

Reviews

Task-based Language Learning and Teaching. Rod Ellis. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. x + 387 pp.

Reviewed by

Thomas C. Anderson
Aoyama Gakuin University

Dr. Rod Ellis, a leading figure in Second Language Acquisition research, is able to synthesize large amounts of research and explain it clearly to language educators, as can be seen in his latest work *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching*. Ellis' bibliography, 24 pages long and containing 637 entries spanning five decades, shows the effort he put into this book.

In the preface, he shares three reasons for this work. First, he is a firm believer in language teaching using language as a classroom communication tool in preparation for real world communication. He views tasks as the best way to achieve this. Second, he says that tasks have become a central concept in SLA research, both as instruments for examining L2 acquisition and as something to be investigated themselves. Finally, and most significantly, he believes that task study can help bridge the gap between SLA research and classroom teaching practice.

There are two caveats in the preface. First, the book's contents are limited mostly to psycholinguistic accounts of tasks as these comprise Ellis' area of expertise. Second, the book is not a "how to" recipe book for teachers. It is designed to identify both the advantages and the downside of task-based teaching. Teachers should come away with a number of ideas, which they can try out and adapt to their classroom situation.

The book begins by examining tasks as an SLA research concept, presenting several definitions and describing their critical features. Ellis distinguishes between unfocused tasks and those that are used to elicit a particular linguistic feature or make language itself the task content. Following this, he looks at the classroom use of tasks.

He mentions the difference between task-supported language teaching, in which tasks are "a means by which learners can activate their

existing knowledge of the L2 by developing fluency,” and task-based language teaching, in which tasks are “the basis for an entire language curriculum” (p. 30).

The next three chapters look at unfocused tasks. First, listening to comprehend and listening to learn are examined. Following this, tasks involving interactions between learners or between learners and teachers/researchers are described in terms of negotiation of meaning, communication strategies, and interaction. The last chapter in this section focuses on the content produced by learners and how it relates to language acquisition. Ellis concludes by considering the operationalization of production in various studies to see how production relates to task design and implementation.

In chapter 5 Ellis turns to focused tasks. He describes their psycholinguistic basis and three principal designs: structure-based production tasks, comprehension tasks, and consciousness-raising tasks. Finally, he looks at implicit and explicit techniques used in implementing focused tasks.

In chapter 6, Ellis switches from the “black box” metaphor that usually is used to inform mainstream SLA, to an intra/interactional focus of sociocultural SLA. Learning, in this view, is dialogically based. Speech, both to others and oneself, plays a crucial role. Orientation and student attitudes, as well as scaffolding between the teacher/researcher and learners or among learners themselves, are also important in developing awareness/production of new L2 forms and assisting in acquisition. Ellis ends the chapter by calling for a pluralistic approach to task-based language learning.

The next chapter looks at the practical concerns that arise with task-based program innovation: development of a task-based course curriculum, task-based teaching methodology, and task-based assessment issues. The book concludes with a chapter on task-based pedagogy evaluation.

Reviewing Ellis’ three purposes (emphasizing oral communication, explaining the nature and importance of tasks in SLA research, and bridging the gap between SLA research and teachers), it is clear that he achieves these goals. The reader will gain a better understanding of how tasks relate to SLA, the difference between unfocused processing and interaction tasks and those that are focused, the relationship between tasks and sociocultural SLA, and the implementation of tasks at the course level including curriculum planning and development, classroom use, and class/program assessment and evaluation.

With this new understanding of the concepts and issues involved in task design and use (aided by the concisely written glossary and extensive bibliography), educators may become excited as they become aware of the action research possibilities in their classroom. This is perhaps the most important reason for using tasks.

Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice. J. Richards & W. Renandya (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. vii + 422 pp.

Reviewed by

Roger Kenworthy

Ohio University, Hong Kong

Recently, a major paradigm shift has occurred with the Communicative Approach emerging as the principal tenet for present day second language instruction and learning. *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice* by editors Richards and Renandya is a comprehensive overview of the Communicative Approach with practical activities tailored to elementary, secondary, and tertiary level classrooms, and a source for pre- and in-service teacher-education programs.

