work suitable for a college text, is a set of discussion questions at the end of each chapter.

References

Schmidt, R.W. (1990). The Role of Consciousness in Second Language Learning. *Applied Linguistics, 11,* 129-157.

Theory and Practice of Writing. William Grabe & Robert C. Kaplan.
  London: Longman, 1996. 487 pp.

Reviewed by
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In the introduction to *Theory and Practice of Writing*, Grabe and Kaplan
express their hope that "this volume will be regarded as an ideas super-
market in which readers are welcome to shop" (p. xi). More in line with
the mega-supermarkets found in most American cities, this text serves as a
broad overview of the anthropological, historical, sociological, linguistic,
and pedagogical approaches to the "technology" known as writing.

Beginning with the most basic question of "why do people write?" Grabe
and Kaplan provide an anthropological/historical/linguistic examination
of the human propensity for written record keeping. Going back 6,000
years to the first documented history of the written word, Grabe and Kaplan
explore the possibility that the tendency to write, unlike the tendency to
speak, may not be biologically determined. While most normally devel-
oped individuals learn to speak, only half of the world's current popula-
tion has acquired the ability to read and write at a functional level, and one
fifth is considered non-literate. Grabe and Kaplan assert that the ability to
write is not naturally acquired and is, in fact, a "technology, a set of skills
which must be practiced and learned through experience" (p. 6). This,
they argue, is a crucial consideration when studying the development of
writing abilities: "The way people learn to write is essentially different
from the way they learn to speak, and there is no guarantee that any
person will read or write without some assistance" (p. 6).

This notion is further complicated by the fact that the act of writing itself
must be divided into two distinct categories: telling or retelling, and
transforming. While telling or retelling involves the simpler skills of recall-
ing and reiterating, transforming involves the far more complex skills of
"writing for which no blueprint is readily available" (p. 4). In the United
States when the first freshmen Compositions courses were introduced at
Harvard in 1874, the standard academic expectation for writing in English
became defined as a three-part essay consisting of an introduction, body,
and conclusion. Yet, while most institutions assume that the skills for
transforming have been thoroughly conveyed by the time a student reaches
the tertiary level, Grabe and Kaplan have found that this is more often not
the case, with the majority never progressing beyond the more rudimen-
tary skills of telling or retelling. This is particularly relevant for L2 learners
who have not had the same opportunities for practicing academic writing.
Grabe and Kaplan also argue that teachers of writing need to recognize

that learners may have a set of writing skills that have been highly valued in other contexts. As Grabe and Kaplan point out, "the central issue in literacy development is not the development of uniform cognitive skills, but the recognition that there are many different literary practices, of which only a few are likely to be valued by a given educational system" (p. 14). In other words, it is essential that the study of writing itself be seen as a study that is socially contextualized.

For a study of writing in the social context of Japan, for instance, Grabe and Kaplan discuss the work of J. Hinds, who compared the organizational methods of writing in English and writing in Japanese. While the standard in English writing is the three-part essay, the standard in Japanese writing is *Ki-Shoo-Ten-Ketsu*, a form which has its origin in classical Chinese poetry. According to Hinds, one major difference between the three-part essay and the *Ki-Shoo-Ten-Ketsu* framework occurs in the third element, *Ten*. Here the writer is required to develop a sub-theme which would be considered a major topic violation in the standard three-part English essay. A second difference occurs in the final element, *Ketsu*, which represents the conclusion; however, "by English standards, such a conclusion appears almost incoherent" (p. 188). Further, Hinds has found that while English writers are thoroughly familiar with a strictly deductive and inductive method of reasoning, Asian texts tend toward a method of reasoning he terms *"quasi-inductive"* (p. 189). Following this method of quasi-inductive reasoning, Japanese writers tend to bury their thesis statements. According to Hinds, Japanese readers do not expect the thesis to be explained at the outset and are better at contextualizing a topic than English readers. He notes that Japanese is a "reader-responsible" language; that is, "readers are expected to work to fill information and transitions, and a writer who does all the work for the reader is not as highly valued" (p. 190). In order to effectively teach L2 writers to write in a manner consistent with the expectations of the target language, these socially different approaches to writing need to be further researched and understood.

