Reviews

Stylistics. Peter Verdonk. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. xiii + 124 pp.

Reviewed by
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As one of the texts in the *Oxford Introductions to Language Study* Series, this book faithfully follows its editorial purpose and design. It is "a general and gradual introduction" (p. ix) to stylistics and also serves as a "preliminary to the more specific and specialized enquiry" (p. x) required for those students who are interested in stylistics.

Stylistics is divided into four parts: Survey, Readings, References, and Glossary. The Survey section is a brief overview of the main features of stylistics: its scope, principles, basic concerns, and key concepts. Readings contains extracts from specialist literature, providing the necessary transition to more detailed study. In the References section, there is a selection of works for further reading. This is not just a list of bibliographical data, but is accompanied by comments indicating how the titles deal with issues discussed in the Survey. The Glossary explains the terms that appear in bold in the text, and also serves as an index.

Although *Stylistics* is compact in size, each chapter contains sample texts to illustrate the key concepts. Chapter 1 lays the groundwork by discussing the concept of style in language. After defining stylistics as "the analysis of distinctive expression in language and the description of its purpose and effect" (p. 4), Verdonk introduces some of the features of style such as ellipsis, intertextuality, and foregrounding. Using illustrations from non-literary texts, such as a newspaper headline and blurb, this chapter also deals with style as motivated choice, style in context, and style and persuasive effect.

Chapter 2, "Style in Literature," explains text types and their relation to style and function. Verdonk suggests that a literary text prompts a different response from a non-literary one: a more individual and creative response. In Chapter 3, "Text and Discourse," Verdonk considers the

nature of text in general, thus illustrating the differences between literary and non-literary texts. He concludes that literature is distinctive "because its texts are closed off from normal external contextual connection" (p. 27) and that "we need to infer possible contextual implications, including perspective or point of view" (p. 27), to which he turns in Chapter 4. In this chapter, Verdonk demonstrates the visual and mental connotations of perspective by using the example of a painting. Writers of narrative fiction exploit this potential of perspective in a similar way. Chapter 4 mainly explores perspective in narrative fiction, introducing stylistic markers of perspective such as deixis, given and new information, and modality.

Chapter 5, "The Language of Literary Representation," discusses perspective in third-person narration. Verdonk demonstrates how perspectives are created through various modes of speech and thought presentation. Chapter 6 touches on other textual features in literary language and considers how a stylistic approach relates to literary criticism. Stylistics can provide supporting evidence for literary interpretation, the larger-scale significance of literary works, by illustrating how this significance can be related to specific features of language. The final chapter introduces a new focus: social reading. As the response of individuals to literary texts is influenced by sociocultural values, the author takes up the question of how far stylistic analysis might be applied to a social reading process of literary text.

As is indicated in the preface, Verdonk had to be selective in his choice of topics. However, most of the key concepts in stylistics are rightly included. On the other hand, the book would have been more complete if Verdonk had mentioned new trends in stylistics such as corpus stylistics and studies related to psychology.

Stylistics is essential reading for students taking stylistics or literary-linguistic courses. The book successfully demonstrates that stylistics can provide added insight to a text, by showing how an interpretation can be related to specific features of language, thus being particularly relevant to those who teach language and literature.

Discourse Politeness in Japanese Conversation. Mayumi Usami.
Tokyo: Hitsuji Shobo, 2002. pp. vii + 343.

Reviewed By
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The publication of Brown and Levinson's *Politeness: Some universals in language usage* (1987) has stimulated a continuous debate regarding the existence of a universal theory of politeness. Their theory prompted criticism by scholars, particularly those working with Asian languages. The main criticism concerns the proclamation of a universal theory based on data gathered from only three languages. Furthermore, the authors analyzed data collected at the sentence level, thus ignoring the larger context that constitutes communication.

Usami (2002) introduces the concept of Discourse Politeness (DP). She defines it as, "The dynamic whole of functions of any element in both linguistic forms and discourse-level phenomena that play a part in pragmatic politeness of a discourse" (p. xv). The aim of her study was not solely to analyze Japanese, but to use the data to facilitate the development of a universal theory of politeness.