The authors divided the textbook into sixteen sections, each with a thoughtful introduction and an ample supply of references intended to benefit researchers and instructors. Every section is guided by a series of questions. The pre-reading questions draw upon personal beliefs and experiences as a source of reference for the articles, while the post-reading questions both engage personal reflection and challenge the readers to apply a wide variety of activities and methods to their teaching practice.

One of the strengths of the work is the breadth of topics ranging from *Approaches to Teaching, Learning Strategies, and Technologies in the Classroom* to *Professional Development*. However, the main focus of the text is upon the nuts and bolts of the Communicative Approach with a thorough discussion of the teaching of grammar, pronunciation, speaking, listening, vocabulary, reading, and writing. The salient points

for each language skill conveyed by the contributors are summarized, beginning with grammar.

There is an uneasy tension among Communicative Approach grammar theorists and practitioners over the debate of fluency versus accuracy. Within the Communicative Approach, researchers argue that grammatical accuracy is essential within all skills while practitioners focus upon the use of real and practical communication which often means that fluency supersedes grammatical accuracy. Ultimately, it must be the aim of instruction that resolves this contentious issue.

Pronunciation practices have been changing dramatically as the focus has shifted from accurate production of individual sounds to the global features of stress, rhythm, pitch, and intonation. Also, because the purpose of speech varies, speakers need to become fluent and use appropriate language required for successful communication. As such, speaking courses should address the complex and varying needs of language learners.

Until recently, listening was thought to be acquired through repeated exposure with little need for explicit instruction. However, in Chapter 22, Field opines that theory has changed to provide a more focused approach as instructors actively guide learners through the processes of learning and identifying common difficulties in order to make appropriate changes in the classroom. The outcome should present learners with the maximum opportunity for personal involvement and development of their listening skills.

There is renewed interest in vocabulary teaching and learning because it is the core for speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Traditionally, vocabulary instruction often meant presenting new words de-contextualized and having no meaningful relationship with other words. However, a paradigm shift has occurred and words are thought of in a much broader sense that includes the learning of phrases, idioms, and collocations. In this section, Nation provides a number of strategies for learning vocabulary within a network of communicative tasks.

Currently there is considerable debate among language researchers on the place of reading in the second language writing classroom. In Section 12, Grabe argues that extensive reading is crucial to learners as they are put in contact with "good models" of organization, varied vocabulary, and grammar. Also, the Communicative Approach favors the process approach to teaching composition. With four distinct stages in the process (preplanning or pre-drafting, drafting, revising, and editing),

this is a systematic but flexible approach to composition allowing writers to know where they are and what they should focus upon at every step of the process. In this section, Seow maintains that learners' writing competency increases due to the interaction between the process, writer, and task, rather than from the learning of structures.

The strength of this highly recommended text lies within the breadth of subjects covered which enables all levels of instructors to benefit from the authors' skillful balance of theoretical background information and practical exercises. This book defines the state of second language instruction and learning at the beginning of the millennium and is a must for your bookshelf.

Practical English Language Teaching (International Edition). David Nunan (Ed.). New York: McGraw Hill, 2003. xi + 342 pp.

Reviewed by

Paul Hullah

Nagoya University of Business

The stated aim of this comprehensive survey of language teaching methodology is to "update the experienced teacher on current theoretical and practical approaches" and offer the "novice teacher ... step-by-step guidance on the practice of language teaching" (p. vi). It takes on this task by providing, in a set chapter by chapter format, chronologically-framed overviews up to present-day opinion of 15 ELT areas housed in three sections: "Exploring Skills," "Exploring Language," and "Supporting the Learning Process." Each chapter is authored by a different expert in the particular field. Nunan writes two, but then he is the editor and, as anyone familiar with his other 30 TEFL book publications knows, an expert in numerous fields.

Each chapter defines its subject skill (e.g. "Listening," "Pronunciation," "Coursebooks," "Learner Autonomy"), presents the historical background, summarizes research, and expands upon relevant concepts from a four-skills-based perspective. Factors necessary for approaching the skill practically as a teacher are then outlined: examples from teaching

materials are included, with transcripts of actual classroom interchanges illustrating an effective or ineffective pedagogical approach. Chapters close with links to suggested further reading and appropriate web sites.