In addition to citing research by Hinds, Grabe and Kaplan provide a virtual cornucopia of leading research ideas by prominent theorists in the chapter titled "Writing Process Research and Recent Extensions," which gives an overview of current trends. Included in this chapter are extensive discussions of the Flower and Hayes model and the Bereiter and Scardamalia model, as well as a criticism of these approaches. The Bibliography consists of a full 45 pages, providing an excellent reference source.

While this theoretical approach to writing occupies the first half of *Theory and practice of writing*, the second half focuses on methods of teaching writing from the beginning to the advanced levels. These methods include curriculum planning, tapping student interest, responding to and giving

feedback, as well as a variety of exercises for classroom use. These exercises clearly described and Grabe and Kaplan have made them further accessible by providing a quick reference guide. Among the exercise ideas for the beginning level are working with pictures, establishing a writing corner, and using a dialogue journal. Intermediate level exercises include autobiographies and biographies, surveys and questionnaires, and portfolios. Advanced level exercise ideas include exploratory writing, exercises distinguishing fact from opinion, and teacher-student conferencing.

These hands-on methods are valuable for practicing teachers of writing, but I found them somewhat simplistic when compared to the more technical and theoretical discussions in the first half of the book. While the first half seems directed toward a highly academic examination of the methods and effects of the writing curriculum, the second half is a more general approach to basic classroom management. Yet this is not necessarily a detrimental characteristic. Referring to Grabe and Kaplan's original wish that their book be regarded as an "ideas supermarket," both aspects of the book serve the purpose of providing an overview of the vast variety of elements inherent in the theory and practice of writing.

Grammatical and Lexical Variance in English. Randolph Quirk. London & New York: Longman, 1995. 220 pp.

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This collection of journal contributions, reconsidered essays and rewritten lectures is concerned with the phenomenon of variance in English grammar and vocabulary across regional, social, stylistic, and temporal space. Quirk's text presents the results of recent and ongoing research on variance in the English-speaking world and will interest who are concerned with teaching, with language policies at the official level, with English language teaching standards here in Japan and with applied linguistics in the broadest sense.

Professor Lord Quirk, F.B.A., is not shy about airing his opinions and convictions; he rightly considers the sporadically-debated proposal that Japanese educators should settle for the "relaxed and clearly insulting goal" of mastering a simplified "Japanese English," or *Japlish,* to be both disgraceful and grotesque. But in truth Quirk's own visits to Japan have been both brief and busy, and his knowledge of everyday educational realities in contemporary Japan seems woefully superficial. With

how many Japanese learners of English has Quirk actually spoken for more than a few minutes, one wonders.

The Japanese learner of English steers undaunted or apprehensively as best he or she can between the Scylla of archaic *Mombusho-Eigo* (Ministry of Education English) speech forms ("You ought not to speak ill of her or say such things to her") and the Charybdis of nonsensical semi-literacy ("Do Photo!" "Beautiful Human Life Plaza," "Life is a Sport," "Beer's New").

Worse, some native-speaking English teachers in Japan appear to have adapted policies Quirk evidently considers sinful to the point of treason; he refers to the *Four Seasons Composition Book* (Pereira & O'Reilly, 1988) which, inter alia, is said to inform learners that "If you can make yourself understood . . . that is good enough," the authors evidently embracing the view that such learners' spoken efforts constitute a "respectable variety of English," (p. 31). This opinion, although lamentably pessimistic, must necessarily command respect among those who have encountered Japanese teachers of English quite incapable of stringing the simplest spoken sentence together in that language. Amid this dire confusion, the astonishing thing is that any Japanese learner manages to make sense of English at all.