What distinguishes this book from other studies of politeness is the method the author chose to gather the data. Previously, questionnaires were a popular means for data collection. Usami used a discourse approach that entailed tape-recording dyadic conversations. Briefing the participants beforehand with ideas about potential topics, she also encouraged them to go beyond her suggestions. Moreover, as a method of triangulating the data, she asked the participants to complete questionnaires to explore their awareness of factors such as age, gender, and educational background.

Some of Usami's findings did support those of Brown and Levinson and traditional rules of honorific usage. However, she also found that the usage of non-polite forms by an interlocutor with more power does not support earlier findings. In addition, she found that an interlocutor with less power does not necessarily use more honorifics. The results of Usami's study make an important contribution to the field of politeness. Clearly her data show the need for further studies that address politeness using a discourse approach.

This book is not targeted at individuals seeking an introduction to the field of politeness. Individuals familiar with the literature on

politeness are well aware of its complexity. Therefore, in order to grasp the important implications of Usami's study, it is necessary to have read the background material. The format, however, is well laid out and the author goes to great lengths to explain the detailed statistical analysis. Furthermore, the extensive references provide ample opportunity for those seeking additional reading on the subject matter. This book will be especially useful for anyone in the field of intercultural communication or the teaching of Japanese as a second or foreign language.

References

Brown, P. & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

An Introduction to Applied Linguistics. **Norbert Schmitt, Editor. London: Arnold, 2002. viii + 344 pp.**

Reviewed by
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This impressive volume introduces key areas of applied linguistics to readers who need further background before attempting more specialized books or journals. However, with contributions from 31 specialists, it will also be useful as a reference book for EFL practitioners. The sixteen chapters are divided into three broad sections: a) Description of Language and Language Use, b) Essential Areas of Enquiry in Applied Linguistics, and c) Language Skills and Assessment.

Section one includes traditional and more recent fields of enquiry. In particular, I found the chapter on vocabulary one of the highlights of the book. For those who believe in the importance of context, this chapter is surprisingly persuasive in the section on direct, often decontextualized, vocabulary teaching/learning and provides a treasure chest of ideas for the classroom. Discourse analysis, pragmatics and corpus linguistics each warrants an independent chapter, providing a useful focus on how language is really used. Not the least of the merits of this first section is the balance it achieves between theoretical and practical knowledge, redirecting our attention to the importance of language itself.

The organization of the second section, "Essential Areas of

Enquiry in Applied Linguistics" appears less satisfactory. The issue is not the four chapters themselves: "Second Language Acquisition", "Psycholinguistics", "Sociolinguistics" and "Focus on the Language Learner: Motivation, Styles and Strategies." All are well written, easy to read and useful. However, the classification seems somewhat arbitrary. I do not understand, for example, why "Sociolinguistics" is not in the same category as "Discourse Analysis" or "Pragmatics." After all, is not each area covered in this volume an essential area of enquiry?

The final section covers language skills and assessment with chapters titled "Listening," "Speaking and Pronunciation," "Reading," "Writing" and "Assessment." The chapter on writing, rather surprisingly in such a carefully edited volume, starts with some broad generalizations about the early years of applied linguistics with almost no supporting references, suggesting that writing has traditionally been used only to the extent that it assisted the learning of speech. It would be useful to have more precision here. However, I strongly recommend the introduction to assessment, which provides an excellent discussion on the distinction between testing and assessment, clear definitions of difficult concepts such as proficiency, and a useful focus on the purposes of assessment.

There are several organizational features that make this book easy to use. One is the cross-referencing between chapters, encouraging the reader who might easily get lost in such a broad discipline to search for, and sometimes find, unity in diversity. Each chapter has a concise and useful list of suggestions for further reading, while a more complete bibliography for every chapter is provided at the end of the book. Other excellent features are the sections in each chapter outlining pedagogical implications and the "hands-on" activities with solutions, making self study a viable option for the highly motivated reader.