This book is a valuable resource to have on one's bookshelf, especially for teachers adopting an integrated skills approach. Chapters are consistently lucid and intelligently cross-referenced. Ken Beatty's "CALL" chapter deals reasonably with the rapidly evolving sphere of online language learning, explaining the usefulness of software-based constructivist programs and "blended learning" sessions with teachers in "chartrooms" (*sic*), presumably *chatrooms*, the only typographical slip I found in the whole book. Maggie Sokolik tackles an intimidating subject ("Writing") enthusiastically, advocating a principled eclectic approach and examining evaluative methods. Pleasingly, the style of each individual contributor is allowed to peek through the uniformly precise prose. Thus Kathleen Bailey ("Speaking") manages a witty dig at the woodenness of inauthentic audiolingual texts, while Donna Brinton ("Content-based Instruction") gives personal anecdotal description of her attempts to learn German. Unintentional irony also occurs: EFL teachers in Japan may groan to find that three examples of outdated, "not... useful" discrete-point test-items "from the 1950s to about the mid-1970s," cited by Geoff Brindley ("Classroom-based Assessment") are precisely the kind of questions which still dominate the English section of present-day Japanese university entrance exams.

Not so dependably well-conceived as the main text, however, are the "Reflection" and "Action" boxes punctuating each chapter, "inviting readers to reflect on issues, principles, and techniques... [and] apply the ideas through action-oriented tasks" (p. vii). Though most of these are provocative and useful, some appear hastily or lazily formulated, for example the "Reflection" sections of the "Vocabulary" and "Content-based Instruction" chapters. Some of these "inserts" pose direct, quantifiably answerable questions, but no answers are provided in subsequent text. The rhetorical or open-ended nature of such tasks ("Name as many countries as you can where English is the dominant language..." p.112) is frustrating: How can a reader gauge comprehension of a principle when questions testing that comprehension are left unanswered? Perhaps each author designed asides for his or her section? If this is the case, Nunan, as editor, might have been better employed composing all the boxes himself. Tellingly, his own "Grammar" chapter inserts are excellent, each followed by an explanatory "Commentary" absent from some other chapters.

However, that is a minor quibble. This is an excellent book. Few assumptions are made of a reader's background knowledge, but passages which veteran EFL instructors might find old hat are presented in a lively, concise manner that never patronizes or bores. For most teachers, parts of this well-written book will feel like shaking hands with old friends; other parts will feel like meeting new ones.

Teachers' Narrative Inquiry as Professional Development. Karen E. Johnson & Paula R. Golombek (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 212 pp.

Reviewed by

Michael J. Crawford

Hokkaido University of Education, Hakodate

Professional development comes in many shapes and forms in the field of language teaching. Common options include attending workshops and conferences, enrolling in certificate courses, and reading journal articles and books. In many cases, these forms of professional development can be considered part of what Johnson and Golombek describe in their book *Teachers' Narrative Inquiry as Professional Development*, as the transmission model of teacher education. In this model, educational researchers impart specialist knowledge to teachers, who are expected to learn and apply it in their teaching.

For language teachers who have harbored doubts about the efficacy of the transmission model of teacher education, this book will undoubtedly strike a chord. The editors argue that the transmission model marginalizes teachers by making them passive recipients of knowledge, as opposed to active creators of knowledge. As an alternative, Johnson and Golombek propose a model of professional development "conducted by teachers and for teachers" (p. 6). At the heart of their model is storytelling or "narrative inquiry."

Teachers' Narrative Inquiry as Professional Development is a collection of stories told by language teachers. In these stories, teachers describe in detail aspects of their teaching that they are consciously seek-

ing to understand. This method of professional development, the act of relating a story about one's teaching, turns teachers into active creators of knowledge about themselves, their educational settings, learners, and teaching practices.

The book is divided into fourteen chapters. In the first chapter, the editors introduce narrative inquiry and note the limitations of the transmission model of professional development. They also acknowledge the limitations of narrative inquiry. The rest of the book is divided into four parts. Part I focuses on instructional practices, Part II on learners, Part III on teachers, and Part IV on professional collaborations. In this review, I will describe one chapter each from two of the four parts.