To quote Quirk on ideal standards in language teaching; "It is neither liberal nor liberating to permit learners to settle for lower standards than the best, and it is a travesty of liberalism to tolerate low standards which will lock the least fortunate into the least-rewarding careers" (p.29). The debate about Standard English in the Anglophone world is intermittent but impassioned; the Kingman Report of 1988 in Britain unleashed a storm of noisy and often ill-informed debate, much of it led by snobbish reactionaries writing in the Tory press or people with an all-too-evident political agenda in favor of the lowest common denominators of ethnic-group solidarity and/or proletarian and regional speech patterns. As Quirk quotes the report, it plausibly concluded that an adequate command of Standard English was "more likely to increase the freedom of the individual than diminish it" (Kingman, 1988, p. 3).

In the United States, the so-called liberation linguistics debate has centered on the issue of Black English, now semi-officially known as Ebonic or Ebonics. A contribution in *TESOL Quarterly* (Goldstein, 1987) suggested that young Hispanic-speakers in New York City should be taught the lively Black English of the streets around them ("I don't have none, dude.") rather than Standard English. Jeremiah-like, Quirk bewails the sad fact that such an opinion was read, and probably totally misinterpreted, by educators around the world. (This seems remarkably similar to the upper-class Victorian social taboo that certain things should simply *not* be discussed in front of the servants.)

Any educated and perceptive person who has traveled a little is aware

that there exists, to coin an appellation, a Standard Mother-tongue Educated English which is virtually, but not quite, a cognate language in Canberra, Ottawa, Dublin, London, Chicago, Edinburgh, Singapore, Cape Town, and Wellington. The book Quirk published with Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985) adequately established that a single, educated, and universally acceptable variety of English can be described as a unity while still catering for the purely local and regional features which occur, to varying degrees, outside this vast common core. In *Grammatical and Lexical Variance* Quirk adds that common folk with their common sense insist on being taught correct standard usage, and he waspishly observes that the language elite invariably express their skepticism about standard English in precise standard English, not in Anglo-Caribbean or demotic prole-speak; "Disdain of élitism is a comfortable exercise for those who are themselves securely among the élite" (p. xx).

These are perilous times. Even the most highly-esteemed of educators are prone to hideous errors of judgment in Quirk's eyes; one H. Coleman, writing in *The Language Teacher*, mused aloud that "language behavior which at first sight appears to be flawed may in fact be a manifestation of a new, though as yet unrecognized, variety of English" (Coleman, 1987, p. 13). This is rather like saying a bright three-year-old's theological musings "may in fact be a manifestation of . . ." the first stirrings of the latest of the world's great religious insights. True, they *may* indeed, but the odds would seem poor to a professional gambler.

Quirk has harsh words for the celebrated B. B. Kachru, who has been publishing prolifically, elegantly, and eloquently on Indian English for a quarter-century, and yet there is *still* no published grammar, dictionary or even phonological description to which teachers or learners in India could turn for normative guidance and from which pedagogical materials could be derived. The late Indira Gandhi, Swiss-educated and from a wealthy patrician background, was appalled at what she perceived as the declining standards of English in India and was quite horrified at the idea of India establishing its own debased Babu standard (p. 39).

Two brief, and related, chapters of surpassing excellence are entitled "Linguistic Variance: Nature and Art" and "Orwell and Language Engineering." The English novelists George Orwell and Anthony Burgess invented imaginary simplified forms of English in two pessimistic novels set in an imagined future, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Nineteen Eighty-Five*. The nuances of the two languages are different; in Orwell's ghastly vision, Newspeak extinguishes free thought because independent thought cannot be adequately expressed with the available vocabulary. Orwell appears to have derived Newspeak in part from Ogden's *Basic English* (1932) and in part from Hogben's *Interglossa* (1943), an exercise in linguistic engineer-

ing which sought to out-Basic Basic English itself. The *SLORC* junta in
Myanmar (Burma) appear to be loyal if totally humorless Orwellians; Bur-
mese-language and, surprisingly, English-language posters decorate Yangon
(Rangoon) with exhortations to work hard and obey the ruling despotism
unquestioningly. Equally, in 1977 Tripoli, the capital of Libya, had bilin-
gual Arabic-English posters evident everywhere with such cheery com-
mands as the one to *"Purge the country of deviationists."*