The book also raises a difficult question. How do we define applied linguistics? Chapter one bravely starts with a definition, " 'Applied Linguistics' is using what we know about (a) language, (b) how it is learned, and (c) how it is used, in order to achieve some purpose or solve some problem in the real world" (p. 1). Schmitt and Celce-Murcia discuss the diversity of the field listing eighteen areas, while admitting that, "due to length constraints, the book must inevitably focus on limited facets of applied linguistics" (p. 2), a constraint we would all be willing to accept, if the publishers' blurb did not claim completeness. Notable omissions include curriculum, syllabus design, and methodology, which receive only passing and indirect reference. A chapter on such well-documented areas would further help us apply the techniques and concepts outlined

in the rest of the volume to the planning and investigation of our own courses and classroom processes.

Language teaching professionals have to transform knowledge into action, making choices from a bewildering range of possibilities. This volume should help us make more informed choices. Last but by no means least, with its colorful, artistically designed cover, it looks attractive on the shelf, making us want to pick it up, which cannot be said about most volumes on applied linguistics.

Teaching English as an International Language. Sandra Lee McKay. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. 150 pp.

Reviewed by
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McKay provides the field of English as an International Language (EIL) research with a well-reasoned thesis about reasons people around the world want to learn English, and suggests ways to teach it. Her pithily written book handily meets OUP's quota of 150 pages for bookshelf reference texts in its current series of language teacher handbooks. McKay divides her argument into five sections before zeroing in on the concluding chapter *Rethinking Goals and Approaches*, which is also the subtitle for the publication.

Drawing upon 170 research articles listed in the bibliography, first McKay defines EIL and reasons for its spread. Readers not fully versed in the field's lexis are kept up to speed with a handy glossary of 30 terms central to the discussion: from *acrolect* (a variety of English that has no significant differences from Standard) and *basilect* (one that has) to *Standard English* (the variety used in printed media that can be spoken in any accent) and *world Englishes* (nativized).

The second section draws heavily upon models of language hierarchy and ways to group countries according to the variety of English in use. Various definitions for the term *bilingual users of English* are presented, before McKay grapples with the complexities of defining a native speaker and the inherent problems of using NS models in research. Section three explores the debate over the use of standards for EIL.

The role of culture is wrapped up within 20 pages in section four,

reflecting McKay's premise that we must question whether the teaching of culture is even necessary to the teaching of EIL, which by her definition has become de-nationalized and no longer belongs to Inner Circle countries from whence it came. She argues that in the context of EIL, a primary curricular aim is to use English to explain one's own culture to others. McKay recommends for example, that a textbook published and used in Japan with Japanese students and teachers should have students describe "the Moon-Viewing Festival and traditional arts like Haiku" (p. 90). These arguments lead to pronouncements on how one's culture influences the way EIL is taught.

Noting the current widespread support for Communicative Language Teaching methods, she challenges their applicability. This fifth section is a valuable addition to the growing body of work by critics of CLT and the Presentation, Practice, and Produce method. Based on three major areas of contention: (a) language use variety in multilingual contexts, (b) the demotion of native speaker models, and (c) language variation based on linguistic factors, she encourages teachers to break through the current ways they think about forming goals and approaching the teaching of EIL.

The reader might be disappointed to find that after announcing three specific goals and a plea for cultural sensitivity in approach, McKay seems to have reached a truncated conclusion. McKay's final argument is that the time has come for decisions regarding teaching goals and approaches to be given to local educators, noting that teaching objectives should emphasize that pragmatic rules will differ cross-culturally and that speakers should "mutually [*sic*] seek ways to accommodate to diversity" (p. 128). However, where are the designs for an appropriate EIL book, and the practical procedures the classroom educator needs? Were they left out to keep within the 150-page limit set by the editor? Are new textbooks and teachers' guides forthcoming? Having been persuaded that educators need no longer look to experts in Inner Circle countries for target models in pedagogy and that local educators must design pedagogies appropriate to their cultures of learning, one infers that the task of textbook writing and procedure development is now a local responsibility. McKay's thesis suggests that the best way forward is for writers to use source culture content in books to allow learners to communicate their own culture when using EIL with individuals from other cultures. Furthermore, these texts should be taught in a way that respects the local culture of learning, so that local educators can assume their rightful place as valid users of English and teachers of EIL.