In Part I teachers write about aspects of their teaching with which they are dissatisfied. In chapter 3, Lynne Doherty Herndon expresses concern that her love of literature causes her to dominate the class. She experiments with three different approaches to teaching reading that aim to create a more student-centered atmosphere. This experimentation leads to changes in her instructional practices thus creating a more satisfying classroom experience for both her and her students.

The chapters in Part IV are written by teachers who seek the help of colleagues to solve a problem with their teaching. In chapter 13, Michael Boshell asks a colleague to help him understand why he is unable to get quiet students to participate in class. He learns that his teaching style denies these students space, both in the physical sense, because he watches over them too closely, and in the psychological sense, because he attempts to control too much what they say. The process of examining this problem with a colleague allows him to make changes in his teaching style.

One of the strong points of *Teachers' Narrative Inquiry as Professional Development* is the variety of stories. In addition, the stories are thought-provoking, and at times humorous and heartwarming. Although the stories may resemble reports on action research, they differ in that they give readers a better chance to look at the big picture. The effects that teachers' personalities, interpersonal relationships, philosophies, and experiences have on their teaching are revealed in a way that is not usually found in action research.

The highly personal nature of the stories in *Teachers' Narrative Inquiry as Professional Development* can be seen as both a strength and a weakness of the book. Readers looking for generalizable data that can be used to support specific approaches to language teaching or teacher

training will be disappointed. To offer this as a criticism, however, would be unfair as this is clearly not the purpose of the book. Rather, the editors have sought to make teachers' thoughts about their craft open to public view, in the hope that other teachers will be stimulated to reflect on their own teaching practices. On this score, the editors are successful. Readers will find themselves thinking about their teaching practices and may very well want to tell their own stories.

Controversies in Applied Linguistics. Barbara Seidlhofer (Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. xiv + 346 pp.

Reviewed by
Scott Petersen
Seijoh University

Applied linguistics draws on various fields. The three main areas are linguistics, psychology (or psycholinguistics), and sociolinguistics. The controversies that Seidlhofer has chosen come from the latter. If you want to read about psychological/psycholinguistic controversies, then look elsewhere. This book focuses exclusively on controversies concerning language and society. Except for one section, it does not address everyday concerns of language teachers.

Seidlhofer has selected sets of already-published articles that address a particular controversy. Each set begins with an article that raises an issue of contention, followed by articles that respond to it. Usually, the first article addresses problems in the work of contemporary scholars, who in subsequent articles refute or at least indicate what they see as misunderstandings. Often the original author then writes a refutation to the refutation. By following several controversies through the stages of argument, counter-argument, and counter-counter argument, the editor hopes that readers will gain an appreciation of how controversy in academia proceeds. Consequently, people interested in theoretical discussion will most enjoy this book. In addition to choosing the articles, Seidlhofer also sandwiches each controversy with an introduction, afterthoughts and a list of material for further study. At the end of the book, she provides general study questions.

Seidlhofer has selected nine controversies which she groups into five sections: World Englishes, corpus linguistics, critical discourse analysis, second language acquisition studies, and the nature of applied linguistics. Since the second section is the only one that directly addresses language teaching, I will briefly comment on the other sections before concentrating on the second.

The controversy surrounding World Englishes revolves around who owns English. Should all people in the world be forced to learn the variants of English in the English-speaking countries? Critical discourse analysis injects sociological concepts into linguistics, thus politicizing it considerably. This section is not really a prime example of academic discussion since the discussants mostly talk past each other rather than to each other. The lead article in the fourth section attempts to reorient the young field of second language acquisition studies so that it takes more notice of the social aspects of learning and less of psychological aspects. The last section raises questions about the exact nature of applied linguistics.

The second section contains the most useful material for language teachers: corpus linguistics and language teaching. At first glance, it would seem that the topic would allow for little controversy. However, while some researchers investigating corpora claim that new, exciting discoveries about language need to be incorporated into teaching materials since ignoring these ideas does learners a disservice, dissenting articles in this book point out flaws in the argument.