In Anthony Burgess' threadbare syndicalist Tucland the Brave (the
nation's name is derived, with malevolent glee, from the Trades Union
Congress), the language, Workers' English, abbreviated as *WE*, is cheery
and proletarian, and—a typical Burgessian quip—is taught on the telly
by "the very humorous and erudite Mr Quirk." WE is, moreover, delib-
erately imprecise and delectably sprinkled with mild obscenities in-
serted as meaningless intensifiers; "Right, that's *that* bleeding wotsit
sorted, then. Know what I fucking mean, mate?"

Quirk notes with scrupulous regard for accuracy that Workers' En-
glish, Burgess' invented language, corresponds precisely to two modern
languages dictated to the *vulgo* by the clever ones on high, Putonghua
in the People's Republic of China and Nynorsk in Norway. A compre-
hensive bibliography gives helpful clues for further reading. The unem-
barrassed Quirk, with or without collaborators, appears eleven times.

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The Communicative Value of Intonation in English. David Brazil. Cam-
bridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. xiii + 188 pp. Audio cas-
sette, 63 min. (approx.)

Reviewed by
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David Brazil (d. 1995) was one of the bright lights of the University of
Birmingham's School of English. *The communicative value of intonation
in English,* first published in 1985 in that university's English Language
Research series, was his *magnum opus.* In their foreword, two of his
colleagues call it "the most detailed statement of the theory of Discourse
Intonation" (p. v). The book addresses the crucial importance of intona-
tion choices made by speakers in concrete situations, choices which are
not bound to other issues of grammar or semantics. Commercial publish-
ers, claiming "it did not 'contribute to the debate'" on intonation in the
1980's, at first refused to print it. Cambridge University Press overcame
such qualms and published Brazil's (1994) ELT textbook based on dis-
course intonation. Since the approach is not yet widely known enough to
be conventional, those considering use of Brazil (1994) would do well to
become familiar with *The Communicative Value of Intonation in English.*

Like other features of language, intonation is a series of paired op-
tions, many of which are available to speakers in a given context. The
choice of one (and not the other) of a given pair communicates some-
thing of the speakers' intention or point of view. The purpose of the
book is stated quite clearly:

> I start with the assumption that the first task of the student of intonation is to
> set up a framework within which the finite set of meaningful oppositions
> can be identified and characterized, and I seek to do no more than this in a
> single volume (pp. ix-x).

To help the reader focus efficiently on ("emic") minimal-pair contrasts
and to avoid considering all the endless ("etic") possibilities in actual dis-
course, there many short examples given in the text and on the audio tape.
They are repeated on the tape only when the repetition is assigned a new
example number in the text. Asterisks indicate the first use of Brazil's own
technical terms (p. xii); and Appendix C (p. 183) is an alphabetized list of
those terms with the page of first occurrence in the text. A glossary would
have been more helpful, since the terms are not always defined the first
time they appear and there is no index to facilitate location of later uses.

Just as it would be impossible to discuss pronunciation without con-

Brazil to develop terminology appropriate for discussion of intonation, and this may be his most lasting contribution. The terminology is not transparent and takes some time to learn, but seems, at least to this native speaker, to describe the way English actually works. Fundamental concepts, such as the "tone unit," planned by the speaker and interpreted by hearers holistically "as a complex contour" (p. 3) similar to what others have called 'sense groups,' 'breath groups' and tone groups'" (p. 5), are quite helpful. Some concepts may be difficult to relate to their realizations, especially for non-native speakers. As an American, I sometimes found the British-accented intonation unpredictable and the terms, "referring tone/proclaiming tone" (p. 69) easier to grasp in the abstract than to apply to examples. Nevertheless, I had far fewer problems in these areas than with anything else I've read (or heard) on the subject.

One thing I found immediately appealing was the (imperfect) analogy between punctuation in written discourse and the choice of "key" (initial pitch) of a "pitch sequence" (pp. 120-124). I remember being told as a child that a comma meant a breath or a short pause and a period a longer pause when reading aloud. This is analogous to pauses separating tone units in spontaneous speech (p. 6). Brazil "could plausibly speculate that punctuation practices are based on an incomplete apprehension of how pitch sequences relate to each other in the spoken language" but refrains from pursuing this beyond noting that a high key is like the separation of meaning represented by a period, a low key to the equivalence represented by a colon, and a mid key to the additive quality of a semicolon (pp. 123-124). Instructors who focus on reading may find this book surprisingly useful, especially if their students are of a high enough level to interpret written English text in a meaningful way.

All teachers of English should take the following advice into account.

> The teaching of languages unavoidably depends upon the presentation of specimens: teachers provide, and students repeat, specimen words, specimen phrases, and specimen sentences. It is easy to recognize the intonation of oblique [noncommittal] orientation in much of the language that results . . . Pedagogical as well as other considerations make it essential to take note of how hearer-sensitive intonation choices differ from those motivated by a limited engagement with the language item. (p. 142)

This explanation of David Brazil's insights well rewards those who accept the challenge of understanding it. It is a must for anyone working in the field of English pronunciation and useful for all who teach ESL/EFL.

Reference

Brazil, D. (1994). *Pronunciation for advanced learners of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

How the Mind Works. Steven Pinker. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997.
   660 pp.

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In *How the mind works*, Pinker addresses the question, How are we
able to perform as we do and what are the sources of our abilities? His
major thesis is that our behavioral capabilities are the product of an
innate endowment given us via evolution. The brain contains structures
called "modules" which are physically specific. Each module has a par-
ticular operational program. The networking of these programs enables
our behavioral capabilities.

How does this work in practice? The modules receive input from the
external world. The mind (which Pinker defines as that which the brain
does) makes assumptions about the input based on its innate programs
and constructs a world view. We then perform actions or think thoughts
accordingly. Cognitive scientists stress that all physical/mental activity is
treated by the mind as information. Hence their term "computational
mind" as a cover term for the brain's performance. Pinker admits that
the computer analogy is a weak one, but suggests that it is handy.

Pinker emphasizes that this view is not deterministic. It is the very fact of
innateness that gives us the seemingly infinite competence we enjoy. But
there are some major fallouts. The traditional distinctions made by social
science, philosophy and religion between contrasting features such as na-
ture/nurture, and mind/body go down the drain. Culture, philosophy, and
religion cannot be considered as fundamental behavioral determinants
since they are also the products of the same innate programs.

What then, of notions such as "will," "self awareness," and the like?
Pinker suggests that either we simply do not have sufficient information
to deal with such constructs or we do not have the cognitive ability in
the first place (and he personally opts for the second position). Our lack
does not deter us from working out a theory of how the mind works, for
"will" and "sentience" seem to have no causal referents.

The brain, Pinker points out, attained its present evolutionary state
some two million years ago. Not much has happened since. It evolved
to deal with the problems that our ancestors faced, not traffic jams, big
government, and so on. This should not surprise anyone familiar with
the principles of evolution. All bioforms have baggage that is of no
direct benefit to the organism, and this is tolerated as long as the cost of
toting it around does not outweigh the cost of its upkeep. Under "bag-
gage" Pinker includes art, music, philosophy, religion, and culture. None

of these, he suggests, have any direct bearing on behavior nor do they have any evolutionary benefit. They exist not because we find them necessary for survival but because they allow us transgressions of our limitation without penalty.

This book is important for anyone interested in human behavior since culture and language are but forms thereof. It is thoroughly documented, amusing, and cogently argued. It writes finis to the romantic notion that we arose from the primordial muck to nuclear enlightenment simply because we are the darlings of creation.

On Becoming a Language Educator: Personal Essays on Professional Development. Christine Pearson Casanave & Sandra R. Schecter (Eds.). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1997. xxi + 243 pp.