The main objection concerns pedagogy. The descriptions of language found in corpus studies are quite complex. How is this complexity to be broken down into presentable and learnable chunks? Maybe learners have no need or desire to emulate, for example, a native speaker of British English in pronunciation or culture-specific turns of phrase. A second objection is that even as descriptions of language, corpus studies fall short. For example, Guy Cook, in text 14 of the book, points out that a corpus of spoken language will show that the word *bet* most often appears in the phrase "I bet." Therefore, the most frequently occurring meaning is closer to *suppose*. However, for the majority of speakers, the core meaning of the word *bet* remains *wager*, and this is in fact the first meaning of the word in the corpus-based COBUILD dictionary. Furthermore, corpora record facts about behavior, not the organization of knowledge in the mind. The last argument turns the tables on linguists whose objection to formal, Chomskian linguistics is that it focuses only on language in the mind and ignores language as behavior. Seidlhofer

ends this section with a list of resources for pursuing the controversy. Even though hardliners may overstate their case, corpus linguistics does have application in language teaching. Indeed, the third issue of *TESOL Quarterly* for 2003 deals exclusively with corpus linguistics.

Seidlhofer has done a fine job of introducing these controversies and providing references for further study. Those interested in the interplay between language and society will enjoy the book. Teachers and material writers will gain much food for thought in the corpus linguistics controversy.

Applied Linguistics in Language Education. Steven McDonough.
London: Arnold Publishers. 2002. 178 pp.

Reviewed by
Scott Bronner
Sophia University

Steven McDonough does an excellent job of reviewing the controversies and current questions in the field of Applied Linguistics. His style is refreshingly honest and practical, using real classroom examples as a framework to discuss key issues. For those who have taught English and who have some background in Applied Linguistics research, this text will be stimulating and helpful in consolidating ideas useful to teaching and action research. However, anyone without such a background or explanatory resource text, may find disturbing the lack of definition of key terms and even acronyms. Therefore I would recommend *Applied Linguistics in Language Education* for those familiar with the field and teachers desiring to consolidate and add to their knowledge of Applied Linguistics.

This text certainly approaches Applied Linguistics from the “applied” more than the “linguistic” perspective, with the connection of research to teaching being one of the key issues covered. McDonough is also unabashedly critical of various teaching methods that have come and gone and of the assumption that a relatively narrow methodology can be found that will be more effective than an eclectic approach guided by experience and practical research. Thus the text glosses over methodologies such as the Audiolingual Method and Natural Approach, while

other methods like “the Silent Way” are not even mentioned. Instead, McDonough focuses on issues relating clearly to current classroom teaching and highlights how research may be conducted in a way that will have either immediate or long-term applicability.

Major sections in the book are “What is applied linguistics?” “Language, linguistics, and teaching,” “Language learning,” and “Applied linguistics and the teaching profession.” Subsections discuss a wide range of topics, including how the field interacts with areas such as language education and linguistics, textual issues, interlanguage studies, the concept of method, teacher development, and assessment and evaluation.

Overall, I found the book to be interesting with a substantial amount of thought-provoking material. Particularly helpful were the examples of various types of data used in Applied Linguistics, from a lesson transcript demonstrating classroom language issues to a learner’s protocol in which someone writes down her thoughts while completing a task in a second language. These examples are presented in the beginning and referred to throughout the text. Accordingly, McDonough chooses to approach this text through the lens of various kinds of textual data instead of presenting a dry account of research methods or a traditional history of language-teaching methodologies and movements.

My main concern is that without a glossary of terms, even mention of important innovations lack clarity, such as the applicability of discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to language teaching. Hence it may be confusing when McDonough goes into related issues, for example, whether turn-taking or the cohesive device of anaphoric reference via pronouns should be treated as part of language structures or language skills (p. 43). This lack of explanation is apparent throughout the book, including the use of undefined acronyms, such as “EST” (p. 49).

I recommend *Applied Linguistics in Language Education* to those looking for a concise account of the issues in our field” and who are not disturbed by a book that raises more questions than it answers. However, since it assumes a certain amount of background information, the text could frustrate those unfamiliar with Applied Linguistics. Finally, I wholeheartedly agree with the book’s consistent plea for a more interdisciplinary approach that would better connect Applied Linguistics with research conducted in education, psychology, and other fields.