Reviewed by
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If your book budget is so small or depleted that there is only a single academic book you can afford to read this year, *On Becoming a Language Educator* should be it. Casanave and Sandra Schecter have nurtured something unique, a "page-turner" of professional development. You will find yourself sneaking back to it during the day and staying up nights as I did, until you have shared every one of these "personal essays" at least once. Acquired only months ago, my copy is worn as a family bible. I continue to go back to the nineteen contributions as one would to parables—to renew and extend the insights they provide.

Among a surfeit of studied formalisms, this warm, engaging, provocative volume truly stands out. Casanave and Schecter have managed some astounding feats in editing the collection. They adapted the narrative form and the recent trend of biographical confession to the service of research in professional development; they coaxed a group of universally known professionals on the language landscape into confiding their personal lives

in a way that illuminates their professional ones; they touched this reader (and others) with a magic dust that has nourished self-reflection and recognition of the larger and enduring issues in my own life as a teacher.

The authors are as familiar as the specialties diverse. Even more notable is the vehicle of their discourse—intimate family backgrounds, personal experiences as learners, and the historical and political contexts of their times. These educators speak unabashedly of their doubts, the successes and failures of their lives, their sense of themselves within the fields they have chosen, the games they play as professionals. They are candid about the dilemmas they have faced and the changes their efforts have wrought. Each essay is imbued with a strong sense of journeys taken and journeys yet ahead. Of course, this strikes up in the reader a similar stocktaking, and perhaps the realization that even as mature, experienced teachers we must still progress to further professional growth.

The first theme explores sources of identity, merging the writers' roots with the evolution of their teaching philosophies. Each author taps family history and values, generously, recounting seminal childhood experiences, particularly those in the classroom. Edelsky's effort begins the anthology by connecting her father's strong sense of social justice, her mother's distaste for pretense, her disturbed aunt's artistic exuberance and her Jewish family's marginality with her commitment to whole language. Foster probes her experience in Catholic and graduate education and her African-American background to examine writing instruction. She lauds the commitment of her nuns to every student's academic success and to providing explicit standards and objectives for the students. The oral traditions of her home community become a basis for good pedagogy.

Beginning with a charming recollection of the six tablemates she met on her first day of school as a Chinese-speaking girl in an English classroom, Lily Wong Fillmore takes us on a tale of migrant schooling for the diverse population of children in California's Pajaro Valley. Her challenges as a student and as an unprepared volunteer teacher of migrants lead to reflections on peer tutoring, educational neglect and bilingual methodologies. Peter Paul's revealing retelling of his family's struggle with a hearing-impaired child, his own challenges as a severely impaired learner facing the ideological and educational dilemmas that separate speech-reading and ASL schooling, not only introduce us to issues in deaf education but also furnish insights for reading instruction with hearing learners. Jim Cummins rounds out the theme, tapping his formative years in Ireland and his later academic career to probe a wide gamut: language maintenance in Ireland, policy conservatism of the Roman Catholic Church, and coercion and subjugation in language policy.

The second theme offers conflicts which have constructed professional identities. Norma Gonzàlez examines the tension between the categorization necessary for ethnographic research and the multiplicity of human experience, drawing on her Mexican ethnicity and work investigating language socialization in Tucson's Mexican community. The well-known juxtaposition of Ph.D. candidate and advisor, so rarely discussed, candidly occupies David Shea's essay, which unpacks the important topic of student-teacher power relations through the chronicle of his own dissertation project. Editor Sandra Schecter offers fresh commentary on the antagonisms between teacher and researcher roles. She champions the pleasures of teaching (and acknowledges the greater authority wielded by researchers) as she documents her transformation from teacher to researcher and the nostalgia she feels for the former.

The importance of teaching is reinforced by the third theme, wisdom gained in the classroom. Vivian Paley's essay is filled with dialog—real exchanges in the classroom and imagined conversations with colleagues. Her beautiful and touching article urges closer reflection on classroom talk and journal writing to sort out what we and our students do there. Also moving is Trudy Smoke's look at some student characters she has known in classes—what she learned from them and what they learned about themselves through their writing and immersion in education. Jill Sinclair Bell shares her journey from literacy researcher to student of Cantonese, becoming her own research subject. Her moods and realizations as she studies under her Chinese teacher's distinctive method are illuminating. Tom Scovel renders a short portrait of himself as a dreadful language learner, which he believes has made him a more curious and committed acquisition researcher.

The darkest portion of the book takes up seeing "the profession." John Fanselow uses a postcard metaphor (and an actual incident involving a Nigerian-based Peace Corps volunteer's postcard) to delve into the dilemmas of being a teacher trainer—providing models and practices as a mentor while seeking to free teachers of preconceptions and constraints—and to offer some solutions he has found. Alan Strand writes from the middle of his sabbatical year, taking us on a raw journey through disappointments and frustrations, the "professional tragedy" of his English-teaching career, ending with the blunt realization that he would rather teach economics.

Denise Murray faces a dilemma similar to Fanselow's. She expresses disquiet at the contradictions between her two facets: reformer and activist prescribing direction for the profession, and nurturing facilitator giving students the inductive freedom to find their own solutions and meanings. Finally, editor Christine Casanave punches a large hole in the pose demanded of academic writing. In examining the approach-

able work she loves to read and the obtuse technotalk that alienates her, she shares her own method of writing, wrestles with the seduction of academe and concludes by calling on her own courage to reject incomprehensible "expert" writing in favor of writing for meanings which will connect with the audience she envisions.

The book closes with a look "backstage" at three essays, one of which never reached publication. Denise Murray's story of editorial negotiations and David Shea's e-mails with an editor uncover the emotions, misgivings and labor that these intimate confessions required. Judy Winn-Bell Olsen's e-mails show her hesitation, her search for a suitable personal topic, and finally, her conclusion that it is too embarrassing and too intimate to make authorial decisions about. She abandons the writing task.

These short stories will inevitably resonate with experiences and thoughts we ourselves have. Norma Gonzàlez' great-grandmother Yara is a character like my own Italian-speaking grandmother. I saw myself in Schecter's description of one teacher after a successful class: "She's so psyched that she feels a need to come down before driving home." I truly connected to Vivian Paley's observation on students, "They are our colleagues in this endeavor." Without meeting them, I feel these authors have become my friends. My sense of community with teachers of language has been enriched by discovering that so many of our backgrounds, principles and goals are diverse, yet similar too.

On Becoming a Language Educator makes a wonderful I-Ching. Through it each reader finds a different message, a personalized prescription for daily and professional life. I hesitate to limit future readers by critiquing the collection extensively. Still, the subtext of power relations whispered in my ear throughout. In many stories the characters strive to gain power against institutional domination and conservatism to secure a competent education. Students and teachers negotiate the terms of their endearment; teachers and researchers struggle to share academic authority. Professionals confront the monolith of academe.

The making of identity involves finding a legitimate place to stand on this globe of life. Every story is suffused with contemplation and observation about wresting the power to secure learning, a profession, a pedagogy of teaching, to make an identity and stand with it. I realize acutely the crucial way I view education as a source of personal strength and individual purpose. I love my work all the more for what I have read here.

On Becoming a Language Educator may well be the most valuable book you read this year; it will certainly be one of the most enjoyable volumes in your library of professional development—one you will be sorry to have overlooked. So don't. Unlike that annoying electronic chain-mail, you should send this book to everyone you know.

Realms of Meaning: An Introduction to Semantics. T. R. Hofmann. London: Longman, 1993. xv + 339 pp.

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This book is not quite like other books on semantics. Firstly it works with a wide definition of what could be included in the field of semantics. Secondly it makes deliberate attempts to engage and involve the reader in the subject matter, and thirdly it seems to be written for learners who are not native speakers of English. This review looks at each of these points in turn. This is a book not about how to teach languages (although the author has comments to make on the learning of languages), but about how to describe the system that lies behind semantics and its relation to logic. It is therefore a text of interest to teachers of courses in semantics, and to people who wish to be better informed about the nature of the language. It does not assume any previous knowledge of semantics. The book examines how meaning is expressed both through lexis and through grammar.