The Changing Face of CALL: A Japanese Perspective. Paul E. Lewis (Ed.). The Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger, 2002. pp. xiii + 274.

Reviewed by

Justin Charlebois

Nagoya Bunri University

Although Japan has maintained a reputation as an innovator in the development of technology, most of its educational technology is not exported. Furthermore, much of the literature about Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in Japan is written in Japanese, and thus not readily accessible to other parts of the world. The current volume is a collection of papers gathered from the JALT CALL SIG 2001 conference that was held at Kanto Gakuen University in Gunma Prefecture.

The book is divided into three main sections, with a total of 17 chapters. The first section, "Theories, Models, and Paradigms," has chapters about applying hypertext concepts to language acquisition, the distinction between CALL and Artificial Intelligence (AI), and even Multiple Intelligence (MI) Theory and CALL. The second section, "CALL Resources," has sections on the potential for computerized bilingual dictionaries to enhance vocabulary learning and security on the Internet. The security section provides a lot of useful, as well as slightly alarming, information on viruses. Finally, some of the topics in the third section, "The CALL Classroom and Beyond," include: network-based language teaching, keypal exchanges, teaching cultural awareness through Internet writing projects, and mobile learning.

One of this book's strengths is that it includes a variety of topics about CALL written by different authors. Additionally, the book does not require extensive technical knowledge to be understood. Since the selection of topics is wide ranging, it should appeal to both those with a strong interest in computers and those who are not yet comfortable with the medium but want to become educated about it.

The book also discusses Japan's slow adoption of computers into education. One reason cited, primarily cultural in nature, is that there has always been a higher value placed on penmanship and calligraphy than in the West. Another factor for technology's peripheral role is that language teachers are unsure how to integrate it into the classroom, most likely due to lack of training.

Although there is a wide range of topics discussed in the book, I think the editor effectively organized the contributions around three centralized themes. This book will be especially useful for anyone who wants to learn how to integrate computers into the language classroom, and for those who want some background knowledge about the work that has already been carried out. While there are many books on the market about CALL, the most useful aspect of this book is that it specifically addresses the Japanese educational context.

Pragmatics. George Yule. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. xiv + 138 pp.

Reviewed by

Donna Tatsuki

Kobe City University of Foreign Studies

This book is one of the oldest contributions to the *Oxford Introductions to Language Study* series. The series was “designed to provide [a] large scale view of different areas of language study” (p. xi) which makes it an excellent preliminary text series for a general readership interested in language and for the serious student of linguistics. Pragmatics had long been characterized as the linguistic “wastebasket” (p. 6) by grammarians who could not reconcile examples of actual language use with the tidy syntactic and semantic categories they had constructed. This changed in the mid-1970’s when linguists such as Austin, Searle, and Wilson, as well as conversation analysts such as Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson started sifting through and trying to make sense of the contents of this overflowing recycle bin. Their pioneering efforts resulted in the vibrant field of pragmatics that we know today. It was fitting that one of the earliest and most prolific contributors to this field, George Yule, was invited to contribute a volume on pragmatics in the Oxford series.

Like the other books in the series, *Pragmatics* has four sections: survey, readings, references, and glossary. The survey, which takes up the majority of pages, offers chapters such as “Politeness and Interaction” and “Conversation and Preference Structure.” In this section, George Yule has masterfully organized pragmatics into eight areas of focus beginning

at the word level, “Deixis” (Latin for “pointing”), and gradually enlarging the scope with each chapter until it culminates in the final chapter, “Culture and Discourse.” The important technical terms preferred by specialists in the field are printed in bold face type along with individual entries in the *Glossary* (Section 4). The most difficult chapter to read, in my view, was the one entitled “Presupposition and Entailment” with its use of symbols and logic equations. To be fair, this could be more my problem than that of the text.

Section 2: Readings features a collection of short passages that illustrate and expand key points raised in the *Survey* section. The best parts of this section are the follow-up questions that Yule poses to encourage readers to go beyond the reading by thinking of their own examples and even proposing alternative explanations for phenomena. For example, after the chapter 1 supplementary reading passage by Georgia Green, Yule challenges the reader as follows:

From this description it seems as if every act in life is part of pragmatics. Do you think that pragmatics is the study of all actions, or should it be limited to only certain actions? What kind of limitations would you propose? (p. 91)

Yule has also ensured that this book is relevant to readers from a wide variety of backgrounds by pointing out Anglo-centric notions and encouraging readers to reframe the arguments in their own contexts. For instance, one of the follow-up questions for the chapter 5 supplementary reading passage by Paul Grice is:

Grice emphasizes the word “reasonable” as he describes his consideration of the cooperative principle and his maxims as a kind of contract. Would the cooperative principle, the maxims, and the three features listed here be treated as “reasonable” in all societies and cultures? (p. 101)

Section 3: References offers graded references that I have found particularly helpful for directing my students to appropriate and accessible articles on these topics. However, there are a couple of references (dissertations and conference proceedings) that would be difficult to obtain so one might wonder if their inclusion is really useful. Nevertheless, I would heartily recommend this text to anyone who would like a compact, concise introduction to pragmatics.

The Bilingual Family: A Handbook for Parents (Second Edition).
Edith Harding-Esch & Philip Riley. Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 2003. xvi + 190 pp.

Reviewed by

Jack Massalski

Tokyo Woman's Christian University

Being trilingual, or raising a family where neither of the parents uses their native language in the home can seem confusing to some. However to others, like myself (a Polish Canadian living in Japan), cultivating bilingualism at home seems natural and appropriate. At the same time, being a professional linguist who is familiar with current research on bilingualism does not completely prevent one from occasional moments of uneasiness regarding personal linguistic choices, and pondering whether cultivating a bilingual family is worth the effort. Wanting to know more about how others have coped with the challenges of bilingualism in the family, I examined the book in question and was not disappointed.

I strongly recommend *The Bilingual Family: A Handbook for Parents* by Edith Harding-Esch and Philip Riley as an excellent resource for parents who wish or need to raise their children as bilinguals. The book's anecdotal and optimistic tone makes it an easy and enjoyable read for those interested in the nature of bilingualism. As the title implies, the book serves primarily as a parenting handbook and thus a background in linguistics is not necessarily required of the reader.

The second and updated edition of the book reviewed here consists of three main sections. Part 1, "A survey of the issues," contains a summary of research conducted on bilingualism and the development of the bilingual child, as well as a discussion of various factors that parents should take into consideration when making decisions regarding the child's bilingualism. Parents will be relieved to learn that mixing languages is a natural part of "sorting it out" by the child and that extensive language correction is not necessary. In my opinion, the first part of the book alone is worth the price of the volume.

In the following section, the authors present a series of case studies that expose the reader to various linguistic arrangements in the family, the choices that each family made, and how the choices affected their children. From reading the studies the reader will get the overall posi-

tive impression of naturalness with which children manage to acquire languages. In this updated edition, some studies also include follow-up interviews with children to show how important being bilingual is to their current identity. Interviewees highly value their bilingualism, regarding it as an enrichment and express gratitude to their parents for providing them with a bilingual environment at home.

The final section of the book is a glossary of terms, topics and notions that may be useful to parents seeking advice regarding bilingualism. In this section, the reader will find discussions of topics such as accent, baby talk, code-switching, code-mixing, swearing, and writing, as well as practical tips and various suggestions meant to assist and encourage the parent of a bilingual child.

My only criticism of the book is that it primarily deals with European languages, mainly French, English, and German. In future editions I would certainly like to see included case studies of families facing the challenges of raising bilingual children of languages strikingly different from each other in terms of grammar, lexicon, and most importantly, the culture they operate in. My assumption is that it would normally take longer for a child acquiring distant languages such as English and Japanese to sort them out than for a bilingual child of English and French under similar circumstances. It would also be interesting to observe how children cope with the cultural differences associated with the two languages (a topic the book in question unfortunately does not even touch upon) and how they become bicultural as well as bilingual. Obviously more research is needed in this area.

Putting minor criticisms aside, *The Bilingual Family* is an excellent resource that is interesting, informative and fun to read. If you are a parent wanting to raise your child bilingually, this book will certainly be very useful to you as a reference. On the other hand, if you are debating whether a bilingual family is what you really want, this book will answer many of your questions. Finally, if like me, you are already a parent of a bilingual child and need reassurance or support in your struggle, this book is definitely for you. Buy it. You will not be disappointed.