The first chapter of the book focuses on basic issues such as the nature of language, the nature of communication, and the nature of meaning. Chapter 2 looks at the ideas of markedness and blocking, and provides important groundwork for the later chapters which focus on particular parts of the semantic system. Chapter 3 examines opposites and negatives including negative prefixes, negation in sentences and double negation. Chapter 4 on deixis examines one of the more patterned areas of language, focusing in words like *this* and *that*, and *here* and *there*. This chapter very clearly shows the fascinating system that lies behind this group of words. Hofmann suggests that the similarity in patterning between quite different languages "suggest the idea that human beings might all have the same [semantic elements] from which to build words . . . It is reasonable to suspect that we all have the same building blocks of articulate thought, for we are all human beings" (p. 71). This is indeed the theme of the book—there is a small group of semantic elements that underlie the important semantic systems of all languages. Hofmann sees learning these as a way to make a quick start on learning another language. Chapter 5, called Orientations, looks at subject-orientation and speaker-orientation, and their effect on requests. Chapter 6 examines modal verbs.

(usually indicated by an adverb), and the time of the event, it is possible to make sense of choices in the tense and aspect system of English. The description is fascinating and thought provoking. It is not however checked against examples that actually occur in normal use of the language to truly test the strength of the description. Somewhat naively, it is also assumed that if the system is right, "English students should not have any more trouble" (p. 119). This indeed is the major weakness of the book. In occasional asides the author makes ill-judged comments on areas that largely lie outside the scope of the book. A similar notable comment firmly within the scope of the book is "it is probably not worth reading anything on semantics more that fifteen years old" (p. 14). This would exclude all the items listed in the further reading at the end of the chapter!

Chapter 8 examines the limits to events, covering states and stativity, volition, punctive and durative—perfective, imperfective, iterative and generative. Chapter 9 looks at the semantic elements that lie behind prepositions, Chapter 10 examines reference and predication, Chapter 11, sentence structure. The later chapters of the book range over discourse and pragmatics. The final chapter, Afterwords, touches on topics raised in earlier chapters—pasigraphic systems, meaning, fuzziness and prototypes, field, use and reference, theories of meaning, and a "usage" theory of meaning.

Hofmann clearly wants the text to be accessible and interesting. It is deliberately written in simple language with an avoidance of jargon wherever possible. There are plenty of diagrams to illustrate and clarify points in the text. Each chapter begins by posing questions about the reasons for the acceptability and unacceptability of example sentences. These questions are accompanied by a diagram indicating the focus of the chapter. The writer says in the preface, "Most of the facts of English presented here derive directly or indirectly from teaching English to non-natives, from seeing mistakes commonly made and noting how to avoid them" (p. xiii). The model of the reader then is largely someone who is not a native speaker of English and the book carefully takes account of this. Within each chapter there are interpolated questions with answers provided at the end of the chapter. They seem to have the aim of allowing readers to check their understanding, breaking the chapter into manageable chunks, and keeping the practical purposes of the theory clear. Each chapter ends with list of keywords (the technical vocabulary that needs to be remembered), suggestions for further reading, and two to four pages of exercises for the reader to work on. Answers to the exercises are provided at the end of the book. The questions and exercises largely involve deciding what is different be-

tween sentences, why some sentences are unacceptable and how to correct them. Although there are examples from a variety of languages, the writer's familiarity with Japanese and French means that many examples are from these languages. It is not difficult to imagine a course based on this book exciting and engaging students. The writer's enthusiasm for the subject and his desire to communicate so that he is well understood is apparent in every page of the book. *Realms of Meaning* is a readable, interesting and wide ranging introduction to semantics for serious students. It brings them to grips with the important issues in this field in an engaging way.