The Japanese Mind: Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture.
 Roger J. Davies & Osamu Ikeno (Eds). Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2002.
 vii + 270 pp.

Reviewed by

Jonathan M. W. Rankine
 strategic.comMUNICATION

At 270 pages, this is a slim collection of essays on “key concepts in Japanese culture” (p. 1). Intended as a text, each of the 28 essays is followed by discussion questions which are separated into two groups: one for Japanese students of EFL and the other for foreign students of Japanese Studies. Furthermore, the co-editors intended that through clarity, well-documented research, and demonstrated field-testing, the text would also appeal to the general reader.

Unfortunately, this text fails on almost all accounts. Written by Japanese undergraduate seniors, the explanations are simplistic, superficial, and inconsistent. The first essay on the purportedly unique-to-Japan *chinmoku* (silence) is an illustration. It is used during times of thoughtfulness, hesitation, restraint, conflict avoidance, defiance, and indifference, in public and in private (pp. 53-55). This “unique” Japanese cultural trait has been defined so broadly as to become meaningless, since it covers almost every moment of silence one could experience anywhere.

The superficiality of the research is reflected in the use of E. Reichauer’s (1990) comments originally made in 1977 on the contemporary status of marriage in Japan: “Japanese women are often said to have difficulty in socializing freely... However, women seem willing to play their own roles in maintaining the household as good wives and mothers” (p. 67). One wonders how “freely” socializing women or “good wives and mothers” who are unhappy with their roles and divorce their husbands fit into these nearly thirty-year-old arguments. There is also the incorrect statement that White Day is only found in Japan (p. 98). It is also found in South Korea. Furthermore, there is an inconsistent level of analysis. *Honne* and *tatemaie* (private versus public persona) receive only two pages of text, but *soshiki* (funerals) receives 14 pages, even though the latter is high on detail and low on analysis.

However, this text's greatest weakness lies in the editing, for, as the editors admit, the essays are patchworks of many papers on the same

or similar topics, which is why no single essay is credited to any one author. The results are frequent jumps in argumentation and awkward or altogether puzzling insertions within the essays, as well as much overlap and repetition among the essays. For example, the concept of *amae* is defined twice and explained multiple times (pp. 17-19, 67, 103-104). The concept of *vertical society* is defined three times (pp. 10-11, 144, 187-188). Both *honne* and *tatemaie* (pp. 104-105, 115-116, 195) as well as *ie* (pp. 61-62, 119-124, 217-218) are defined three times. Many other concepts are similarly over-defined. There are also basic grammatical and sentence structure errors, including run-on sentences, capitalization, and verb-agreement problems. It is surprising that this book was edited by two professors and has gone through Tuttle's editing process.

The book's basic premise is to explain and create discussion on contemporary Japanese culture. However, it is centered on a historical Japan that not only has changed, but also is changing in many of the areas covered. Not to be found are discussions on contemporary Japanese cultural traits exemplified by *enjokosai* (teenage prostitution), *furiita* (young, part-time workers with little hope or belief in the future), or *tomodachi-oyako* (an unhealthy parent-child friendship deficient in minimal socialising functions that are usually derived from parental hierarchy). From these (admittedly negative) contemporary Japanese cultural traits there is much to be mined, such as the fixation on youth, with the inherent fetishising of school girls and pressure on older women and mothers to be young and girlish, and the effects of 10 years of economic decline on a disenfranchised youth.

This text presents concepts that fit in with the tea garden and mossy stone view of Japan, while in reality, Japanese culture is a vibrant and dense culture in flux, equally as modern as any other. Unfortunately, poor research, writing, and editing misrepresent traditional cultural traits while neglecting contemporary ones. For sociological analyses of Japan, the reader should stick to monographs put out by trained sociologists. Perhaps the flip side of that is linguists should tread carefully in areas that are not their expertise.

References

- Reischauer, E. (1990). *The Japanese today: Change and continuity*. (M. Fukushima, trans.). Tokyo: Bungei Shunju. (Original work published 1977.)